

# Ó Maol Phádraig: the name, the people, and the clans. Part I.

Ian Fitzpatrick<sup>1</sup> ✉, and Dr Mike Fitzpatrick<sup>2\*</sup> ✉

<sup>1</sup> Genealogist, Chaffey's Locks, Ontario, Canada K0G 1E0

<sup>2</sup> Independent Scholar, Titirangi, Auckland, New Zealand 0604

\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

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## Abstract

Once upon a time, the Ó Maol Phádraig (O'Mulpatrick) was a notable clan; or, better – there were once notable clans of that name. Earlier, there were noteworthy individuals named Máel Pátraic, which is the earliest version of any name given to honour St Patrick. Among such notables were those whose given name came to transcend the individual – so, Máel Pátraic became attached to a patronym.

Our series of articles explores the name Máel Pátraic. In Part I, we discuss the origins of the name and consider the patterns apparent in early annalistic records. Connections are made to those regions of Éire where the name was commonly found. In Part II, we review authoritative Máel Pátraic genealogies, the dynasties whose members bore the name, and the emergence the Ó Maol Phádraig surname. In Part III, and we consider records that occur from the late medieval era until the nineteenth century. Finally, in Part IV, we link the living with those Ó Maol Phádraig gone before via the power of genetic genealogy.

Ó Maol Phádraig is a virtually extinct surname; today their descendants carry Fitzpatrick or other Pátraic-surname forms. Here, the name, the people, and the clans are revived.

## Names, styles, edits, and historical records

This article is written in the English language, but the people and places discussed are Irish. To acknowledge the primacy of Gaeilge (Gaelic) and to allow readers to be able to find locations on modern maps, place names are provided in modern Gaeilge using the most common spelling; for example, Ard Mhacha (Armagh), unless the place name is titular, for instance, the Abbot of Ardstraw.

The rendition of personal names and by-names of people referenced in this article requires consistency because there can be variability in historical records even for the same individual, with mixtures of Gaeilge and English forms being used and sometimes with spellings imaginatively conjured up via phonetics. The approach here is to use the most obvious and correctly spelt form of the personal name, be it Gaeilge or an English form. Surnames are much less problematic, and preference is for a standard spelling, e.g., as determined and published by authorities such as Woulfe (1923)<sup>1</sup> and Mac Lysaght (1985)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Woulfe, P. (1923). *Sloinnte Gaedheal Is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames*. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son.

<sup>2</sup> MacLysaght, E. (1985). *Irish Families: their names, arms and origins*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Quotations are italicised. This article is a living work, i.e., it can, and most likely will, be edited by the authors who will retain all versions. Every effort has been made to consult all available records related to the period relevant to this article.

## Introduction

Ó Maol Phádraig says Woulfe (1923), i.e., descendant of a ‘*servant of St Patrick*’ was ‘*once a common surname, especially in Cavan and Cork; and while the name has disappeared, the family was too numerous to have died out*’. Woulfe’s assessment provides the framework for the series, ‘*Ó Maol Phádraig: the name, the people, and the clans*’. When did the name arise; who were the Ó Maol Phádraig of historical note; who were the clans of Cabhán (County Cavan), and Corcaigh (County Cork); and, who and where are they today?

Woulfe also made specific mention of ‘*Conor O Molpatrick, chief of his name*’ in 1602; what of he and his descendants? And concerning the loss of their ancient name, if the Ó Maol Phádraig ‘*anglicised it to Fitzpatrick*’, as Woulfe asserts, for some reason by their own volition, did not die out, can they be found among Fitzpatricks today?

We demonstrate that the large-scale disappearance of Ó Maol Phádraig was later than 1602, and that is unlikely the death of the surname came by the hands of those so named. And we prove true that, as Woulfe stated, the Ó Maol Phádraig, were too numerous to have died out. Yes, their name was very largely anglicised to Fitzpatrick, but Ó Maol Phádraig descendants live and breathe today.

