`StronPatnaHachalas or the Oxterhill`: place-names and language-contact in the Beauly area, Inverness-shire

Simon Taylor  
University of Glasgow

Summary

In this article I will explore how place-names behave when languages come into contact, especially in long-term bilingual (or even trilingual) situations. I will take concrete examples of the interaction between place-names in Gaelic, Scots, Scottish Standard English, Norse and French in the area around Beauly in north-east Inverness-shire, using evidence from the thirteenth century onwards. At the same time I will attempt to construct a typology of the various relationships that can exist between names referring to the same place in different languages, a ‘typology of toponymic contact’.

The data used was collected as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) Project carried out between 2000 and 2001. This data is available on-line both as a series of Word documents: <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/beauly/> and as a searchable database: <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/beauly/search.php>.¹

¹ This data will form the core of a forthcoming publication Place-Names of the Parishes of Kilmorack, Kiltarlity & Convinth and Kirkhill, Inverness-shire by Simon Taylor, Jacob King and Ronald MacLean (forthcoming).

A more descriptive, if less colourful, title for this paper might be ‘towards a typology of bilingual place-names’, since it attempts to classify different types of relationship that exist between names referring to the same place or feature within different language-communities. It will, I hope, become clear that such relationships are not purely linguistic, but also involve different political and social perceptions of a shared environment. Place-names can thus be an expression of these different perceptions, and it is this aspect which I would see as being relevant to the overarching theme of this conference.³

² Nicolaisen 1975, 174. For more on the article from which this quote was taken, see Appendix, below.

³ This article began life as a paper given to the conference ‘Us and Them: perceptions, depictions and descriptions of Celts’, held in Melbourne, Australia, August 2006. I am very grateful to the organisers of the conference for their invitation to speak at it. The article is only now seeing the light of day because the original intention had been for it to be published in a volume of conference proceedings. Unfortunately, through no fault of the organisers or editors, this volume will not now appear, and permission has been given to publish it elsewhere.
The area of study from which the material for this paper was taken is in the north-eastern part of pre-1975 Inverness-shire, at the western end of the Beauly Firth, named after the main town of the area, Beauly, about 14 kilometres due west of Inverness itself.

It comprises the three modern parishes of Kilmorack, mainly north of the Beauly and Glass rivers, the united parish of Kiltarlity & Convinth, mainly to the south, and Kirkhill to the east, along the southern shore of the Beauly Firth (see Map 1).

In the medieval period this area comprised five parishes: Kilmorack or Altyre, Kiltarlity and Convinth, as separate but intermixed parishes, now united, and Wardlaw and Farnway, now united as Kirkhill. These are shown on Map 2, which also shows the sites of the medieval parish churches.

An important subdivision of this area is The Aird, a very old district name, deriving from Gaelic *àird(e)* 'height' (< *àrd* 'high'), probably referring to the upland area between the Beauly River and Firth on the north side and Loch Ness, part of the Great Glen, on the south.

The other important early division was Strathglass, a broad strip of low land reaching deep into the hills, drained by the River Glass.

An extensive place-name survey was undertaken of this large area as part of an AHRB project I worked on between 2000 and 2001. It was initiated by Dr Barbara Crawford of St Andrews University, Scotland, with a view to investigating names along the southernmost frontier of Norse settlement in eastern Scotland as evidenced by place-names. While names of Norse origin formed the ultimate focus of the project, much wider place-name collection and analysis had to be undertaken, since it is impossible to study one stratum of place-nomenclature without studying the totality. Approximately 500 names were collected and analysed, along with early forms, often from unpublished documents. These are available both in Word documents and in a searchable database with maps and photographs on line on the St Andrews University website (see Summary above for details). The photographs were taken by local researcher, Mrs Mary MacDonald of Evanton, who contributed much to the project. The main findings were written up in an article jointly authored by Barbara Crawford and myself which appeared in *Northern Studies* in 2003 (Crawford and Taylor 2003).

This Survey makes no claims to being comprehensive, but it is hoped that it will serve as the basis for a more complete place-name survey of an area which has hitherto received little serious attention from place-name scholars. In 1904 the great Celticist and toponymist William J. Watson published his in-depth place-name study of his home county, Ross and Cromarty, which lies immediately to the north of Beauly and its parish of Kilmorack. But, as is the case for most of Scotland, there has never been anything similar done for Inverness-shire.

The topography of the study area is remarkable for its variety. It includes,
in the west, the highest hills in Scotland north of the Great Glen, around Loch Affric, such as Sgùrr na Làpaich and Càrn Eige, which rises to over 1,100 metres. Moving eastwards it takes in Strathglass, a remarkable strath or wide valley running south-west to north-east, directly parallel with the Great Glen to the south. This constitutes a strip of rich, alluvial land reaching deep into the hills. And in the east the study area includes large, relatively rich estates such as Belladrum with good lowland arable and pasture land.

