THE VIRGIN ST DUINSECH AND HER THREE ULSTER CHURCHES NEAR STRANGFORD LOUGH, COUNTY DOWN

In a previous number of this journal Pádraig Ó Riain re-emphasised the important role which a study of Irish place-names will have to play in assisting to elicit further information on the various personages mentioned in Early Irish hagiographical material in what he aptly termed 'The Age of Saints (c. AD 500–650)'.[1] Ó Riain used the evidence of the existence of the modern Co. Mayo townland of Kildaree[2] to establish a link between this place and a female saint by the name of *Dar Í*. The personal name *Dar Í* 'Daughter of (the) Yew' had proven problematic for some modern editors but the views of Ó Riain, and Pokorny, can be clearly accepted[3] as can Ó Riain's proposed *Cill Dar Í* 'Dar Í's Church' for the Co. Mayo place-name Kildaree.[4]

Elsewhere, Ó Riain also pointed out the hazards attached to accepting as bona fide all entries and personages in the extensive corpus of Early Irish material as there was a danger of bogus saints appearing simply due to the fact that as a result of 'scribal or editorial misunderstanding of entries, several spurious natales were introduced over a period of centuries into the Irish calendar of saints'.[5] Bearing in mind, then, the desire for any evidence of the topographical kind which can help locate a figure from the Early Irish ecclesiastical record to modern parish, townland or minor name(s), the following is offered by way of a small contribution to the most formidable and extensive task which lies ahead if the much-needed review of the state of the art in relation to reference dictionaries for Irish saints and place-names is ever to be completed.[6]

THE VIRGIN *Duinsech* AND HER THREE ULSTER CHURCHES

In the Dioecesium Dunensis, Conerensis et Dromorensis portion of the Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV, levied in 1306-7 supposedly to help fund Crusades,[7] reference is made to *Ecclesia de Kilwyinchi*, which Reeves identified as 'Now Killinchy (*cill inse* 'church of the island') a parish church'.[8] While Reeves was

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[1] P. Ó Riain, 'A misunderstood annal: a hitherto unnoticed *cáin' Celtica* 21 (1990) 561-6, p. 562.

[2] Parish of Crossmolina, barony of Tirawley, Co. Mayo, Burke, W. M. *Census of Ireland, 1871: Townland Index. . .* (Dublin 1877) 434.

[3] On problems of the female personal name *Dar Í* in editions of MSS by modern editors, and for a suggestion 'daughter of (the) yew', see Ó Riain 'A misunderstood annal', pp. 562-4. See also J. Pokorny, 'Das nicht-indogermanische Substrat im Irischen', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 16 (1927) 370-1, '*Dar* "Tochter". . . . *Dar Í* (zu *éo* "*Eibe*")'.

[4] The place-name Kildaree was previously assumed to have been representative of an Irish form *Cill dá Rígh*, for which see below.

[5] P. Ó Riain, 'Some bogus Irish saints', *Ainm* 3 (1988) 1–8, p. 1.

[6] See accounts on proposed 'Dictionary of Irish place and tribal names in Celtic Cultures Newsletter' 4 (Galway, November 1986) 46–7, and on the proposed 'Historical dictionary of Irish place and tribal names' in *Ainm* 1 (1986) 94.

[7] As W. Reeves points out, *Ecclesiastical antiquities of Down, Connor and Dromore. . .* (Dublin 1847) p xi, 'The term Crusade had by this time lost its original import and the *subventio Terrae Sanctae* was by now nothing more than a state fiction for securing the frequent recurrence of a tax which was destined for home, or, at most, European purposes'.

[8] Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities*, 10, note d.

correct in his identification of *Kilwyinchi* as the modern Co. Down parish of *Killinchy*,[9] his suggestion that the name *Kilwyinchi* went back to an original Irish *Cill Inse* was probably based on a suggestion from his friend John O'Donovan,[10] for in the Ordnance Survey Name Book for this parish (p. 2)[11] O'Donovan had proposed *Cill Inse* 'Church of the Island', where the testimony of a local Co. Down native Irish speaker Luke Killen was cited. Reeves's suggestion of *Cill Inse* as the Irish original for Killinchy was followed by other authors, such as Alexander Knox,[12] P. W. Joyce,[13] Seosamh Laoide,[14] and Monsignor James O'Laverty in his five-volume history of the diocese of Down and Connor, where he proposed: 'Killinchy (the Church of the Island)', adding that the place 'seems to have received its name at a period when the surrounding lands were covered with water'.[15] In addition to having been influenced by his reading of Bishop Reeves's *Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, Msgr O'Laverty also appears to have been influenced by the form *Cill Inse* as it appeared in the *Martyrology of Donegal*: 'The festival of St. Ailltin, bishop and virgin of Kill-innsi; and of St. Caomh, virgin of Kill-innsi, was celebrated on the 1st of November'.[16]