## The origins of Máel Pátraic

It is said that Pátraic was not found in Ireland as a distinct given name until the arrival of Anglo-Normans<sup>1</sup>; in reverence to the saint, mere Irish considered Pátraic (Patrick) too sacred to use directly<sup>3</sup>. The early forms appear limited to Máel Pátraic and Gilla Pátraic (i.e., servant of and follower of, respectively, Patrick), and ‘*when used by the Anglo-Normans it was rendered Pádraigín by the Irish*’<sup>1</sup>.

While Máel-type names occur in annalistic records from 611 AD, a Gilla-type name does not appear until 977 AD. Hence, it should not surprise that Annals record Máel Pátraic as a given name in 847 AD, some 136 years before Gilla Pátraic appears, in 983 AD<sup>4</sup>. Although the historicity of St Patrick is complicated by the fact there were ‘*two or possibly three Patricks*’ it is clear he was revered from the mid seventh century, notably among, first, the Oirghialla and, then, the Uí Néill via their alliances. By the ninth century ‘*Patrick truly became Ireland’s pre-eminent saint*’, hence Pátraic-type names, surely, would have been expected during that era. Pátraic-type names may also have undergone a revival in the Viking era when Patrician relics began to ‘*come into the fore*’<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Withycombe, E. (1978). *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Names*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Hennessy, W. (1887). *Annals of Ulster: otherwise Annals of Senat; a chronicle of Irish affairs*. Dublin: HMSO.

<sup>5</sup> Erskine, S. (2012). *The relic cult of St Patrick between the seventh and the late twelfth centuries in its European contexts [thesis]*, University of Glasgow (Scotland). School of Humanities: pp 226.

The use of Máel, meaning crop-headed or shorn<sup>6</sup>, followed by a proper name ‘received its chief development after the introduction of Christianity’ to Ireland; the general form being Máel-Dei<sup>7</sup>, i.e., it was followed by a Saint’s name, indicating tonsure. Máel-type names were common throughout the seventh and eighth centuries before declining from the late tenth century as Gilla-type names emerged<sup>8</sup>; yet, Gilla was not Norse in origin, as some have proposed<sup>9</sup>.

The rise of Gilla-type names was due to ‘a model change in Irish nomenclature’<sup>6</sup>, and there was a pattern of different geographic distribution of Máel Pátraic versus Gilla Pátraic. A simple survey to estimate the relative frequency of the forms used in early times can be undertaken via annalistic records, or genealogical works, and Gilla Pátraic is approximately three times more common than Máel Pátraic. Also notable is that while Giolla Phádraig is found among many clans, such as those summarised by Ó Muraíle<sup>10</sup>, across all of Éire – a pattern matching the modern distribution of Fitzpatrick<sup>11</sup> – Máel Pátraic is found among few, and mostly among clans of the northern half of Éire; this is explored fully in Part II.

### Annalistic use of Máel Pátraic

The basis for understanding the first uses of the name Máel Pátraic comes from various Annals of Ireland, which only record it as a given-name – never as a surname. Almost always the bearer of the name is either a religious figure or closely related to one, the first record being from 847 AD; ‘Cellach son of Máel Pátraic, prior of Fera-Rois south of the river, died’<sup>3</sup>. In the Annals of the Four Masters Donovan annotates, ‘the Fera Rois were seated along the Boyne and at Carrickmacross, in the county of Monaghan’<sup>12</sup>. Yet, Mac Iomhair’s account of the history of Fir Rois, also known as Crích Rois, lays out a greater expanse of lands – most of central Lú (Louth) and extending into southern Muineachán (Monaghan) and northern Mhí (Meath); Cellach’s monastery, he concludes, was in Cluain Caoin (Clonkeen), which lies south of the River Glyde<sup>13</sup>.

This example makes it evident that, when synthesising occurrences of Máel Pátraic in the Annals and Genealogies, it is helpful to correlate the name use with population groups and geographic locations; and, as will be seen, a pattern emerges. Table 1 presents annalistic references to Máel Pátraic as a given name in isolation, which occur until 1096 AD, and Table 2 presents annalistic references to Máel Pátraic as a given name in conjunction with a surname, which do not appear until 1016 AD. The tables are annotated and run across several pages. Note, the surname Ó Máol Pádraic does not occur in Annalistic records.