Type 1

We know that in the lowland parts of the study area the Scots language was present from a relatively early period, stimulated in the first place by the foundation of the burgh of Inverness, probably in the second quarter of the twelfth century. Already by 1221, amongst the earliest charters which exist for this area, a bilingual situation is indicated by the text found in two charters from 1221, which can be translated as follows:

John Bisset ... has conferred and granted in pure alms to the church of Dunballoch seven acres of land in a suitable place and near to the parish church of Dunballoch once it has been translated to Fingask (Fingasc etc.) to the place which is called Wardlaw, in Gaelic Balabrach/Balcabrac.

It concerns the re-siting of the parish church from Dunballoch (Dulbatelach) to Wardlaw beside Fingask (see Map 2). As part of a deal between the local lord, John Bisset, and the bishop of Moray, the parish church was moved from beside the flood plain (Pictish *dul or *dol) of the River Beauly, practically at sea-level, to a site two kilometres to the north-east to the top of a low hill which rises to 62 metres above sea-level, and with a wide, clear view to the north.

Already by the early thirteenth century we can see that the highest part of this hill has a Scots name, Wardlaw, that is ‘guard hill, watch hill’, watching out, no doubt, for an enemy from the north and west. It is probable but not provable that the ward and watch after which Wardlaw was named was in connection with the series of so-called MacWilliam uprisings which by 1221 had threatened the Scottish realm from the north for several decades, and would continue to do so.

---

4 Pryde 1965, 11 (no. 20).
5 *Johannes Byseth ... contulit et concessit in puram et perpetuam elemosinam ecclesie de Dulbatelach septem acras terre in loco competenti et propinquo ecclesie parochiane de Dulbatelach cum fuerit transleta ad Fingasc ad locum qui dicitur Wardelau(e) scotice Balabrach/ Balcabrac* Moray Reg. nos. 21, 51. Forms confirmed by the ms from which the printed version was taken, NLS Adv. MS 34.4.10 fos 19r (Balabrach), 28v (Balcabrac).
6 The whole ridge, of which Wardlaw is the highest point, seems to have been called in Gaelic *Fionngasg ‘white ridge or tail-like spur of land’. It survives in the modern farm name Mains of Fingask at the north-east end of the ridge.
Map 2 Study area showing medieval parishes and church sites

Crawford and Taylor 2003
for some years to come. The most recent of these uprisings had been just a few years beforehand in 1211 or 1212, and had been crushed somewhere in the Inverness area.\(^7\)

In terms of the theme of this paper the most interesting feature in this charter are the two names which are given to this place, one in Scots, Ward Law, the other in Gaelic, *Balcabrach. The Latin scottice I have rendered ‘in Gaelic’, which is what it means throughout the kingdom of Scotland until the later medieval period, when it, or its Scots equivalent, *scottis, started to be used to refer to lowland Scots. Up until then this latter language was referred to in Latin as *lingua anglica* (adverbially *anglice*), in Scots *inglis*. Lowland Scots, known as Older Scots from about 1100 to 1700,\(^8\) developed from northern Old and Middle English (which had been heavily influenced by Scandinavian) and the language of Lothian, where a northern form of Old English (also known as Old Northumbrian) had been wide-spread since as early as the seventh century. In this charter of 1221 the place-name Wardlaw does not have a language assigned to it, from which it can probably be assumed that the ‘base language’ of those who framed the charter, and for whom it was intended, was not *lingua scottica* but rather the language to which Wardlaw belonged, that is *lingua anglica* or Older Scots.

The first element of Wardlaw’s alternative name is the common Gaelic settlement or habitative word *baile* ‘farm’, while the second element is probably *cabrach*, deriving ultimately from Gaelic *cabar* ‘tree-trunk, pole’. The element is still represented in a local place-name, namely Cabrich (Kirkhill, formerly Wardlaw),\(^9\) NGR NH536433 (*Caberach* 1743 NRS E.769/1/4, fo 6r), about 2.5 kilometres south-west of Wardlaw. It is probably to be interpreted ‘place of tree-trunks or poles’, containing G *cabar* + G adjectival ending *-ach* with the meaning ‘place of, place abounding with’. But note Dwelly also has the noun *cabrach* (m.) ‘copse, thicket’, which can be compared with Irish usage.\(^10\)

\(^7\) See Duncan 1975, 196. For wider context, see McDonald 2003.

\(^8\) CSD p. xiii.

\(^9\) Although Cabrich appears to straddle the parish boundary (between Kirkhill and Kiltarlity and Convinth) on both the OS 6 inch 1st edition and the 1 inch 7th series, it can safely be assigned to Kirkhill. This is confirmed by the association of the adjacent Milifiach (Kirkhill), and Cabrich in the 1743 Rental.

\(^10\) In Ireland *cabrach* means ‘copse’, a meaning also found in Scottish Gaelic (see above). However, the townland of Cabragh (Irish *An Chabrach*), Clonduff parish, Co. Down, is locally interpreted as ‘rough land’, presumably because it was covered in clumps of trees or bushes. In its earliest forms (early 17th century) it is combined with *baile* ‘townland, farm’, e.g. *Ballecabragh* 1609 (Ó Mainnín 1993, 83), remarkably similar to *Balcabrach*. Amongst the various meanings given by Dwelly for *cabar*, one is ‘eminence’, as in *cabar beinne* ‘mountain top’. Although obviously a secondary meaning – the primary meaning seems to be ‘rafter’, for
The non-linguistic relationship between these two names, Cabrich and *Balcabrach, if indeed there was one, is not known and is probably unknowable. One possibility is that Cabrich was once the name of the whole area of what is now the western part of Kirkhill parish, including Wardlaw, and *Balcabrach is therefore to be interpreted ‘the farm of or in (the territory of) Cabrich’, with the name Cabrich later becoming restricted to a small area on the boundary of that territory. There is however no other evidence to suggest that this was the case, and it is just as likely that these two names, although containing the same word, are independent of each other.

