Notes on Collection and Research

Scottish Place-Names 32: Gaelic tulach *and* barr

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

When one looks at the long list of books and articles on Scottish place-names published during the last hundred years, one is struck by the dearth of publications on Scottish mountain-names. Names of hills and mountains either figure as parts of regional studies or as elements in linguistic investigations but very little has been written about them for their own sake. This particular series of Notes is no exception in this respect, for only twice so far have the names of hills been examined in their own right, once in connection with the search for early Gaelic material in Scotland especially in those areas in which we know Dalriadic settlement to have taken place (Nicolaisen 1965*a*:91–106), and on another occasion in course of a study of the peculiar 'A of B' construction in its bilingual Gaelic-English origins (Nicolaisen 1965*b*:75–82). The reason for this apparent lack of interest in mountain-nomenclature, compared with the amount of attention paid to the names of water-courses, for example, must surely lie in the comparative lateness and derivativeness of that nomenclature, which in turn is to be explained by the fairly recent interest taken in mountains as such by climbers, scientists, cartographers, *etc.* In a recent paper (Nicolaisen 1969*b*:109–15) I have tried to show that this accounts for the fact that most of our Scottish mountains have been named from below, although there are of course well-known instances of names being given by mountaineers, albeit more recently.

Even if many mountain-names, including those of some of the highest eminences in the country, are relatively late compared with the high antiquity of some of our river-names, this does not invalidate them altogether as onomastic evidence; in a paper first read in 1961 but not published until a few months ago (Nicolaisen 1969*a*:113–28) I therefore attempted a tentative review of the geographical distribution of some of the best known elements used in Gaelic hill-names, and in spite of the rather random choice of the words involved—*beinn*, *cnoc*, *druim*, *meall*, *maol*, *sliabh*, *torr*—certain patterns appeared to which some topographical, dialectological, or chronological significance might be attributed. Nevertheless, a degree of inconclusiveness was also quite apparent, mainly probably because of the more or less aimless selection of elements to be plotted. The intention of this present note is therefore a more aimed examination of a further two Gaelic words which have already been claimed to have significant and opposing geographical distributions.

In his great book on *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, now unfortunately out of print, W. J. Watson, in a discussion of the Gaelic place-names of Galloway, states that 'in so far as one can distinguish between the names of Ireland and Scotland, the Galloway names seem to go with the latter. To take some instances: from Cape Wrath to Loch Leven, the boundary between Argyll and Inverness-shire, the regular term for an eminence of no great height is *tulach*. South of Loch Leven *tulach* becomes rare; the term in use is *barr*, "a top". In the Galloway region *tulach* is very rare, though it does occur, *e.g.* Fintloch for *Fionn-tulach*, "white height"; the regular term is *barr*. Here Galloway goes with Argyll' (Watson 1926:184). The question we are asking now is whether we can make the distribution of these two terms visible and how far the visual pattern supports Watson's statement. In particular, is there any variation or deviation from this general conclusion worth noting?

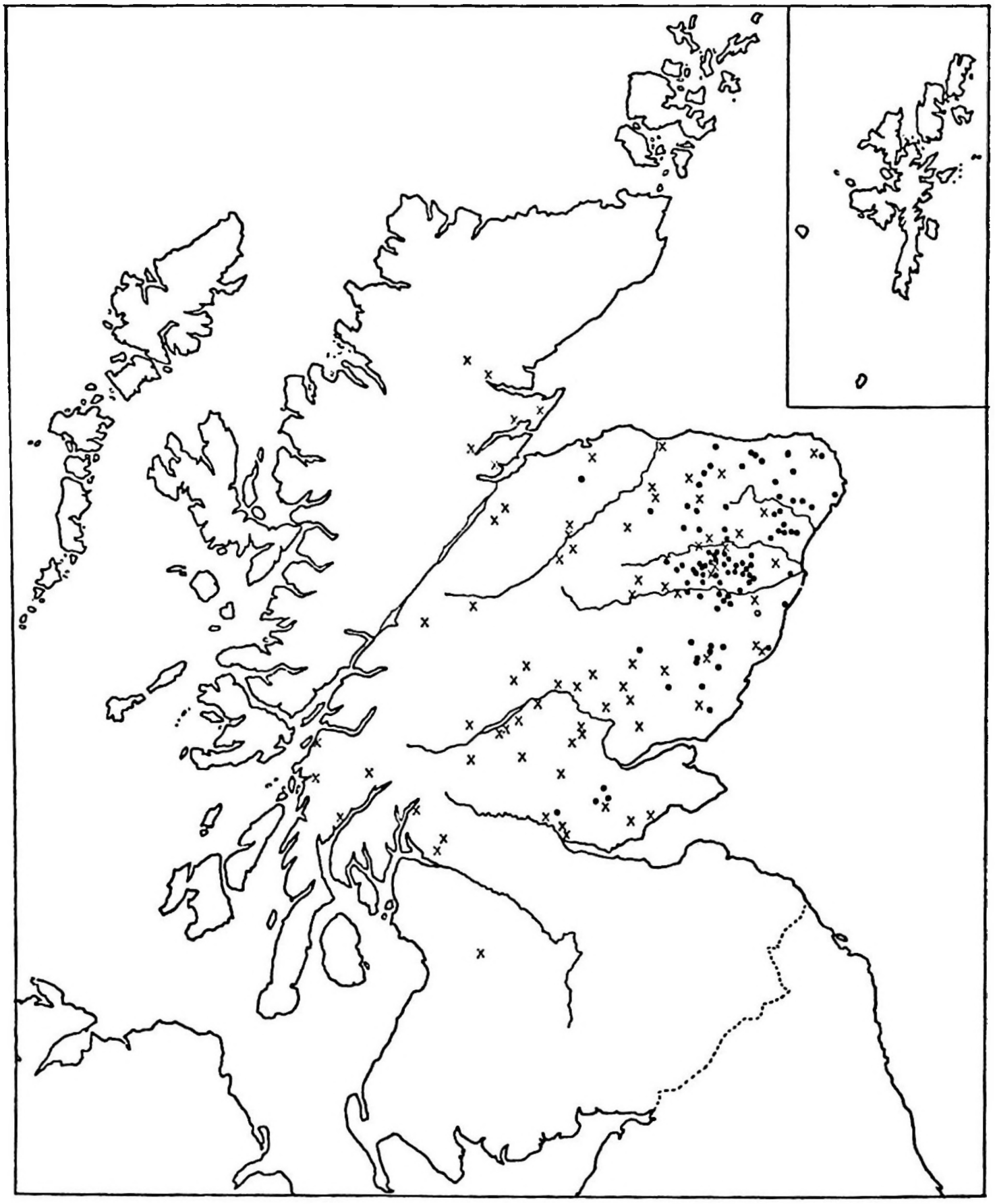
Scottish Gaelic *tulach* 'hillock, knoll, mount, small green hill, low smooth hill or ridge' is a derivative of Old Irish *tul* 'protuberance, projecting part, swelling' which also has the variant forms *taul*, *tel*, and *til*. Correspondingly, *taulach*, *telach*, *tilach* occur in Old Irish besides *tulach*, but in addition there are the variant forms *talach*, *tailach*, and *tolach*. In fact, the vowel of the first syllable is so unstable that the whole range of Old Irish vocalic monophthongs and two *a*- diphthongs are possible. Pokorny (1959: 1081) explains the Old and Middle Irish *telach*—*t(a)ulach* oppositions by supposing vocalisation of the bilabial fricative *u̯* with subsequent development of a falling diphthong so that *telach* would start from an Indo-European base **tu̯el*- and *t(a)ulach* from **tu̯el*-. This, however, does not account for the other variants. Nevertheless, the situation seems to have been a confused one even in Indo-European times, for the root meaning 'to swell' is given as *tēu*-, *təu*-, *teu̯ə*-, *tu̯ō*-, *tŭ* and *tū*, with a considerable number of consonantal extensions of which **tŭlo*- 'bulge' is one. Whereas Old Irish, as we have seen, still reflects the Indo-European situation, later stages of the language seem to have adopted a more economical simplification with *tulach* apparently running out the winner but in his discussion of the name Kirkintilloch Watson (1926:348), without further explanation, assumes a parallel form *tilach* in addition to *tulach*. (Early forms of this name, by the way, still show a tremendous variety of vowels in the stressed syllable, as in *Caerpentaloch* tenth century, *Kirkentulach c.* 1200, *Kirkintolauche* 1288, *Kerkintallach* 1306–29, *Kirkintullach* 1399).