<sup>6</sup> Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language. <https://dil.ie>: accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Marstander, C. (1918). Altirisch Gillae. Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie, 12, 309-322.

<sup>8</sup> Ó Máille, T. (1910). The language of the Annals of Ulster. Manchester: University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Gilla-words ‘appeared in Irish literature as early as the first half of the ninth century’ being derived from gildae, with probable old French or Latin roots meaning soldier, hireling (armed with a lance), recruit, etc. (Marstander, 1918). Also, Pokorny, J., (1918). Vermischtes. Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie, 12, 298-308.

<sup>10</sup> Mac Fhirbhisigh, D. and Ó Muraíle, N. (2003). Leabhar mór na ngenealach. Dublin: De Burca.

<sup>11</sup> Fitzpatrick, E. and Fitzpatrick, M. (2020). When Everything Changes: Using Critical Family History to Deconstruct Keesing and Fitzpatrick Surnames. Genealogy, 4, 25. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4010025>.

<sup>12</sup> O’Donovan, J. (1856). Annals of the Four Masters: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616. Dublin, Hodges, Smith, and Co.

<sup>13</sup> Mac Iomhair, D. (1964). The History of Fir Rois. County Louth Archaeological Society Journal, 15, 321-348.

**Table 1: Annalistic references to Máel Pátraic<sup>14</sup>**

Reference <sup>15</sup>	Date, AD <sup>16</sup>	Location
Cellach son of Máel Pátraic, prior of Fera-Rois south of the river, died. <sup>AU</sup>	847	Cluain Caoin, Lú <sup>17</sup>
Máel Pátraic, son of Finnchu, bishop, scribe, and anchorite, and intended abbot of Ard Mhacha, died. <sup>AFM,18</sup>	861 (863)	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha <sup>19</sup>
Máel Pátraic son of Cellach, abbot of Mainistir Bhuithe, died suddenly. <sup>AU</sup>	878	Mainistir Bhuithe, Lú <sup>20</sup>
Máel Pátraic son of Mael Curarda, King of the Airghialla, was killed by his associates. <sup>AU,21</sup>	885	Oiriolla <sup>22</sup>
Máel Pátraic, Abbot of Cluain Mhic Nóis, of the race of the Ui-Maine ... died. <sup>AFM,23</sup>	883 (886)	Cluain Mhic Nóis, Uíbh Fhallí <sup>24</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Máel Pátraic is used as a standard spelling throughout.

<sup>15</sup> AU, Annals of Ulster; AFM, Annals of the Four Masters; AI, Annals of Inisfallen (translated by Seán Mac Airt (2008). CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College Cork, College Road, Cork, Ireland. <http://www.ucc.ie/celt>, accessed 1 February 2023). Only the most informative among parallel records is cited.

<sup>16</sup> ‘*The chronology of the Annals of Ulster is accurate from AD 773 to AD 1023*’; dates for entries from other Annals are shown corrected, if required, in parentheses using Annals of Ulster dates (McCarthy, D., 1998. *The Chronology of the Irish Annals*. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature , 98C, 203-255).

<sup>17</sup> Clonkeen, County Louth.

<sup>18</sup> Máel Pátraic, son of Finnchu, is the first of several recorded notables of the church of Ard Mhacha who bore a name associated with the founder, St Patrick. The origin of the church is said to be in 444 AD, and was episcopal; yet, from 758 AD to 1136 AD the heir of St Patrick (Comarbai Pátraic) ‘*was always an abbot and the office of bishop ... was subordinate*’ (Moody T., Martin F., & Byrne F., 1989. *A New History of Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press).

<sup>19</sup> Armagh, County Armagh.

<sup>20</sup> Monasterboice (i.e., the Monastery of St Buíte), County Louth.