The two names, *Balcabrach and Wardlaw, while clearly referring to the same place in the context of this charter, would thus seem to have nothing to do with each other either phonologically or semantically. They provide my first type of bilingual place-name category, in which there is no relationship between elements across languages. Another example of this type would be Dingwall, the next town north of Beauly, a name deriving from the Norse þingvellir ‘the field(s) of the assembly’. In Gaelic this is Inbhir Pheofharain ‘the mouth of the Peffer Burn’. A third example is Cill Chumein ‘the church of St Cumméne’. This is a settlement and parish at the south end of Loch Ness. The Gaelic name commemorates a seventh-century abbot of Iona.11 In English the settlement is called Fort Augustus, emphasising the eighteenth-century military aspect of the place and named after a very different character, William Augustus the Duke of Cumberland, commander-in-chief of the government troops at Culloden in 1746, better known in Scotland as the Butcher Cumberland. However, the parish has retained the Gaelic name, anglicised as Kilchumin.

Such a relationship, or rather absence of relationship, between different names in different languages referring to the same place could be said to arise where there are pronounced cultural and political as well as linguistic differences between the groups involved. It is perhaps no coincidence that two of the above mentioned examples, Dingwall and Fort Augustus, refer to political structures which have their roots clearly outwith the Gaelic-speaking community of the time when the names were coined. It might be said that this type consists of place-names which deliberately turn their back on each other. It is also possible to see Wardlaw as belonging to this category: ‘watch hill’ or ‘guard hill’ plays its

which see DIL under capar ‘rafter, joist, roof’ – it is possible that in at least some place-names containing this element, such as this one and The Cabrach in Aberdeenshire, it might simply refer to its relatively high position. However, in the light of the Irish evidence, it is more likely to refer to some kind of tree cover, however patchy.

11 See Watson 1926, 303 and Taylor 1999, 56.
part in a wider network of political and military organisation to which the Gaelic name makes no reference.\textsuperscript{12}

Type 2

The next Scots place-name on record in this area is Donaldston, now obsolete, beside Lovat and near Wardlaw kirk, and this provides my second type of bilingual place-name category, in which there is semantic equivalence of one element across languages, usually the generic, while the other element is unrelated. Donaldston was probably coined c.1250 × 1275, and well illustrates the complex ethnic and linguistic mix at this period. The eponymous Donald, the bearer of a Gaelic personal name, and no doubt a Gaelic speaker, is probably the Dofnaldus del Ard (Donald of the Aird) whose son witnesses charters of Beauly Priory around 1300 (\textit{Beauly Chrs.} nos. 8, 9).\textsuperscript{13} Whoever the eponymous Donald was, his name appears about 700 hundred years ago qualifying the Scots place-name element \textit{toun} ‘farm, agricultural settlement’. Incidentally, Donald of the Aird’s son is called Harald, a name which looks northwards to the Scandinavian cultural area of Sutherland and the Northern Isles. This one place-name, and the family of its eponym, thus seems to look culturally, if not linguistically, in three directions. But there is a further point to make regarding Donaldston. It would appear from the \textit{Fraser Chronicles}, the detailed account of the history of the parish of Kirkhill, as well as of the Lovat Frasers, written by the admirable Rev. James Fraser, minister of Kirkhill between 1661 and 1709, that Donaldston was also known as \textit{Ballbra<n>} (Wardlaw MS, 112).\textsuperscript{14} The implication here is that Donaldston was known as such only in a Scots- and Scottish Standard English-speaking context – I mention Scottish Standard English here because that is the language of the \textit{Fraser Chronicles}, although the author was also a Gaelic speaker. In a Gaelic-speaking context, therefore, Donaldston seems to have had a different name, but shares the equivalent generic element (Sc \textit{toun}, G \textit{baile}).

\textsuperscript{12} However, if *Balcabrach refers to an eminence (with \textit{cabar} used in its secondary meaning of ‘hill-top’, for which see the discussion above, footnote 7), it could be argued that a semantic link exists with the generic \textit{law} of the Scots name. This would then place Wardlaw/Balcabrach in Type 2.

\textsuperscript{13} Some early forms are: \textit{Dofnaldistun} 1297 × 1325 NLS Adv.MS.35.2.4, ii fo. 197v no. 3 (= \textit{Beauly Chrs.} no. 9).