At a first glance it looks as if the pair *tulach*—*tilach* sufficiently explains the toponymic usage of our term in Scotland and that the Anglicised reflexes *Tully*- and *Tilly*- (with their minor variants) have developed significant geographical distributions from what was once a purely phonological dichotymy. If we look at Map 1 we find that the *i*-spellings form a very definite distribution area within the distribution of the *u*- spellings, and that in fact *u*- spellings are rather rare where *i*- spellings are plentiful, as in the region between Dee and Don and in Buchan. The distribution of *Tilly*- is quite clearly much more limited than that of *Tully*- and is practically confined to what one might call the Scottish north-east proper, *i.e.* the area between Tay and Spey. Outliers do occur

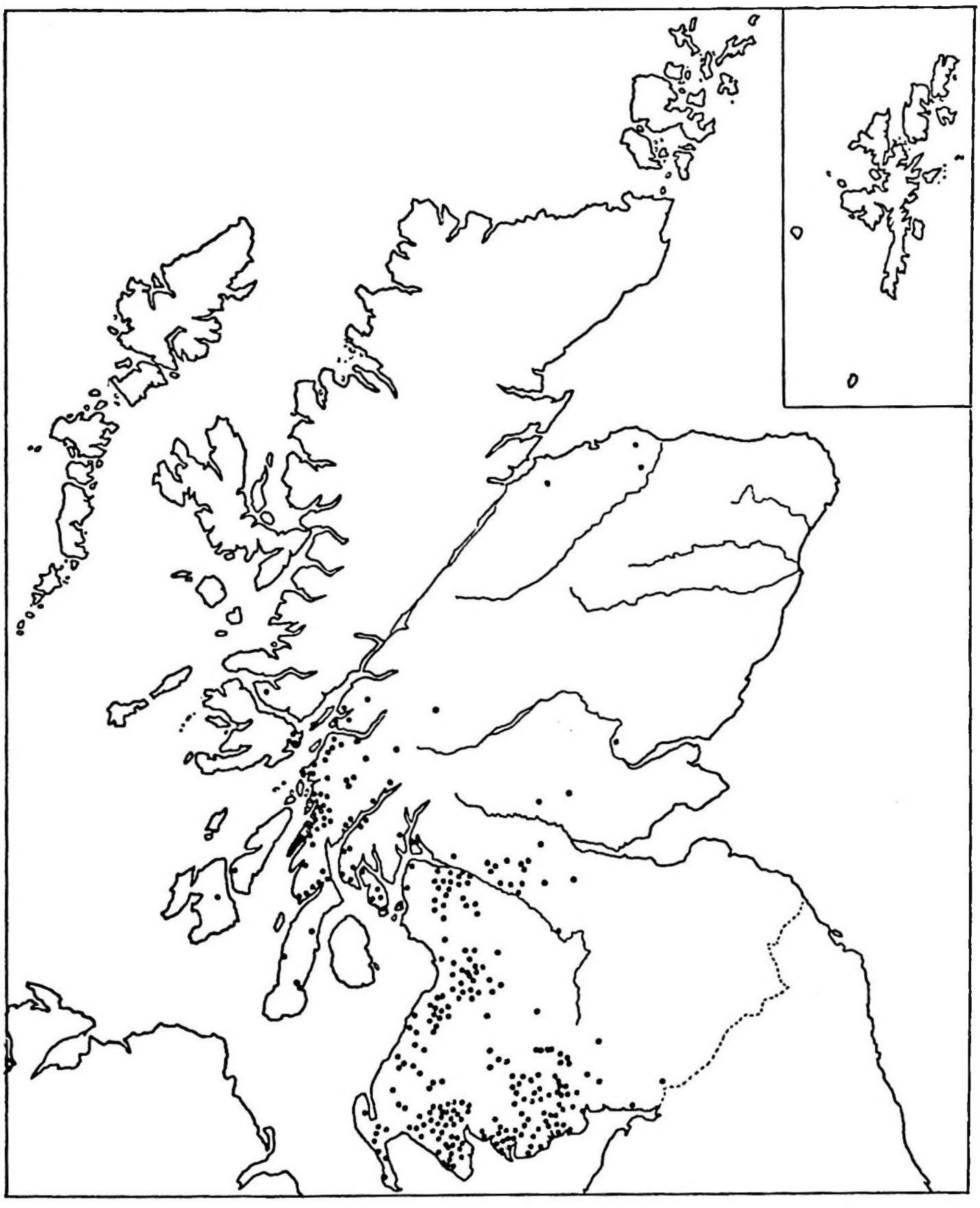
but only in very small numbers. However, the map, of course, only shows names shown on the modern one-inch map, and the emerging patterns are therefore primarily the result of the spellings adopted by the Ordnance surveyors about a hundred years ago. In practically all cases these spellings are clearly based on local usage but we nevertheless do well to remember that the position made visible by our map is to all intents and purposes a mid-nineteenth century one, for historically the situation is a little more complex.