<sup>21</sup> Mael Curarda (d. 853) was King of Uí Mheic Uais (i.e., among the descendants of Colla Uais, a mythical High King of Ireland; Byrne F., 1973. *Irish kings and high-kings*. London: BT Batsford Ltd). Two other notable sons of Mael Curarda were Mael Ruanaidh (d.871), King of Uí Mheic Uais, and Oenghus (d.881), Abbot of Ard Sratha, Tír Eoghain (Ardstraw, County Tyrone)<sup>U</sup>. Walsh posited the pedigree of the Uí Fhiachrach of Ard Sratha ‘*belonged to the ruling dynasty*’ of Uí Mheic Uais of Oiriolla during the ninth century (Walsh, P., 1923. *Uí Maccu Uais*. Ériu, 9, 55-60). The slaying of Máel Pátraic ‘*by his associates*’ may refer to the Cenél nEógain, whose eastward expansion led them to hold the Airghialla as vassals from ca. 827 AD (Duffy S., 2005. *Medieval Ireland an Encyclopaedia*. New York and London: Routledge).

<sup>22</sup> Oriel, a medieval kingdom approximating the area of the modern dioceses of Armagh and Clogher.

<sup>23</sup> Graves’ (1855) accounts of ancient monuments at Cluain Mhic Nóis includes ‘*a Latin cross, the arms combined by a circle at centre, the extremities slightly widened*’ engraved with the words ‘*A prayer for Mael Patric*’; this, states Graves, refers to the abbot in the Annals who died in 883 AD; he was of Ui-Maine, which at the time the Annals entry was written referred to Connacht (Graves, J., 1855. *A list of the ancient Irish monumental stones at present existing at Clonmacnoise*. Proceedings and Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society , 3, 293-303).

<sup>24</sup> Clonmacnoise, County Offaly.

**Table 1: continued**

Reference	Date, AD	Location
Máel Pátraic, scribe and excellent scholar, superior of Treoid and steward of the community of Patrick for the district south of the mountain, rested. <sup>U,25</sup>	888	Treoid, Mhi <sup>26</sup>
Máel Pátraic son of Niall, superior of Shláine, fell asleep happily. <sup>U,27</sup>	890	Shláine, Mhi <sup>28</sup>
Máel Pátraic, son of Flathrai, lord of Ráth Tamhnaighe died. <sup>AFM,29</sup>	909 (911)	Ráth Domhnaigh, Laois <sup>30</sup>
Aed son of Máel Pátraic, king of Uí Fhiachrach, was killed by Niall, son of Aed. <sup>U,31</sup>	910	Ard Sratha, Tír Eoghain
The plundering of Leithghlin by the foreigners, where Máel Pátraic, a priest and anchorite, and Mongan, anchorite, and many others along with them, were slain. <sup>AFM,32</sup>	916 (917)	Leithghlin, Ceatherlach <sup>33</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *'On the foundation of the monastery St Patrick placed an abbot in charge'* (Kelly, M., 1941. Three Monasteries of Drogheda. Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society, 10, 25- 41).

<sup>26</sup> Trevet, County Meath.

<sup>27</sup> The Abbey at Shláine is said to be founded by Bishop Erc at the behest of St Patrick (Westropp, T., 1901. Slane in Bregia, County Meath: its friary and hermitage. The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 31, 404-430). In the ninth and tenth centuries, two bishops named Máel Pátraic had their seat at Shláine, and another was the son of a bishop. Hence, Westropp suggests there were *'genealogical descents'* among the bishops, including those named Máel Pátraic: from Bishop Niallan (d.867) was Máel Pátraic, son of Niall (d.886), and there followed Colman son of Máel Pátraic (d.948). Colman was *'slain by the foreigners'* (O'Donovan, 1856), during an era when Shláine was *'unfortunate enough'* to attract the attention of the Danes of Átha Cliath (Dublin) (Westropp, 1901): *'the belfry of Slaine was burned by the foreigners, with its full of relics and distinguished persons, together with Caieineachair, Lector of Slaine, and the crozier of the patron saint, and a bell [which was] the best of bells'* (O'Donovan, 1856).

<sup>28</sup> Slane, County Meath.