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Donaldston} 1478 × 1666 Wardlaw MS, 112 [*Glashen Gow Smith, in Donaldston or Ballbra<n>s*]; recounting an incident reputed to have taken place in 1478; \textit{<n>} represents the expansion of a suspension mark over the second \textit{a}].
Another example of this category is Kirkhill, which as a place and a parish is known in Gaelic as Cnoc Mhuire ‘Mary’s hill’. Both of these are ecclesiastical names, but whereas the Scots name Kirkhill refers to the physical presence of a kirk – i.e. the parish kirk firstly of Wardlaw, later of Kirkhill – the Gaelic name preserves the memory of the saint, Mary, under whose patronage the place, and by implication the church, lay. The development of this name may well reflect different attitudes amongst the post-Reformation Gaelic- and Scots-speaking language groups to saints’ cults in general.

Type 3

The name Beauly provides a third category of bilingual name, in which the name in one language refers in a generic way to an exotically imported and/or named feature. Of French origin, from beau lieu ‘beautiful place’, the name Beauly was introduced by the French-speaking Valliscaulian monks brought into the area by the Bissets, with the support of King Alexander II, about 1230. All the early references to this place occur in Latin texts, where the name is fully latinised as Bellus Locus ‘beautiful place’ (see Beauly Chrs., passim). There is no reason why the local tourist board should not make as much of this name as possible, although I would argue that it was not spontaneously generated by the interaction of the monks and the local scenery and amenities. Rather it was a kind of ready-made name with ideological, even propagandistic, overtones used by the French-speaking monks themselves to refer to monastic foundations wherever they settled. There are at least four monasteries in France called Beaulieu, and one in England, Beauly in Hampshire. The official modern Gaelic name for the place is much more neutral, being simply A’ Mhanachainn ‘the monastery’, sometimes also referred to in early modern sources by the equally prosaic Baile nam Manach ‘the town of the monks’.

Near Beauly is Beaufort Castle, until recent years the chief seat of the Frasers of Lovat. Also French, it means ‘beautiful strong one or place’. It was coined by the French-speaking Bisset lords of this area, and it can be seen as deliberately contrastive or complementary to their nearby foundation of the priory of Beauly (‘beautiful place’). It was the Bissets’ chief stronghold, and already in 1242 the priory, *Beau Lieu, is described as being beside (juxta) Beaufort (Beauly Chrs. no. 3 and p. 40). We thus have the two halves of the incoming French-speaking aristocratic world, the ecclesiastical and the secular, presented in two neat, positive-sounding, high-register place-names, related to each other both semantically and ideologically.

Gaelic speakers, on the other hand, refer to Beaufort Castle simply as
Dounie, that is the place of the dùn or stronghold, the original stronghold almost certainly pre-dating the Bisset stronghold of Beaufort.¹⁵

Perhaps the best known Highland example of this third type of bilingual name is Fort William, in Gaelic simply An Gearasdan ‘the garrison’. Such place-names, coined in the language spoken by those responsible for the feature, contain more, or at least quite different, information. In the case of Fort William, the personal name commemorates King William I of Great Britain (II of Scotland and III of England), in whose reign it was built, while the Gaelic name gives no such chronological or political information. The name-pairs in this category are especially closely linked, with the indigenous name secondary to the exotic one, since the indigenous name describes the exotic feature.

Type 4

A fourth type of bilingual name is provided by Bridgend, just south of Beauly, known in Gaelic as Ceann na Drochaid (literally ‘the head or end of the bridge’). This type is one in which there is complete equivalence across languages. Bridgend (Sc Briggend)/Ceann na Drochaid is a common name throughout Scotland for a settlement beside a bridge. The early forms of Bridgend by Beauly are as follows: Bridgend 1743 NRS E.769/1/4, fo. 5v; Bridgend 1757 Lovat/1757, Kinnin drochet 1795 RHP11605, Sheet 5. Given its situation in this lowland part of the parish, exposed to Scots influence at a relatively early date, it is justifiable to assume that Scottish Standard English Bridgend itself is a translation of Sc *Briggend. There is in fact good corroborative evidence that this was the case, since, only a few kilometres to the north, the place beside Dingwall, which appears as Bridgend on modern maps, is Brigend in a charter dated 1526 (RMS iii no. 380).

I have described this fourth type of relationship between bilingual place-names as that of complete equivalence across languages. It is tempting to use the term ‘translation’ here, but in fact it is safer to use the word ‘equivalence’, since translation assumes that one of the names is primary, the other derivative. It is just as likely that *Briggend and Ceann na Drochaid arose at the same time, and were linguistically independent of each other, as both are perfectly usual terms in their respective languages for describing a settlement beside a bridge.

¹⁵ See, for example, the name of the tune ‘Neo-aighearach thall an Dùnaidh’, translated by Angus Fraser as ‘The decay of festivity in Beaufort Castle’ (Angus Fraser Collection, 30). The name first occurs in the thirteenth century applied to one of the eleven davochs of Convinth (Dunyn 1220 x 1221 Monk Reg., nos. 21, 51). The Scots and Scottish Standard English form of the name, Dounie, is now the name of the farm near the castle, formerly the castle’s demesne or home farm.
Another fully equivalent Gaelic and Scots place-name is Lettoch/Half Davoch, a farm just north of Beauly. The Scots name, which has not survived, contains what was ultimately a loan-word from Gaelic into Scots, that is *dabhach*, literally ‘vat’, but used in Scotland to refer to a sizeable unit of land of both arable and pasture. Despite this Gaelic provenance, the name Lettoch/Half Davoch appears much earlier in the record in its Scots form than its Gaelic one: almost 200 years earlier, in fact. As with Bridgend/Ceann na Drochaid, neither of these forms can be said to be primary, with one a translation of the other. Rather they should be seen as having a parallel existence within the two groups of language-users.

