

Notes and Comments

Pennyland and Davoch in South-Western Scotland: a Preliminary Note*

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It is not always realised that Gaelic *peighinn*, 'pennyland', with the associated *lethpheighinn*, 'halfpennyland' and *fàirdean*, 'farthingland', is one of the commonest elements in the settlement names of South-Western Scotland, nor that the pattern of distribution stands in a curious relationship with that of another common element, *ceathramh*, 'quarter(land)', and the much less frequent *dabhach*, 'davoch'. (The very existence of this last in South West onomastics has often been denied—see, for instance, Barrow 1962:135). A fully-detailed study would probably yield valuable information on the settlement patterns of Gaelic-speaking immigrants in the South-West during the poorly documented period from the ninth to the twelfth century. Place-names in *peighinn* are found in concentration to the north of the region, particularly in the river-valleys of Carrick, the southern part of Ayrshire. Those which contain *dabhach* centre on the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, while *ceathramh* names are found in quantity in Wigtownshire and the Stewartry, scarcely at all elsewhere. A provisional count indicates that of 40 reasonably certain *peighinn* names, 26 are to be found in Ayrshire, 6 in Wigtownshire, 4 in the Stewartry, and two each in Dumfriesshire and Lanarkshire. I have noted 9 instances of *lethpheighinn*, 7 in Ayrshire, and one each in Wigtownshire and the Stewartry; 12 of *fàirdean*, 8 in Ayrshire, 4 in Dumfriesshire. There are 10 likely instances of *dabhach*, 6 in the Stewartry, 3 in Ayrshire, and one in Wigtownshire. Of the 35 instances of *ceathramh*, 20 are in Wigtownshire, 14 in the Stewartry, and one in Dumfriesshire. The list which follows is arranged alphabetically by county and parish.

1 *peighinn*

AYRSHIRE

Ballantrae parish: Dupin, Pencummin, Penderry

Barr parish: Corphin, Pinbreck, Pinclanty, Pindonnan, Pinhannet, Pinmullan,
Pinvalley

Colmonell parish: Pinmore, Pinwherry

* This paper was written as a contribution to an unpublished collection of papers by former pupils and colleagues presented to Professor K. H. Jackson in June 1976 to mark his completion of 25 years as Professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh (1950–75).



Fig. 1. South Carrick (detail) after Timothy Pont c. 1590, Blaeu's Atlas 1654.
 (By courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.)
 Settlement names in Pin-, Pen-, -fin, and Douch- reflect former pennyland and davoach land-divisions.

Dailly parish: Penkill

Dalmellington parish: Pennyvennie

Girvan parish: Dupin, Letterpin, Penwhapple, Pinbain, Pinmacher, Pimery,
Pinminnoch, Pinmore

Kirkmichael parish: Pinmerry

Maybole parish: Penmore, Pennyglen

Old Cumnock parish: Penbreck

DUMFRIESSHIRE

Kirkmahoe parish: Pennyland

Tynron parish: Pingarte

LANARKSHIRE

Crawfordjohn parish: Glespin

Douglas parish: Glespin

STEWARTRY

Colvend parish: Colvend

Girthon parish: Penwhaile

Kilmabreck parish: Daffin

Rerwick parish: Castledaffin

WIGTOWNSHIRE

Inch parish: Penwhirn, Pinwherrie

Kirkmaiden parish: Fourpenny Moor

Port Patrick parish: Colfin, Pinminnoch

Sorbie parish: Penkilm

2 *lethpheighinn*

AYRSHIRE

Ballantrae parish: Garleffin, Leffin Donald

Barr parish: Garleffin (2)

Kirkoswald parish: Leffinwyne

Old Cumnock parish: High Garleffin

Straiton parish: Linfern (*Leffinfairn*, Pont)

STEWARTRY

Dalry parish: Garleffin

WIGTOWNSHIRE

Inch parish: Leffnoll

3 *fairdean*

AYRSHIRE

Barr parish: Fardin

Colmonell parish: Farden, Fardenreoch

Girvan parish: Fardenden

Kirkmichael parish: Farden William

Kirkoswald parish: Farden

New Cumnock parish: Blackfarding, Fardingreoch

DUMFRIESSHIRE

Durisdeer parish: Fardingmullach

Holywood parish: High Farthingwell

Keir parish: Fardingjames

Penpont parish: High Farthingbank

4 *dabhach*

AYRSHIRE

Colmonell parish: Dochroyle, Docherneil

Straiton parish: Kildoach

STEWARTRY

Buittle parish: Doach Wood

Carsphairn parish: Cullendoch Hill

New Abbey parish: Cullendeugh, Knockendoch

Parton parish: Culdoach

Twynholm parish: Culdoach

WIGTOWNSHIRE

Inch parish: Drumdoch

5 *ceathramh*

DUMFRIESSHIRE

Tynron parish: Corrodow

STEWARTRY

Anwoth parish: Kirklaugh (Kirrieclaugh, 1605, *Inq. ad Cap.*)

Balmaclellan parish: Currydow

Balmaghie parish: Duchrae

Carsphairn parish: Kirreoch Burn, Carminnow, Carnavel

Dalry parish: Duchrae

Kells parish: Kirreroch

Kirkgunzeon parish: Tarkirra

Minnigaff parish: Corrafeckloch, Kirriedarroch, Kirriemore Burn, Kirshinnoch Burn, Kirriereoch