<sup>29</sup> One of three Lords of Rathdowney referred to in the Annals of the Four Masters, and it is possible to genealogically connect three generations, i.e., Máel Pátraic (d.909), son of Flaithri (d.874), son of Máel Dúin. A later entry in the Annals of the Four Masters records the death of *'Gillamolua Ua Bruaideadha'* Lord of Rathdowney, in 1069, providing a possible link between Máel Pátraic and clann Ua Bruaideadha, i.e., O'Brody, or similar (O'Donovan, J., 1856; MacLysaght, E., 1985).

<sup>30</sup> Rathdowney, County Laois.

<sup>31</sup> That is, Aed, son of Máel Pátraic son of Mael Curarda, King of the Airghialla (Jaski, B., 1995. The traditional rule of succession in early Ireland, [thesis], Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Department of History: pp 326; pp 275). This line of Uí Fhiachrach were seated at Ard Sratha, Tír Eoghain. Aed was killed by Niall Glúndub, High King of Ireland (916-919 AD) (Byrne, F., 1973).

<sup>32</sup> In 902 AD the Danes were expelled from Átha Cliath, where *'they left a great number of their ships, and escaped half-dead, after having been wounded and broken'*. The Danes returned with their fleets in 917 AD, led by Sitric and Ragnall, grandsons of Ímar; at that time the Danes also plundered Cill Dara (Kildare) (O'Donovan, J., 1856; Hennessy W., 1887).

<sup>33</sup> Leighlin, County Carlow.

Table 1: continued

Reference	Date, AD	Location
Máel Pátraic, son of Morann, Abbot of Droim Chliabh and Ard Sratha ... died. <sup>AFM, 34</sup>	921 (923)	Droim Chliabh, Sligeach and Ard Sratha, Tír Eoghain <sup>35</sup>
Máel Pátraic, son of Celen, priest and Vice-Abbot of Beannchar ... died. <sup>AFM,36</sup>	927 (929)	Beannchar, Dún <sup>37</sup>
The two successors of Patrick, namely, Joseph, scribe, bishop, and anchorite, the wisest of the Irish; and Máel Pátraic, son of Máel Tuile, bishop and wise man, died. The latter was five months in the abbacy when he died. <sup>AFM</sup>	936	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha
Repose of Aed son of Máel Pátraic, abbot of Achadh Deo. <sup>AI,38</sup>	939	Achadh Deo, Ciarrí <sup>39</sup>
Cairpre son of Máel Pátraic, King of Uí, Liatháin, and Finn son of Mután, King of Corcu Loígde, were killed by the men of Mag Féine. <sup>AU,40</sup>	944	Barraigh Mhóra, Corcaigh
Colmán son of Máel Pátraic, superior of Shláine, was taken prisoner by foreigners, and died on their hands. <sup>AU,18</sup>	948	Shláine, Mhi
Máel Pátraic son of Coscán, lector of Ard Mhacha ... died. <sup>AU</sup>	953	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha
Máel I Pátraic son of Cú Bretan, superior of Shláine ... died. <sup>AU</sup>	956	Shláine, Mhi

<sup>34</sup> The Monastery at Droim Chliabh was founded by St Columba ca. 575 AD; Máel Pátraic is the earliest abbot named in Annals. O'Donovan notes with curiosity that although Droim Chliabh was part of the territory of the descendants of Cairbre, son of Niall Naoighiallach (i.e., of the Nine Hostages) it was, in the early tenth century, '*considered to be a part of Ulster, and a tributary to the King of Aileach*', i.e., of the Cenél nEógain. (O'Donovan J., 1847. *The Book of Rights*. Dublin: The University Press). Hence, a connection between Droim Chliabh and Ard Sratha might be unexpected, but not inexplicable. Silke notes, '*Máel Pátraic was probably a lay comarb*'. (Silke, J. 1998. *Airgialla Churches and Churches in Donegal*. Clogher Record, 13, 85-89).

<sup>35</sup> Drumcliff, County Sligo, and Ardstraw, County Tyrone.

<sup>36</sup> Beannchar Abbey was founded by St Comgall ca. 558 AD. Also in 929 AD, the Annals of Ulster record '*Ceile, comarb of Comgall, and Apostolic doctor of all Ireland, went into pilgrimage*' (Hennessy W., 1887), while the Annals of the Four Masters has, '*Celedabhail, son of Scannall, successor of Comhgall of Beannchair, throughout Ireland, bishop, scribe, preacher, and learned doctor, died on his pilgrimage at Rome, on 14 September, and in the fifty-ninth year of his age*' (O'Donovan J., 1856).