If there is any evidence for name-translation in the Beauly area, then it seems to have been from Scots into Gaelic. The name *Greenfauld* appears several times in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century as one of the pendicles of Teachnuick by Beauly. The name *Boulaglass* appears as one of the fieldnames on the farm of Teachnuick on Peter May’s wonderfully detailed plan of the Lovat estate dated 1757 (Lovat/1757). This clearly represents Gaelic *buaile ghlais* ‘green fold or fauld (for cattle or sheep)’. Since Greenfauld appears relatively early in the record along with Gaelic-derived names such as Teachnuick (G *taigh a’ chnuic* ‘the house of the hill, hill-house’), and since it is not a commonly occurring compound (unlike Bridgend or Half-Davoch), it is more likely that this name was originally coined in Scots, and became translated into Gaelic as *Buaile Ghas*, rather than that it was coined in both languages independently.

A final twist to this story is that modern Grayfield is roughly on the site of *Boulaglass*, and may in fact be a somewhat loose translation of this name into Scottish Standard English, with Gaelic *glas* being translated as *grey*. This is, of course, from a purely lexical point of view, perfectly feasible. So we may have a Scots name translated into Gaelic, from which it is translated back into Scots, by which time Scots has become Scottish Standard English: a complex and intricate dance of language in the landscape!

---

16 For more on the davoch, especially in northern Scotland, see Ross 2006.
17 G *leth-dhabhach* ‘half davoch’. Early forms are: The *halff davouucht* 1571 NLS Dep. 327/50/1; lie Half-Dawwacht 1592 RMS v no. 2165; the *half Duagh of Lettock* 1755 NAS E.769/69, fo. 8v; farm of *Letttoch* 1757 Lovat/1757.
18 A pendicle is a piece of land regarded as subsidiary to a main estate. The earliest form is: *Thayknok* [Teachnuick], cum pendiculis viz *Uvir-Croaresis*, [Croyard?], the *Relict et Greenefald* cum brasina ejusdem (‘with its brewery’) 1572 RMS iv no. 2020.
19 All the names on this plan, which include the names of around 300 fields and other minor features, have been transcribed by Mary MacDonald and appear in a word document on the Beauly place-names website.
20 From Ordnance Survey Pathfinder Map (1:25000).
Thus this fourth type of complete equivalence can be broken down further into two parts. The first of these is where there is no obvious primary name (e.g. Bridgend/Ceann na Drochaid, Half-Davoch/Lettoch); and the second is where there is translation from one language to another (probably *Greenfauld/Boulaglass).

**Type 5**

The fifth, and by far the most common way in which place-names co-exist in different languages, is by phonological adaptation: that is a name coined in one language is borrowed into another language and adapted to the latter’s phonology. Examples are legion from all over Scotland, such as (from Gaelic to Scots or Scottish Standard English) *Ceann Mhona(i)dh to Kinmont or Inbhir Nis to Inverness. Such adaptation requires no knowledge by the borrower of the lender language, unlike in Type 2, and in at least some examples of Type 4. Such adaptation can also lead to reinterpretation or assimilation of one or more elements to a phonetically similar word in the borrower language.²¹ An example might be Main in Strathglass, which derives from G *mèinn ‘mine, ore’. A frequently found example throughout Scotland is the assimilation of Gaelic mòr ‘big’ to Sc *muir ‘rough grazing’, e.g. Balmuir by Dundee (G *baile mòr). Another common one is G dùn ‘hill-fort’, adapted to Sc den ‘gorge’: both these are probably found in the Fife place-name Denmuir, originally Dùn Mòr, or similar.²² This is what might be called ‘secondary adaptation’, since it does not necessarily arise from a direct language-contact situation.²³ In fact it is more likely to develop after the lending language has ceased to be spoken in a given area.

Another form of secondary adaptation is what onomastic theorists call ‘epexegetic’ or ‘explanatory’. This refers to any word added to a place-name to describe the type of feature involved, when the place-name alone could convey this adequately, or would do if understood by the place-name user. An example would be Inchcolm Island, an island in the Firth of Forth which itself contains G innis ‘island’. This gives rise to the phenomenon traditionally but less accurately termed ‘tautology’, when a word in one language is added to a name which already contains a word with the same semantic range, but in another language. Another example, this time from Strathglass, would be the

---

²¹ For more discussion of this process, see Nicolaisen 1975.
²² See Taylor with Márkus 2010, s.n.
²³ Sandnes 2003, 86–88. She bases this on the theory of Hans Walther, who, however, writing in German, uses the problematic term Hybridisierung (‘hybridisation’). It is Sandnes who, quite rightly I think, uses the term ‘adaptation’ (Norwegian *tilpasning*). For a good critique of the concept of hybridisation in place-names, see Cox 1989.
River Glass itself, since Glass derives from G *glais* 'burn, river'. As with other forms of secondary adaptation, it is more likely to flourish in a context where the lending language is no longer spoken or understood.