If we look at a number of Aberdeenshire place-names beginning with *Tilly-*, for instance, because these are particularly well documented (see Alexander 1952:125–7, and 389–93), we find that the majority of these have earlier *u-* spellings, such as *Twlery* 1544 and *Tullyrie* 1610 for Tillery, *Tulyhafe* 1390 and *Tulyaif* 1511 for Tillieve, *Tulygonyis* 1461 and *Tulygownes* 1505 for Tilligonie, *tuligreg* 1157 and *Tuligirg* 1436 for Tilligreig, *Tulielte* 1234 and *Tulenahilt* 1474 for Tillyhilt, *Tholaukery c.* 1250 and *Tullecherie* 1574 for Tillykerrie, *Tullochourie* 1628 and *Tulliequhorrie* 1638 for Tillygourie, and many others. On the other hand, twenty-five names (including Tilliepestle, Tilligreig, Tillybo, Tillybrex) do not show any *i-* spellings until the last decade of the seventeenth or well into the eighteenth century, the sources being in almost all cases either the Parish Registers or the Poll Book of Aberdeenshire, sources which are presumably close to the local pronunciation. For one name, Tillybirloch, the Poll Book lists both *Tillibrickloch* and *Tullibrockloch* in 1696. That *i-* spellings expressing an *i-* pronunciation (or its allophonic realisation) were possible earlier is shown by such forms as *Tillicarne* and *Tillicartin* 1592 for Tillycairn in the Arbroath Chartulary, *Tillikero* 1597 for Tillykerrie, *Tillioch* 1557 for Tillioch, *Tilliquhroskie* 1597 for Tillyfruskie, and *Tillentermend* 1534 for Tillytarmont, all in the Register of the Great Seal. The earliest example is *Telanchsyne* 1357 for Tillyching, quoted in the second volume of the *Antiquities of Aberdeen and Banff*. The impression one derives from this documentation is that the *Tilly*-forms represent a late dialectal change in pronunciation, perhaps to be dated from the sixteenth century onwards, or a little earlier, but first clearly expressed in the Parish Registers and the Poll Book, compilations less close to, or completely independent of, scribal traditions. This is supported by the fact that only two names of the *Tully*-variety—admittedly much rarer in Aberdeenshire than *Tilly*-names—have isolated *i-* spellings: Tullynessle in 1549 (*Tillenessil*) and Tullikera in 1455 (*Tillykerak*). *Tulloch-* names which mainly occur in the west of the county never show *i-* forms. It is therefore clear that, at least as far as Aberdeenshire is concerned the *Tully - Tilly* opposition is not based on a Gaelic *tulach-tilach* dichotomy but on a phonological phenomenon within the post-Gaelic Scots dialect of the region. The resulting patterns on our Map 1 should therefore be treated as the visual representation of this dialectal development.[1]

This means that for the primary purpose for which this map was drawn we can regard all names marked as belonging to the same category and deriving from *tulach* (the earlier Indo-European and Early Irish situations being what they may). In



MAP 1. Distribution of Scottish place-names containing Gaelic *tulach* 'hillock' as a first element. The symbol x represents names beginning with *Tulloch-*, *Tully-*, *Tullo-*, etc., whereas • stands for names beginning with *Tilly-*, etc.



MAP 2. Distribution of Scottish place-names beginning with Gaelic *barr* 'top, height'.

interpreting the distribution, we are forced to modify somewhat Watson's statement that *tulach* is 'the regular term for an eminence of no great height' 'from Cape Wrath to Loch Leven' (1926:184), for it is quite apparent that many of the more northerly and westerly regions of Scotland north of Loch Leven do not participate in this usage of *tulach*. This does not mean that the term is not known in those parts, and it must also be borne in mind that the names shown on the map all contain *tulach* as a first element whereas it does occur as a second element elsewhere (we have already mentioned Kirkintilloch and Fintloch). True onomastic usage is, however, always expressed through employment as a basic element which in Gaelic most often means as the first word in a compound. There is therefore no doubt about it that *tulach*, in this sense, only occurs in those parts of Scotland in which it is plotted on our map, *i.e.* central and north-east Scotland, with a few outliers in Argyll and the lonely Tulloch Hill in Ayrshire.