<sup>37</sup> Bangor, County Down.

<sup>38</sup> This is the first record of Achadh Deo in annalistic records, of which pre-twelfth century records are vague and limited to the Annals of Inisfallen.

<sup>39</sup> Aghadoe, County Kerry.

<sup>40</sup> Uí-Liatháin was '*the name of a territory nearly co-extensive with the present Barony of Barrymore, Co. Cork, anciently occupied by the descendants of... the Uí Fídhgeinte*'. Corcu Loígde was '*a territory anciently comprising the south-west part of Co. Cork, namely, the present baronies of Carbery, Bear, and Bantry*'. And the Mag Féin were '*a tribe anciently inhabiting the district now forming the barony of Fermoy, Co. Cork*' (Hennessy, W., 1887).

**Table 1: continued**

Reference	Date, AD	Location
Máel Pátraic, Abbot of Ros Cré ... died. <sup>AFM,41</sup>	986 (987)	Ros Cré, Tiobraid Árann <sup>42</sup>
Loingseach, son of Máel Pátraic, lector of Cluain Mhic Nóis ... died. <sup>AFM</sup>	988	Cluain Mhic Nóis, Uíbh Fhallí
Conn, son of Máel Pátraic, airchinnech of Mungairit and Disert-Oenghusa, died. <sup>AFM,43</sup>	1034	Mungairit, Luimneach
A great mortality of the men of Ireland, so that it is impossible to enumerate all the people that died. From that pestilence died ... Máel Pátraic, bishop of Ard Mhacha. <sup>AI,44</sup>	1096	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha

**Table 2: Annalistic references to Máel Pátraic in conjunction with a surname**

Reference	Date, AD	Location
Máel Pátraic Ua Sluaghadhaigh, the [most] learned of Ireland, died. <sup>AFM,45</sup>	1015 (1016)	Lann Abhaigh, Aontroim and Beannchar, Dún
Máel Pátraic Ua Ailecain, lector of Dun-Leathghlaise ... [died]. <sup>AFM,46</sup>	1026	Dún Pádraig, Dún <sup>47</sup>
Máel Pátraic Ua Baoghalán, priest of Cluain Mhic Nóis ...died. <sup>AFM,48</sup>	1028	Cluain Mhic Nóis, Uíbh Fhallí

<sup>41</sup> Where 'St Cronan, the son of Odhran, erected a monastery in the latter end of the sixth century' (O'Donovan, 1856).

<sup>42</sup> Roscrea, County Tipperary.

<sup>43</sup> Mungairit, is in Luimneach (i.e., Mungret, County Limerick) yet O'Donovan (1856) stated Disert-Oenghusa was Díseart Aonghais (Dysartenos) in Laois. The case for Disert-Oenghusa referring to 'ecclesie de Diserengussa, Limiricensis', i.e., Díseart (Dysert) in Lumineach, as found in the Annates of Limerick (Moloney, M. & Costello, A., 1943. *Obligaciones pro Annatis Diocesis Limiricensis 1421-1519*. Archivium Hibernicum, 10, 104-162), is stronger.

<sup>44</sup> 'A plague unrelated to a famine fever' (MacArthur, W., 1949. *The Identification of Some Pestilences Recorded in the Irish Annals*. Irish Historical Studies, 6, 169-188).

<sup>45</sup> Erenach of Lann Abhaigh (Glenavy) in Aontroim (County Antrim), and Deputy Abbot of Beannchar (Bangor); his was from Cronn Badruí of the Dál Araidhe (King of Ulster, 392-414 AD). Mac Fhirbhisigh records four other Abbots (or deputies) of Beannchar who came out of the Uí Shuanaigh (O'Slowey) – Maol Tuile, the son of Donnghal; Airmheadhach, the son of Conall; Fear Dhá Chríoch, the son of Conall; and, Congus the son of Adhamhnán (Mac Fhirbhisigh, D. and Ó Muraíle, 2003; Woulfe, 1923).