Walther’s Model (after Walther 1980, and Sandnes 2003, 87) Fig. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Adaptation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phonetic adaptation</td>
<td><em>Inbhir Nis</em> &gt; <em>Inverness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morphemic adaptation</td>
<td>G plur. -<em>ean</em> &gt; Sc plur. -<em>is</em>, later -<em>s</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semantic adaptation</td>
<td>G <em>baile</em> &gt; Sc <em>toun</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Adaptation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semantic clarification or epexegesis</td>
<td><em>Inchcolm Island</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexical adaptation</td>
<td><em>Denmuir</em> &lt; <em>Dùn Mòr</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, such a model assumes a lender-borrower situation. I would contend that it can be even more complex than this, since, as we have seen with Bridgend/Ceann na Drochaid, closely related names can be generated independently in different language user groups, and can run parallel with each other for as long as the two languages co-exist. Yet another layer of complexity is provided by the different registers within one language, with nick-names or by-names for a place used in informal situations or for comic effect, e.g. G *Inbhir Pheofharain* versus *Baile Càil* ('cabbage town'); and Sc *Embros* and SSE *Edinburgh* versus Auld *Reekie* ('old smoky').

Another factor in the understanding and systematising of cross-language place-names is that of survival. For example, we have no idea how many -*toun*-names in east central Scotland had a name in *baile* when Gaelic was the dominant language there from the tenth to the twelfth century.24 In other words, there are certain parts of the primary adaptation process which are now unknowable or can only be guessed at. What makes the Beauly area so valuable in understanding language-contact through place-names is the fact that a bilingual situation has existed from the late twelfth century practically to the present day, and documentary evidence goes back to the very start of this period.

---

24 The Gaelic names of two -*toun*-names in Fife, Mastertown by Dunfermline and Friarton (Forgan), north-east Fife, both of which were coined around 1200, are known, and neither of them contain G *baile*. See Taylor with Márkus 2006, 331, 337–38 (under *Lethmacdungal* and Mastertown DFL); and Taylor with Márkus 2010, 414–15, 424–25 (under Melcrether # and Friarton FGN).
Oxter Hill or a place-name in the making?

An exciting set of sources for the Beauly area are the Government-commissioned surveys of the forfeited Lovat estates after 1746. The chief surveyor was the lowland Scot Peter May, arguably the greatest of all the early modern Scottish surveyors (see Adams 1979). We have already seen an example of his work when looking at the name *Greenfauld near Beauly. While Peter May’s native tongue would have been Scots, like most educated Scotsmen of his day, especially one working for the British Government, he wrote in Scottish Standard English. One of his many fine maps is that of Glen Strathfarrar, which he made in 1758 (May/1758). It is from this map that the phrase used in the title of this paper is taken, that is ‘A Top called StronPatnaHachalas Or the Oxterhill’. It is shown just east of Creag nan Deanntag (Ordnance Survey Pathfinder), at the approximate NGR NH194383. In modern Gaelic orthography May’s name would be Sròn Bad na h-Achlaise, and can be translated ‘the nose-shaped hill of or beside a place called Bad na h-Achlaise’, which itself means ‘the clump of the oxter’, oxter being the Scots and Scottish Standard English word for ‘armpit’. G achlais is relatively common in place-names, referring to a shallow, oxter-shaped hollow, and on the modern map there are several places called Bad na h-Achlais(e), although the Glen Strathfarrar one is not among them. So we see here a striking reduction and distortion of the Gaelic name: on the one hand there is a complex name containing an existing name, a name within a name, that is *Bad na h-Achlaise, referring to a clump of trees in a small hollow, in a name referring to a relief feature, sròn. On the other hand we have simply the Oxterhill.

Rather than recording a genuine local usage, however, the Oxterhill seems to be a somewhat sloppy or ill-informed attempt by the Surveyor to convey something of the meaning of the Gaelic place-name. Other bilingual names on this map suggest that this explanation is the correct one, since about 15% of the Gaelic place-names on the plan are given a Scots or Scottish Standard English equivalent, most of them being literal translations. An example would be ‘Corra buiepeak, or the little yellow quarry’. In modern Gaelic orthography this would be Coire buidhe beag ‘little yellow corrie’. Other examples are: ‘Top of Meaul an Tarraugh or the Bull Hill’, in modern Gaelic orthography Meall an

---

25 As with Lovat/1758, all the place-names and descriptions on this map are to be found on the Beauly place-names website.

26 I have preserved the upper and lower case letters of the original throughout.

27 Sc and SSE corrie ‘hollow on the side of a hill’ is a loan-word from G coire ‘kettle; cauldron or cauldron-shaped feature’. This is represented in the translation on May/1758 as quarry, which has nothing to do with modern English ‘quarry’.

The Journal of Scottish Name Studies 9, 2015, 63–82
Tairbh ‘the rounded or lumpy hill of the bull’; and ‘This part of the hill is called Bane-Tarsn or the Cross hill’, in modern Gaelic orthography Beinn Tarsainn ‘hill lying across or athwart’.  