Map 2 examines the complementary part of Watson's statement and shows the distribution of Gaelic *barr*, either as a simplex or as the first (basic) element of a compound name. Etymologically *barr* is much more straightforward than *tulach* as it has quite clearly developed from an *s*- extension **bhars*- of the Indo-European root **bhar*- 'protuberance' (Pokorny 1959:109). In Old Irish, *barr* meant 'top, uppermost part, foliage', and Welsh and Cornish *bar* and Breton *barr* have similar meanings. Primarily, *barr* therefore refers to the top of something and not, like *tulach*, to the whole protuberance or eminence.

As *barr* has no phonological side-forms we can at once proceed with the interpretation of its geographical distribution which is again remarkable in its limitation, this time to areas completely outside or only on the fringe of those parts of Scotland in which *tulach* was found. Whereas the latter may be said to have a north-easterly distribution, *barr* clearly displays a south-westerly scatter, with Galloway, Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, and Argyllshire participating particularly strongly. The density of *barr*- names is often such that they could not all be plotted on a map of this scale. Typical examples of the several hundred names involved are Baranlongart ARG, Barblues LAN, Barfad WIG, Barmurrie KCB, Barnaigh RNF, Barremman DNB, and Barwharrie AYR, but especially instructive are names in which *barr* occurs either alone (*Am Barr* ARG, Barr ARG, AYR, DMF, KCB, STL, The Barr ARG, DMF, KCB) or in a pleonastic compound with English *hill* as in Barrhill or Barr Hill ARG, AYR, BTE, DMF, KCB, WIG. Names such as these are always good proof of real onomastic usage.

The fact that the distribution patterns of *tulach* and *barr* are practically mutually exclusive is at once apparent and striking, and in this respect Watson's observation is obviously correct, as long as one bears in mind the qualifications and modifications set out above (p. 161) and also remembers that *barr* does, of course, occur as a second element elsewhere (Dunbar ELO, for example, which may be a Gaelic adaptation of an earlier Cumbric *din-bar*). What, however, are the further implications? Are, in the

first place, the distributions of *tulach* and *barr* truly complementary in addition to being mutually exclusive? It seems to be more than doubtful that *tulach* and *barr* ever referred to the same kind of geographical feature in two different dialects, and one can hardly say that *tulach* means in one area what *barr* means in the other. Nevertheless one might accept—with some reservations—the notion that our two maps show certain dialect differences in the naming of hills. From a chronological point of view this is defensible, as the two words must have been used simultaneously for a considerable time, although *tulach* cannot have been introduced into the north-east until the ninth century at the earliest whereas *barr* may after all have been applied to hills, or at least hill-tops, ever since the Gaels first arrived in Scotland. Whether the earliest names containing *barr* are as early as names containing *sliabh* (see Nicolaisen 1965*a*:91–106) is another question and one which cannot be answered very easily, and much will perhaps depend here on the chronological ascription of a name like Barnultoch, from Gaelic *Barr nan Ultach* 'height of the Ulstermen', in the Rinns of Galloway. When did the Ulstermen referred to settle there or at least when did they give their name to the eminence?

How far, however, can one use names beginning with *barr* in support of the theory that Galloway names seem to go with Scotland rather than with Ireland (see p. 160 above)? *Barr* does occur in Irish townland names although not as frequently as *tulach* (Goblet 1932:105–6) whereas in Scotland it is limited to the south-west and Argyll. Does this prove that it is a Scottish rather than an Irish term? Hardly. And where does *tulach* come in? Surely its absence from the south-western counties does not bear out Watson's statement, just as its presence in the Scottish north-east and in Ireland does not make it an Irish term. Rather than argue one way or the other, we would prefer to see both *tulach* and *barr* as common Gaelic words used in the naming of hills in both Ireland and Scotland, with very different and mutually exclusive and perhaps complementary distributions in Scotland, indicating mainly dialect differences. If any closer relationship with Irish toponymy had to be proved for one of these words one might indeed go for *barr* because of the close geographical proximity, but there is really no need for this. We shall refrain from speculating on the extent, or existence, of a lexical dialect unit between the Gaelic of the Scottish south-west and Argyll, or on the possibility that *tulach* may have flourished particularly well on Pictish soil.

We therefore feel that, whereas our maps undoubtedly make visible, in a modified way, Watson's contention that *tulach* has a more northerly (we would say north-easterly) and *barr* a more southerly (or rather south-westerly) distribution, they do not allow us to come to any conclusions with regard to the Scottishness or otherwise, of the place-names of Galloway, nor can we as yet clearly establish the chronological implications of the presence of so many *Barr*-names in the Scottish south-west. Their absence from much of Strathclyde proper may here be a clue but no more. From the point of view of the study of Scottish mountain-names two more distinctive distribution patterns will still have to be examined in a wider context, and only then shall we know whether they are at all meaningful within this special aspect of toponymic research.

NOTE

1 Corroboration for this conclusion comes from Ireland where the seventeenth-century townland index only contains five names which could possibly be interpreted as beginning with *i-* forms of *tulach* (Goblet 1932:363) whereas there are literally hundreds of names beginning with *Tulla-*, *Tullagh-*, *Tulle-*, *Tulli-*, *Tullo-*, *Tullogh-*, *Tully-*, and the like (*op. cit.*:370–4), plus a few beginning with *Tollagh-*, *Tolle-*, and *Tolli-* (*op. cit.*: 365–6).

For the development [u]>[ʌ]>[i,ɪ] in the dialect of Buchan see Eugen Dieth, *A Grammar of the Buchan Dialect* vol. 1. Cambridge 1932, p. 45. Our *Tully-/Tilly*-names may help to date this phonological process more precisely.

REFERENCES

ALEXANDER, WILLIAM M.
1952 *The Place-Names of Aberdeenshire.* Aberdeen.

GOBLET, Y. M.
1932 *A Topographical Index of the Parishes and Townlands of Ireland.* Dublin.