<sup>46</sup> Ua Ailecain, i.e., O'Halligan. (Harrison, H., 1918. *Surnames of the United Kingdom*. London: The Morland Press Ltd).

<sup>47</sup> Dun-Leathghlaise being the early medieval name for Downpatrick, County Down (Mac Cionnaith, S., 1938. *Dioghluim Dána*. Dublin: Office of the Taoiseach).

<sup>48</sup> An Abbot of Clonmacnoise, named Ua Beguláin, was deposed in 1002 AD (Hennessey, W. 1866. *Chronicum Scotorum: a chronicle of Irish affairs*. London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer). Kehnel considers it possible that Máel Pátraic Ua Baoghalán, 'after his deposition turned to life as a priest' (Kehnel, A., 1997. *Clonmacnois – the church and lands of St Ciarán. Münster: Lit*). 'The Uí Beguláin (also Uí Bhaoithín, i.e., Boyton or Boyne; Woulfe, 1923) were a branch of the Uí Briúin Bréifne' (Duigan, M., 1934. *The Uí Briúin Bréifni Genealogies*. The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 4, 90-137).

Table 2: continued

Reference	Date, AD	Location
Mael Pátraic Ua Bileóice, chief lector of Ard Mhacha, and one eminent for piety and chastity, rested at a ripe old age. <sup>AU,49</sup>	1046	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha
Mael Pátraic Ua Drugain assumed the lectorship of Ard Macha on the feast of Ailbe and of Mo-Laisi of Daimhinis. <sup>AU,50</sup>	1107	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha
Mael Pátraic Ua Drugain, paragon of the wisdom of the Irish, chief lector of Ard Mhacha, head of council of the west of Europe in piety and devotion, died on his pilgrimage at the Island of Loch Cre. <sup>AFM,51</sup>	1138	Ard Mhacha, Ard Mhacha
Máel Pátraic Ua Callada, successor of Cronáin of Ros Cré. <sup>AFM,52</sup>	1168	Ros Cré, Tiobraid Árann
O'Banain, Bishop of Condeiri and Dál-Araidhe, a venerable man, full of holiness and of meekness and of purity of heart, died full piously in in Hy-Columbkille, after choice old age. <sup>AU,53</sup>	1174	Condeiri and Dál Araidhe <sup>54</sup>
Máel Pátraic O' Cobthaigh died. <sup>AU,55</sup>	1193	Not stated
Máel Pátraic Mac Kele, Erenagh of Cill Ala, was slain. <sup>AFM,56</sup>	1257	Cill Ala, Maigh Eo
Máel Pátraic Ua Scannall <sup>57</sup>	1253-1270	Dún na nGall
A battle was fought between Donnchad, son of Domnall Ó Briain ... and Lochlainn Ó hAichir ... and Muirchertach, son of (Mael) Pátraic Ó hAichir, [was] captured. <sup>AU,58</sup>	1312	Tuamhain

<sup>49</sup> Ua Bileóice apparently comes from *'leaf of a book'* (Ó Murchadha, D. 1999. The Formation of Gaelic Surnames in Ireland: Choosing the Eponyms. *Nomina* 22, 25-44).

<sup>50</sup> That is, St Ailbe of Emly and St Molaise of Devenish. The Ua Drugain (Drugain) were of the Cenél nEógain (Woulfe, 1923; Pender, S. 1951. The O' Clery Book of Genealogies: 23 D 17 (RIA). *Analecta Hibernica*, 1951, 18, 1-198).

<sup>51</sup> Loch Cre, *'now Moinnahinnse, near Roscrea, in the county of Tipperary'* (O'Donovan, 1856).

<sup>52</sup> Ua Callada, i.e., Kelledy; *'extremely rare'* (Woulfe, 1923).

<sup>53</sup> O'Banain, i.e., O'Bannan (Woulfe, 1923). Hy-Columbkille, i.e., Iona Abbey (O'Donovan, 1856).

<sup>54</sup> Condeiri and Dál-Araidhe, i.e., the modern Connor and Down (O'Donovan, 1856).