WIGTOWNSHIRE

Inch parish: Duchra, Kirminnoch, Kirclachie

Kirkcolm parish: Kermanachan, Kirminnoch, Kirranrae, Kerowdow, Salchrie

Kirkcowan parish: Carlure

Kirkinner parish: Kirwaugh

Leswalt parish: Garchrie

Mochrum parish: Killantrae (*Kerintray*, 1494: Reid 1960: 178 *etc.*), Gargrie

New Luce parish: Quarter

Penninghame parish: Blackquarter, Kirkhobble (*Kerychappell*, Pont)

Stoneykirk parish: Kirklauchlane (*Kererlauchlin*, 1516, RMS), Kirkmagill (*Karmagell*, 1488, RMS: *Keromagill*, 1571, Galloway papers in SRO), Kir-naughtry

Wigtown parish: Kirvennie

Etymologically *peighinn* is derived from Old English *pening*, 'penny', an element which is occasionally found in such English place-names as Pennington and Penton, where the meaning is "'TUN that had to pay a penny geld" or the like' (Ekwall, *s.v. pening*). In English place-names however the word is very infrequent, and there can be no reasonable doubt that it entered Scottish nomenclature by way of Norsemen, who had adopted English monetary units, and who established their influence in the west and north of Scotland during the period from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. The scat which they imposed on the Gaelic-speaking population appears to have been levied at the rate of one ounce of silver per townland. The town-land thus became known as the *tir-unga*, 'ounceland', which, in theory at least, was subdivided into 18 or 20 units, each usually representing a single household, and valued at a silver penny (Thomas 1885-6). Larger subdivisions also existed, in much of Gaelic-speaking western Scotland, for instance, the old *ceathramh* 'quarterland', familiar in Ireland as in much of the remainder of Scotland, was equated with the fivepenny- or quarterounce-land. Castledaffin (Rerwick parish) and Daffin (Kirmabreck parish),

both in the Stewartry, contain *dà-pheighinn* 'twopennyland'. As has been illustrated above, other units were valued at less than a penny. In the Isle of Man, *tir-unga* became *treen*, but this makes no appearance in surviving place-names. In Carrick, the pennyland as a fiscal unit survived into the period of extant Latin charters. The lands of Crossraguel and Southblane, granted before 1202 by Duncan, Earl of Carrick, to the monks of Paisley, constituted a fivepennyland (*ceathramh*); those of Duneyne or Dinham a two-and-a-half-pennyland (*leath-cheathramh*, *ochdamh*) while Clenacheth, Balchriston, Dalquharran, Quarrel (= 'quarry') and Auchennaich were each single pennylands (Hunter Blair 1886: I. 2, 15–16). There is no trace in place-name or charter evidence of the term *tir-unga*.

The word *dabhach*, as opposed to *peighinn*, is of purely Gaelic origin. The basic meaning is 'a large vat', and it is probable that

the term was applied to that amount of land necessary to produce, or to require for sowing it, a fixed amount of grain, enough to fill a large vat of a fixed size; this being perhaps not the total yield of grain but only the proportion of it due as a fixed render of tax.

(Jackson 1972: 116)

The oldest instances of this use of the word are to be found in the Gaelic notes added in the mid-twelfth century to the *Book of Deer* to form a record of grants of land made to the Buchan monastery. The term was Latinised for use in charters as *davaca* or *davach*, as in *dimidiam davacam terre de Achinleske* or *unam davach terre in strathardel. Tulahourene scilicet* (Easson 1947: I. 237, 85). Generally it belongs to the east of Scotland north of Forth, but the total range is wider.

It is not found in Argyll, Lennox or Menteith, nor is there much evidence of its use in Strathearn. It can be found in Fife, Gowrie, Stormont and Atholl, and was evidently general throughout the country north of Tay as far as the Dornoch Firth area . . . In the west highlands its distribution is hard to trace because of the scarcity of early texts; it occurs in Lochaber, and in late documents which refer to 'fiscal' davochs it is applied to Glenelg, Skye, the Small Isles and the Outer Isles. Despite the Irish origin of the word, there seems to be something inescapably Pictish about the use of the davoch of land.

(Barrow 1962: 135).

According to Professor Barrow in the same place, 'it is not found anywhere south of the Forth–Clyde line', but while this fairly represents the documentary evidence, it fails to take account of onomastics. Place-names establish that in the Stewartry, and probably to a lesser extent in Carrick and Wigtonshire, the *dabhach* existed as an important unit of land-assessment.

Where the basic unit is the *dabhach*, the *ceathramh* is to be understood as a quarter-*dabhach*.

For Galloway, Carrick and Dumfriesshire, the total evidence may appear complicated in the extreme. One suggestion, however, which deserves consideration, is that the south-west saw a blend of two systems in terms of which the eastern *dabhach* was sub-divided on the western pattern into twenty pennylands. Individual

instance of *peighinn* are more or less restricted to the hill-country, which occupies the north of the region; in the more level and fertile south the *ceathramh* and *dabhach* predominate. The presence of the *dabhach* may support the hypothesis which I have put forward elsewhere (MacQueen 1962) that some part of the historical Pictavia is the likeliest place of origin for the majority of the *Gall-ghaidhil* who settled in Galloway, probably around the tenth century, and that the *Gall-ghaidhil* and the Picts of Galloway, whose very existence has often been disputed, were one and the same people.

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