NICOLAISEN, W. F. H.
1965*a* 'Scottish Place-Names:24. *Slew-* and *sliabh.*' *Scottish Studies* 9:91–106.
1965*b* 'Scottish Place-Names:25. "Hill of —" and "Loch of —" '. *Scottish Studies* 9:175–82.
1969*a* 'The Distribution of Certain Gaelic Mountain-Names.' *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 45:113–28.
1969*b* 'Aspects of Scottish Mountain Names.' *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences* (Vienna 1969) 1, 109–15. Vienna.

POKORNY, JULIUS
1959 *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1. Bern.

WATSON, WILLIAM J.
1962 *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland.* Edinburgh.

Population and Places in North East Scotland 1951-1961

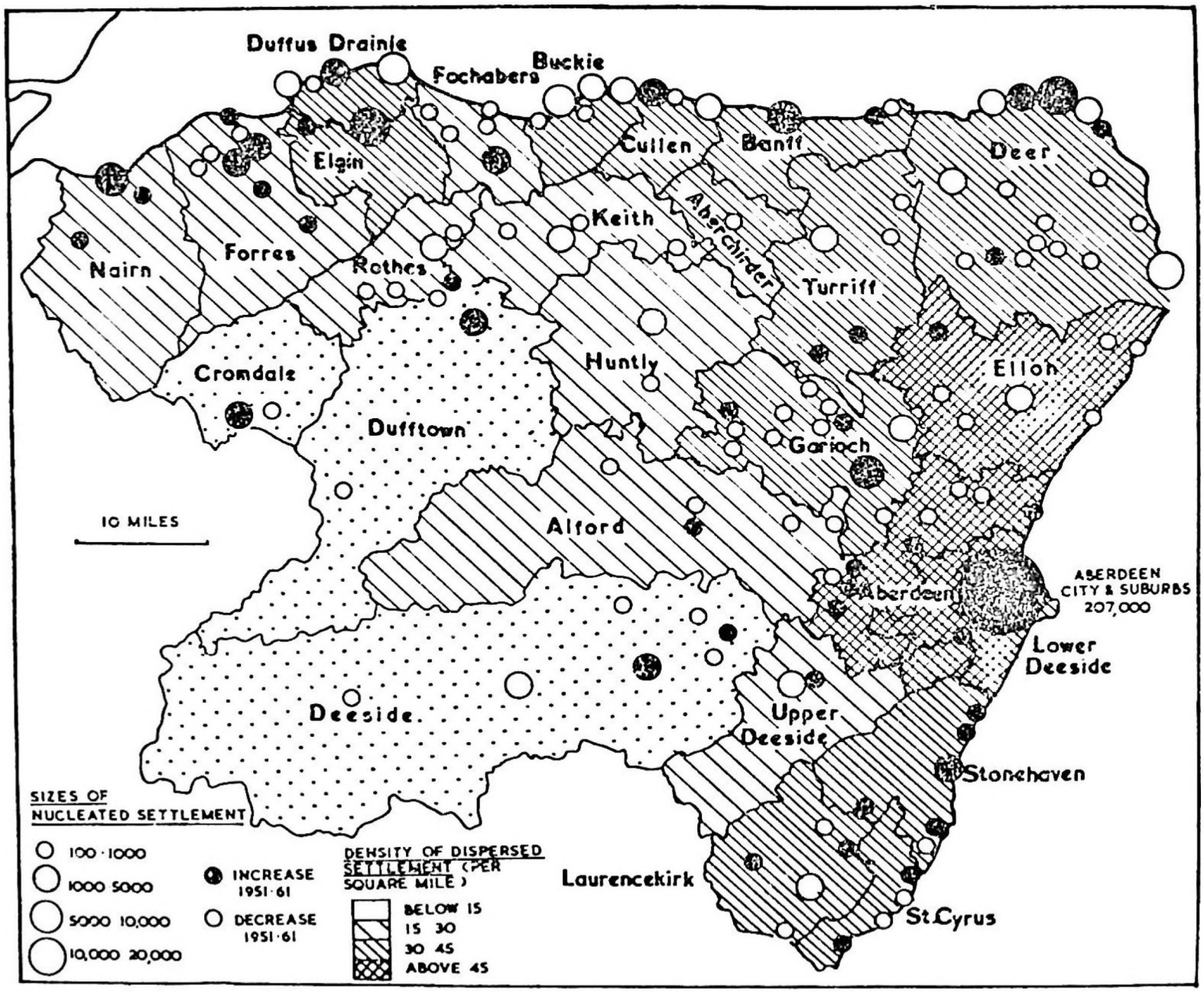
DAVID TURNOCK

Detailed study of population changes in small areas is often frustrated by the lack of information on the sizes of individual settlements as distinct from parish and district units. While these larger areas can form a suitable framework for general studies important local contrasts within each area are inevitably obscured. Late nineteenth-century statistics for individual settlements can be abstracted from census enumeration books from 1841 to 1891 and these are an important source for research in historical geography (Storrie 1962). But until recently there has been no corresponding source for the post-war period apart from private investigation or the use of Registers of Electors (Turnock 1967).

The publication of a list of the population of places in Scotland (Scotland 1967) is a valuable step forward since the number of inhabitants in every nucleation containing more than five houses is included for 1961. All villages and hamlets are included as well as many of the larger farms, thus enabling a more sophisticated distribution map to be drawn with geographical aspects of population such as the varying balance between nucleated and dispersed settlement clarified. Future versions of the list will no doubt allow trends to be examined but already some useful comparisons can be made by reference to an index of place names compiled by the General Register Office on the basis of the 1951 census. This latter volume gives the population of most nucleations but only as an estimate and only if they contained more than 25 people. Nevertheless, while its basis is not sufficiently similar to allow reliable comparison with 1961 figures in many cases, the performance of the larger nucleations (those with 100 inhabitants and above) can be more realistically studied since any inaccuracies or anomalies in areal delimitation of settlements should not be too serious.