Furthermore these Scottish Standard English forms are always provided with an article, which also suggests interpretation or translation rather than the recording of a living place-name. And the final point to be made here is that, from what we know about the political and social structures in this part of the Scottish Highlands from external sources, it is very unlikely that a genuine Scottish Standard English toponymy had developed in Glen Strathfarrar by the mid-eighteenth century. I would therefore describe such names as The Oxterhill and the little yellow quarry as nonce translations or interpretations, such as those carried out by eager toponymists the world over, myself included, rather than as fully-fledged place-names, i.e. place-names used by a linguistic community inhabiting or exploiting the land, which are then capable of being communicated to and used by a wider community. The fact that none of these Scottish Standard English names makes it onto the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1876 is further proof, if such be needed, of their ephemeral nature.

I would argue, however, that under different socio-linguistic circumstances these nonce names could have become fully-fledged place-names. May’s 1758 plan of Glen Strathfarrar in fact provides us with a rare glimpse of what might be termed the very first phase of place-name formation in a linguistic contact situation, and the mess made of the hill name Sròn Bad na h-Achlaise might be seen as representing a whole layer of confusion and misapprehension in the adoption and adaptation of place-names in such a contact situation, a layer which usually remains invisible because of the centuries-long time periods involved and the lack of relevant documentation.

Concluding Remarks
This discussion of names on the May/1758 plan does not provide another type of bilingual place-name category as such, since I argue that the Scottish Standard English translations of the Gaelic names are not in themselves place-names. Rather it illustrates a process by which some names belonging to Type 4b may have come into existence.

---

28 This is Sgurr na Muice on the modern Ordnance Survey Pathfinder map (more correctly Sgùrr na Muice).
The categories discussed above can be summarised as follows:

Type 1: no relationship between elements across languages. Examples are Wardlaw/*Balcabrach, Dingwall/Inbhir Pheofharain, Fort Augustus/Cill Chumein.

Type 2: semantic equivalence of one element across languages, usually the generic, while the other element is unrelated. Examples are Donaldston/Balbra<n>, Kirkhill/Cnoc Mhuire.

Type 3: the name in one language refers in a generic way to an exotically imported and/or named feature. Examples Beuly/A’ Mhanachainn, Beaufort/Dùnaidh, Fort William/An Gearasdan.

Type 4a: complete equivalence across languages. Examples are Bridgend/Ceann na Drochaid, Half Davoch/Lettoch.

Type 4b: translation from one language to another. Probable example is Greenfauld/*Buaile Ghas. See also the discussion of ‘StronPatnaHachalas or the Oxterhill’, above.

Type 5a: phonological adaptation. Examples are: *Ceann M(h)ona(i)dh > Kinmont, Inbhir Nis > Inverness.

Type 5b: phonological adaptation resulting in re-interpretation. Examples are *Baile Mòr > Balmuir; *Dùn Mòr > Denmuir.

Type 5c: phonological adaptation with epexegesis. Examples are the River Glass, Inchcolm Island.

These categories are not set in stone and can be augmented and refined. They represent an attempt to clarify the complexity of interaction between languages and communities, especially in north-eastern Inverness-shire, viewed through the prism of place-names.

Appendix

A closely related study to the one attempted above is W. F. H. Nicolaisen’s article ‘Place-Names in Bilingual Communities’ (1975), which takes the interface between Scots and Gaelic as an illustrative example of ‘the basic relationships between the place-nomenclature of one language and that of another in a bilingual context’ (1975, 169). His categorisation can be roughly mapped onto mine, with some differences in perspective and emphasis. These differences arise from the fact that, while my chief concern is with the interaction (or absence of interaction) between coexistent language communities, Nicolaisen’s is more concerned with the transference (or absence of transference) from a donor...
language (in this case Gaelic) to a receiving language (in this case ‘English’),\textsuperscript{29} and the various processes involved. He categorises these relationships as follows: (a) two names for the same place are completely unrelated to each other (ibid., 169) (my Type 1). (b) The name in one language is a translation or part-translation of the name in the other language (ibid., 169–70) (my Types 2 and 4b); (c) the name in one language is a phonological adaptation of the name in the other language (ibid., 170) (my Type 5a). (d) The name in one language is phonologically adapted by the other, as under (c), but a morphological ‘translation’ adds a plural marker in the receiving language (English) because the name had been in the plural in the donor language (Gaelic) (ibid., 170–71).\textsuperscript{30} (e) ‘As a consequence of (c), i.e. phonological adaptation and resulting lexical meaninglessness, the receiving language adds a generic of its own which tautologically repeats a generic already contained in the adopted name’ (ibid., 171) (my Type 5c). (f) The name in the outgoing language is not in any way adapted, translated or replaced by the incoming language (ibid., 172). He concludes his study with two case studies: the first of which involves several of the above processes which produce ‘a totally new name-type in the incoming language, a type which might never have been created spontaneously without this linguistic interaction’. His example is that of names such as \textit{Burn of X, Mill of X, Mains of X}, which he sees as atypical of Germanic constructions, which would rather yield \textit{X Burn, X Mill, X Mains}, which he would see as ‘a strong indication of morphological interference by Gaelic on English (especially Lowland Scots)’ (ibid., 172–73).\textsuperscript{31} The second is ‘the process by which linguistic transfer combined with phonological adaptation not only results in semantic opacity but also in loss of morphological transparency, which permits names to be reinterpreted in the new linguistic medium’ (ibid., 173). His example here is provided by the many \textit{Auchen-} and \textit{Auchin-} names on the Scottish map. While some of these derived from G \textit{achadh ‘field} followed by a reflex of the genitive definite article \textit{an}, which in Older Gaelic always contained \textit{n}, e.g. Auchentend (\textit{G Achadh an teine ‘the field of the fire’}) or Achintoul \textit{Achadh an t-sabhail ‘the field of the barn’}, others, such as Auchenreoch (\textit{Achadh riabhach ‘brindled or variegated field’}) or Auchenfedrick (\textit{Achadh Phàdraig ‘Patrick or Peter’s field’}), cannot have contained a definite article, and probably derived the medial unstressed syllable -\textit{en-} from ‘the Anglicised form \textit{Auchen-}’ being ‘regarded