<sup>55</sup> O' Cobthaigh, i.e., O'Coffey (Goldman, L. 2009. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press).

<sup>56</sup> Mac Kele, i.e., Mac Hale (O'Donovan 1856). Woulfe (1923) refers to them as a Mayo family who were erenaghs of Cill Ala, Maigh Eo (Killala, Mayo) and coarbs of St Caillin in Fionach, Liatroim (Fenagh, Leitrim).

<sup>57</sup> Numerous annalistic entries note Máel Pátraic Ua Scannall (i.e., O'Scannell; Woulfe, 1923) and MacInerney summarised his career. He was of the Ua Scannall of Sligeach who descended from Cairbre, a son of Niall. It is possible he was born in Dún na nGall (Donegal) or an adjacent county since he became Bishop of Raphoe in 1252 before elevation to Archbishop of Armagh in 1253 (MacInerney, M., 1916. *A history of the Irish Dominicans*). Máel Pátraic Ua Scannall is discussed in depth later in this series.

<sup>58</sup> Ó hAichir, i.e., O'Hare, a branch of the Uí Fidhgeinte of Tuamhain, i.e., Thomond (Woulfe, 1923).



## Other early occurrences of Máel Pátraic

A remarkable entry from the medieval Icelandic work Landnámabók (The Book of Settlements) reads:

*Onund Bild, took possession of the area above Thver River and made his home at Bildsfell. He had a freedman called Steinrod, son of Melpatrek of Ireland, who got possession of all the Vatnslands and made his home at Steinrodarstead. Steinrod was a remarkably fine man. His son was Thormod, father of Kar, father of Thormod, father of Brand, father of Thorir who married Helga Jon's-daughter.*<sup>59, p.145</sup>

The arrival of Steinrod, who was once a slave, in Iceland can be dated some time from 860 to 930 AD. From ca. 795 AD a small population of Irish anchorites had occupied Iceland, driven there by Vikings. But ca. 870 AD Scandinavian settlers began to establish permanent bases, and a 'steady stream' of immigrants arrived between 890 and 910 AD; the 'Age of Settlements' was over by 930 AD.<sup>58</sup> Although nothing else is known about Máel Pátraic, father of Steinrod, it is evident that he most likely obtained his name in the ninth century.

Another occurrence of Máel Pátraic, albeit indirect, is found in a manuscript known as St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 904, which is dated to 850-851 AD. It is considered mostly to have been written in Éire and is well known because 'it contains the magnum opus of the Latin grammarian Priscian of Caesarea'. In addition, the manuscript is heavily glossed, i.e., it contains extensive commentary in the form of interlineal and marginal notes. The text was written mostly by two scribes and the 'first signs himself as Calvus Patricii (a Latinisation of the Irish name Máel Pátraic)'.<sup>60</sup> Calvus, meaning 'bald' in Latin, is a literal translation of Máel and its use is observed in other manuscripts, e.g., The Book of Armagh.<sup>61</sup>

## Discussion

A review of the annalistic occurrences of Máel Pátraic demonstrate clear patterns; although none should be considered unequivocal. Many occurrences are associated with a religious figure, and notably an individual connected with a monastic site obviously associated with St Patrick. The geography of Máel Pátraic occurrences in the Annals is, on a pro rata basis, dominated by Ard Mhacha. And an imaginary latitudinal drawn through just south of Cluain Mhic Nóis (Clonmacnoise) puts 76% of Máel Pátraic in the north of Éire (refer Figure 1). Such, an albeit crude, understanding will assist in the interpretation of genealogies, and with appearances of the surname in late medieval documents, such as the Fiants of Ireland.

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<sup>59</sup> Pálsson, H. and Edwards, P. (1976). The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

<sup>60</sup> Moran, P. (2022). Latin Grammar Crossing Multilingual Zones: St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 904. Open Access, published by De Gruyter: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110776492-003>.

<sup>61</sup> Duffy, S. (2005).

**Figure 1: Modern geographic locations, sometimes approximate, associated with the occurrence of Máel Pátraic in the Annals.**