The settlement pattern of North East Scotland is an interesting case to consider in the light of these new sources. Data for settlements of more than 100 people in 1961 can be abstacted and mapped against a background of the density of the remaining (dispersed) settlement (Map 1). The density of dispersed settlement is greatest round Aberdeen and Ellon with substantial figures recorded in Banff and Buchan as well as the Howe of the Mearns, Garioch and Moray. The mountain core is predictably sparsely settled with surrounding districts in an intermediate category. In these latter areas especially, stability appears to be threatened by the sparsity of nucleated settlement for there are few large village centres with growth potential.

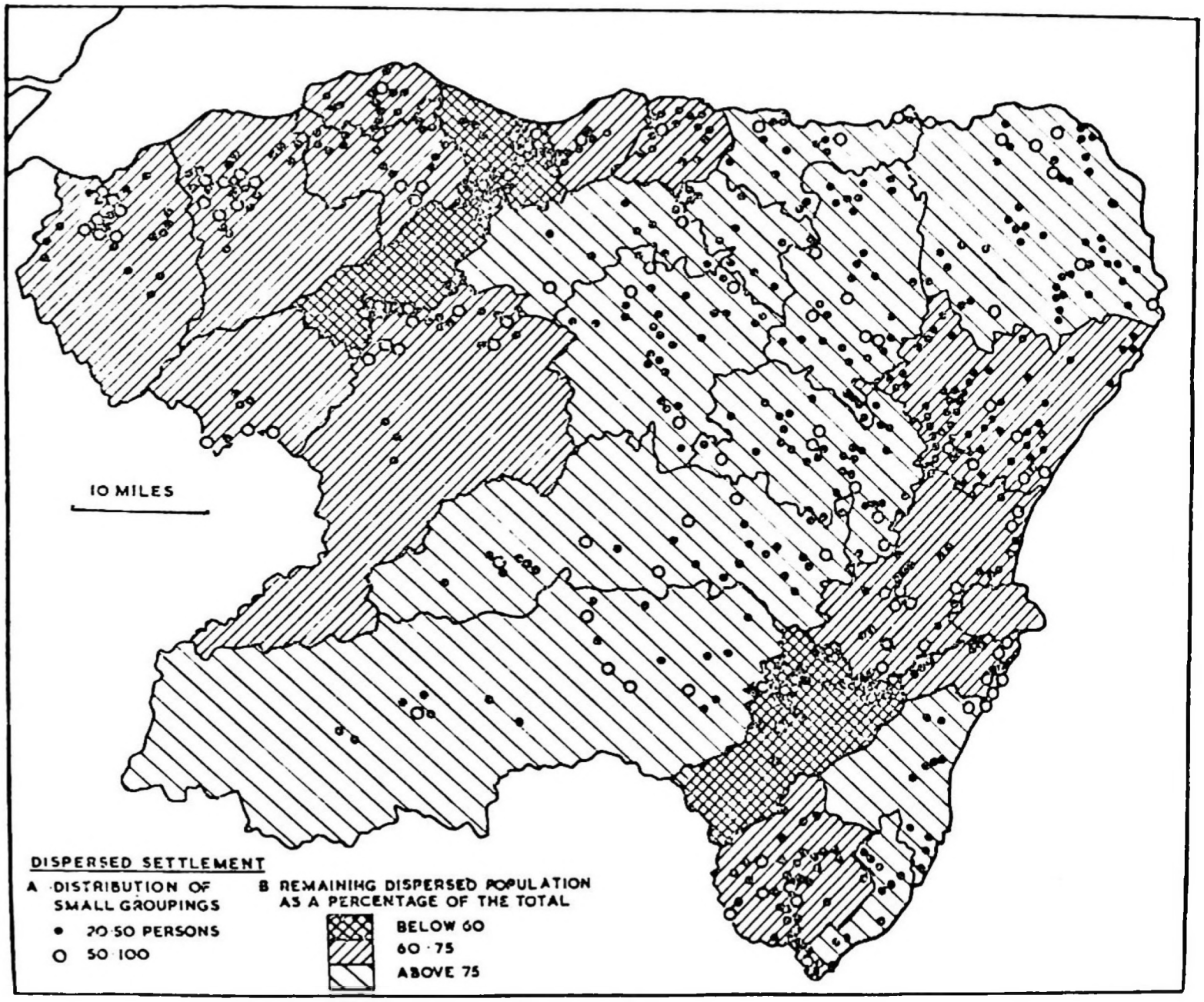
Recent trends in the nucleated settlements (arbitrarily defined as places with a population of a hundred or more) can be studied by reference to the 1951 list alongside



MAP 1. North East Scotland. Nucleated and dispersed population.

the 1961 figures. Settlements which have grown during this period are shown in black on Map 1 and fall into two major groupings; one is centred on Aberdeen and extends outwards for some 25 miles to Fyvie, Insch, Alford, Aboyne, Fettercairn and St. Cyrus and the other surrounds Elgin where Forres, Nairn, Grantown, Dufftown and Fochabers are among the settlements which have grown. Apart from Banff/Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead the intervening area, covering Upper Deeside, Upper Donside, Strathbogie, Banff and Buchan, shows a general decline which, given the likelihood of further losses from the land, will continue to pose problems in the future.