\textsuperscript{29} Nicolaisen uses English to refer to both Scots and Scottish Standard English.

\textsuperscript{30} This is not as frequent as Nicolaisen supposes, as the examples he uses such as Fetters and Leuchars FIF do not derive their final \textit{s} from a Scots plural. See Taylor with Márkus 2010, 514–15, 526; for a variety of suffixes ending in -\textit{s} in Irish (and Scottish Gaelic) place-names, see Ó Máille 1990.

\textsuperscript{31} For a critique of aspects of this problematic theory, see Cox 2007.
by non-Gaelic speakers as a fixed morphological element, having become
an indivisible unit which served as a kind of pseudo-generic in English,
with no definable lexical meaning apart from a vague feeling of onomastic
appropriateness’ (ibid., 174).

ABBREVIATIONS (NON-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL)

G Gaelic
FF Fife
INV Inverness-shire
NGR National Grid Reference
ROS Ross and Cromarty
Sc Scots
SSE Scottish Standard English

REFERENCES

(Scottish Historical Society, 4th series, vol. 15).
Angus Fraser Collection: The Angus Fraser Collection of Scottish Gaelic Airs
(Taigh na Teud, Skye 1996; printed from a manuscript of Angus Fraser,
died c.1874, whose father’s family came from Knockie).
Beauly Chrs.: The Charters of the Priory of Beauly (Grampian Club, 1877).
Cox, Richard, 1989, ‘Questioning the value and validity of the term ‘hybrid’
in Hebridean place-name study’, Nomina 12, 1–9.
Cox, Richard A. V., 2007, ‘The Norse Element in Scottish Place Names:
Syntax as a chronological marker’, The Journal of Scottish Name Studies 1,
Settlement in North Scotland: Place-Names and History’, Northern
Scotland 23, 1–76.
DIL: Dictionary of the Irish Language (based mainly on Old and Middle Irish
Dwelly: The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary, E. Dwelly 1901–11 (9th
Lovat/1757: ‘A plan of that part of the annexed estate of Lovat lying in the
parish of Kilmorack.’ by Peter May. Every farm and field named, from
Aigas in the west to Lettoch (north of Beauly) in the east. Original in the

The Journal of Scottish Name Studies 9, 2015, 63–82
Lovat Estate Office, Beauly; 19th-century lithograph copy in West Register House, Edinburgh, RHP6586.

McDonald, R. Andrew, 2003, *Challenges to the Canmore Kings, 1058 to 1266* (East Linton).

May/Glen Strathfarrar: Peter May’s Plan of Glen Strathfarrar, 1758. The original is in the Lovat Estate Office, Beauly. Photostats of most of this map are lodged in the Highland Council Archives, Inverness (courtesy of Prof. Alexander Mather, Department of Geography, University of Aberdeen). This plan is analysed in his article ‘Pre-1745 Land Use and Conservation in a Highland Glen: An Example from Glen Strathfarrar, North Inverness-shire’, *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 86 (1970), 159–69.

Moray Reg.: *Registrum Episcopatus Moraviensis* (Bannatyne Club, 1837).


NRS: National Records of Scotland, formerly National Archives of Scotland (NAS), formerly Scottish Record Office (SRO).


Sandnes, B., 2003, *Fra Starafjall til Starling Hill: Dannelse og utvikling av norrøne stednavn på Orknøyene*, published PhD, NTNU Trondheim, Norway. [‘From Starafjall to Starling Hill: formation and development of Norse place-names in Orkney’]


Walther, H., 1980, ‘Zur Problematik Typologie und Terminologie der sogenannten “Mischnamen” (Onymischen Hybride)’, in Andersson et al.,
eds, *Ortnamn och språkkontakt*, NORNA-rapporter 17 (Uppsala), 143–62.
*Wardlaw MS Fraser Chronicles*, by Rev. James Fraser, ed. W. MacKay (Scottish History Society, 1905).