Polarisation around the two main centres of population is accompanied by a secondary process of resettlement which places emphasis everywhere on the larger market towns



MAP 2. North East Scotland. Analysis of the dispersed population.

of the region as distinct from the smaller units. Table I divides the North East into four units covering the Aberdeen and Elgin areas and the less dynamic watershed areas of Banff and Buchan. It indicates the intercensal trend in the dispersed population and in four different size categories of nucleated settlements, the size brackets being selected so that each category will cover a reasonably large population in each area. While the dispersed population has declined everywhere by rates in excess of 14 per cent and settlement groups of over 5000 have grown in every area, it is in Aberdeen and Elgin where growth is most pronounced and where the redistribution has taken place without heavy losses overall. While the population of the North East declined by 2.6 per cent as a whole between 1951 and 1961 the rate was much higher in Banff

TABLE I

North East Scotland

Analysis of Population Changes 1951–1961

Sub Region	*Settlement size grouping:* *Below 100*			*100–1,000*			*1,000–5,000*			*Above 5,000*			*Total*		
	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c
Aberdeen[1]	47·98	40·90	−14·7	15·25	14·82	−2·8	14·35	13·99	−2·5	208·00	212·74	2·3	285·58	282·45	−1·1
Banff[2]	21·77	18·34	−15·8	4·74	4·28	−9·7	18·19	17·22	−5·3	15·64	15·76	0·8	60·34	55·60	−7·9
Buchan[3]	18·02	15·13	−16·0	6·23	5·72	−9·1	9·26	8·48	−8·4	26·18	26·40	0·8	59·69	55·74	−6·6
Elgin[4]	14·40	10·92	−24·1	3·92	4·32	−2·0	16·79	17·46	4·0	22·83	24·84	8·2	57·94	57·54	−0·6
NORTH EAST	102·17	85·29	−16·5	30·14	29·14	−3·1	58·59	57·15	−2·5	272·65	279·74	2·6	463·55	451·32	−2·6

a Population 1951 ('000s).
b Population 1961 ('000s).
c Percentage change 1951–61.

[1] Aberdeen City, Aberdeen County (excluding the districts of Deer, Huntly and Turriff) and Kincardine County
[2] Banff County and the Huntly District of Aberdeenshire
[3] Deer and Turriff Districts of Aberdeenshire
[4] Counties of Moray and Nairn

(7.9 per cent) and Buchan (6.6 per cent) than in Aberdeen (1.1 per cent) and Elgin (0.6 per cent). Settlements in the intermediate categories have declined overall but while such settlements have grown in the Elgin area losses in Banff and Buchan have been almost three times above the average figure, a situation which underlines the importance of the search for stability in these marginal areas.

This imbalance is endorsed by further analysis of the dispersed population in Map 2 in which small groupings of between 20 and 50 and 50 and 100 inhabitants in 1961 are plotted and the rest of the dispersed population shown for each district as a percentage of the total. A broad belt running across the region from south-west to north-east emerges in which the dispersed population is relatively poorly grouped and where individual small farms and crofts are still a very prominent element. By contrast in the Aberdeen and Elgin areas—the latter especially—minor groupings are often well developed and account for relatively high proportions of the total dispersed population; dormitory housing, small industrial nucleii (such as distilleries) and larger farms help to produce this more satisfactory pattern which is especially prominent in Speyside and parts of Deeside.

With the aid of this new material therefore some further light can be thrown on problems of regional balance and work undertaken on a scale which was hitherto inappropriate. While further detailed investigation would be required in the case of individual localities to determine a planning and development strategy such illustrations form a useful intermediary between the general and the specific.

In future, as documents accumulate, further investigation should prove feasible, but historical studies will easily be frustrated if inconsistencies arise over the areal delimitation of settlements at different times, especially where they are small and no obvious nucleation exists.

REFERENCES

SCOTLAND
1967 'Place Names and Population: Scotland'. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Edinburgh.

STORRIE, M. C.
1962 'The Census of Scotland as a Source in the Historical Geography of Islay', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 78:152–65.

TURNOCK, D.
1967 'Population Studies and Regional Development in West Highland Scotland, *Geografiska Annaler* 49B:55–68.

Alasdair Cameron, M.A., 'North Argyll'

The laureation address of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts on the occasion of Alasdair Cameron's graduation as Honorary M.A., 3 July 1969

'The "lad o' pairts" who despite initially adverse circumstances makes his way into the liberal professions is a well-known figure in Scottish life. Yet more worthy of remark, however, and again a not unfamiliar figure among us, is the "man of the people" whom circumstances have never greatly favoured and who nevertheless, though lacking opportunities and advantages commonly taken for granted nowadays, and earning his bread by the work of his hands, achieves esteem and authority through his native talent, his scholarly industry, and the intellectual ardour that has so often been fostered in the humble country schools of our land.

'Such a man, Sir, is Alasdair Cameron. He was born in 1896 near Strontian in Sunart, of crofting stock. His formal education was confined to the seven years of his attendance at Salen school in Ardnamurchan—and I am happy to say that his school-teacher in those distant days, Miss Susan MacNaughton, is present here to-day to witness the laureation of her pupil. Greatly though Mr Cameron benefited from these few years at school, it was perhaps there too that he first realised that he belonged to a minority culture, for the use of the Gaelic was forbidden and the children had to speak it surreptitiously. Certainly his loyalties and his affections have remained deeply rooted in his native earth. Apart from a short spell in the army towards the end of the First World War, he has spent all his life in North Argyll, labouring on the farms and on the roads until physical disability compelled him to take shelter in Oban.

'Mr Cameron is noteworthy first as a great tradition-bearer. As a boy he acquired from older members of his family, and in particular his grand-uncle Donald MacPhee, a vast store of knowledge about the traditions and history of Moidart, Ardnamurchan and Sunart. He has spent many hours recording for our School of Scottish Studies all kinds of lore that otherwise would have been lost for ever—Gaelic poetry, folk-tales, stories of places, names and people, and of the old way of life in the Highlands.

'Besides this invaluable contribution as a transmitter of oral tradition, however, there is further reason why we should seek to honour him here to-day. Mr Cameron is himself a scholar and a skilful historian, at home among books and documents. At Salen he read with avidity the 300 volumes in the school library, a donation of the Coates family; through the later years he made constant call on the resources of the Carnegie Library in Dunfermline. Under the pen-name of "North Argyll" he is himself known to countless readers throughout the world, wherever the *Oban Times*

PLATE XI. Alasdair Cameron at the School of Scottish Studies after the graduation ceremony.
(Photograph reproduced by kind permission of Scotsman Publications Limited)

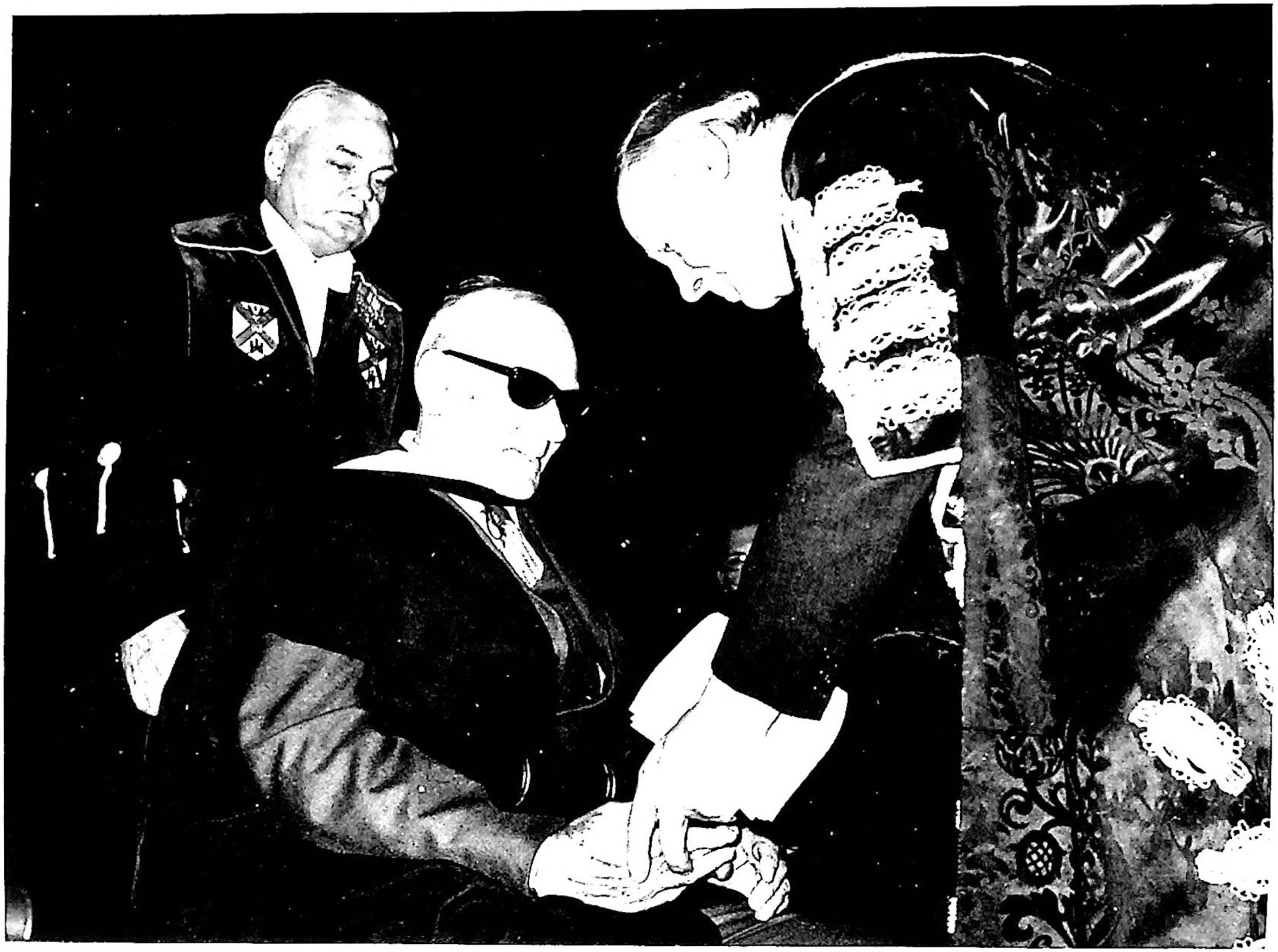


PLATE XII. Alasdair Cameron receiving the honorary degree of M.A. from the Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University, 3 July 1969.
(Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the *Scottish Daily Express*)

circulates among Highlanders far from home. His first letter appeared in that journal in 1912, and since then he has contributed many hundreds of notes and articles on questions of local and family history. Never content with guesswork and never pretending to knowledge he does not possess, he has when necessary enlisted the help of friends in Edinburgh to carry out investigations for him in the Register House. With little guidance other than his own intelligence, good sense, and scrupulous regard for truth, he has developed in exemplary fashion his gift for original research, and in addition to his work in the *Oban Times* has published a number of excellent articles which form a valuable contribution to the history of the West Highlands. Several of them were first given as papers to that distinguished body, the Gaelic Society of Inverness, and printed in their *Transactions*; others have been published as brochures in Oban.

'The brotherhood of scholarship, Sir, as all those know well who have engaged in research or had any contact with the intellectual life of local communities, is fortunately very much broader than the frontiers of the University. In a man like Alasdair Cameron we greet one whom only chance has kept from our midst, and I would now invite you, Sir, to make him in the formal sense what he already is in reality—one of ourselves.'

Alasdair Cameron and the School of Scottish Studies

The School of Scottish Studies was specially pleased that in honouring Alasdair Cameron the University was recognising the value of oral tradition in historical research. One of their reasons for proposing him as a candidate was that in his own life and work he was also the representative of the many tradition-bearers they had recorded.

Rarely has a graduation received such acclamation. A combination of circumstances seemed to have caught the imagination and sympathy of the public and press: a 'man of the people' had been awarded a degree not often conferred, and in spite of severe physical handicap he had made the effort to receive it in person.

The School had the honour of giving him an informal reception, where he was warmly welcomed in English and Gaelic, and in verse and song. Many old friends were there, including John MacLean (brother of Calum MacLean), Susan MacNaughton, his school teacher, Wendy Wood, his crofting neighbour, Dr and Mrs R. M. Gorrie and Father Anthony Ross.

D.J.H.