This identification of Killinchy (Co. Down) with *Cill Inse* of the martyrologies was further accepted by E. Hogan,[17] who provided fuller references to *Cell Inse*, and stated 'prob[ably] Killinchy, townland and parish in barony Dufferin, Down', although he did also allow for the possibility 'perhaps Killinch, townland near Carrig-on-Suir'.[18] Whatever about modern Killinch in Co. Tipperary – or the other *cell insi* listed in Hogan (p. 195) and identifed by him with *Inis Sgre-obhuinn*, modern Iniscrone Co. Sligo – I hope to demonstrate that we can safely rule out the modern townland and parish of Killinchy in Co. Down as being a candidate for the *Cell Inse* mentioned in the Martyrology of Donegal. One of the

[9] *Kilwyinchi* occurs in the taxation roll between the church of *Rencady* (= modern townland of Ringhaddy, in Killinchy parish) and *Nedrum* (= nearby Nendrum > OIr. (*N*)*Óendruimm*), or modern Mahee Island, named from 6th-century bishop Mo Choe, for which cf.: *Quies Mo-Choe Noendromma* 'Repose of Mo-Chóe of Naendruim' in S. Mac Airt (ed.), *Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin 1951) s.a. 498.

[10] See acknowledgements made by Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities* p. xxiv, 'to John O'Donovan, Esq., for the generous bestowal of much valuable time and thought'.

[11] These name books are currently housed in The Ordnance Survey, Phoenix Park Dublin, but I have based my readings on the microfilm copy.

[12] A. Knox, *A history of the County of Down. . .* (Dublin 1875) 541.

[13] P. W. Joyce, *The origin and history of Irish names of places* vol. 3 (Dublin 1913) 415.

[14] S. Laoide, *Post-sheanchas. . . cuid I: Sacsbhéarla-Gaedhilge* (Connradh na Gaedhilge: Baile Átha Cliath 1905) 82. Cf. now, however, a change of current reconstructed official form *Cill Dhuinsí* cited below.

[15] J. O'Laverty, *An historical account of the diocese of Down and Connor* (Belfast 1878) vol. i, 345-6.

[16] O'Laverty, *An historical account of the diocese of Down and Connor* i, p. 27 Parish of Saintfield. For primary references, see J. H. Todd (ed.), transl. J. O'Donovan and W. Reeves, *The martyrology of Donegal: A calendar of the saints of Ireland* (Dublin 1864): *Ailtin, epscop, acus an ógh, ó Chill insi* 'Ailtin, Bishop and Virgin, of Cill-insi' Nov. 1, pp. 290-1; and *Caomhócc, ó Chill insi* 'Caemhóg, of Cill-insi' Nov. 1, pp. 292-3.

[17] E. Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum. . .* (Dublin 1910) pp. 195-6 (s.v. *c. insi* 3).

[18] *Census of Ireland 1871 Townland index* 446 has a townland Killinch, parish of Templemichael, barony of Slievardagh, Co. Tipperary.

main reasons for dismissing *Cell Inse*, or even *Cell Findsiche*,[19] as an original Irish form for Co. Down Killinchy is that it seems evident that the Co. Down name can be successfully linked to Saint Duinsech. In connecting Killinchy with St. Duinsech, we owe a great debt to Reeves and O'Donovan, for it was the former (with the latter's help) who pointed out in print the relationship between this saint and modern Co. Down, even though both of them inadvertently missed a major part of the connection. Reeves cited the Martyrology of Donegal for August 5: '*Duinseach ogh for Loch Cuan*[20] *i nUltoibh* "Dunsheach, a virgin, at Loch Cuan in Ultonia"',[21] and proceeded to connect it with Dunsy Island.[22] This, of course, is an accurate connection but the subsequent identification by Reeves (*Ecclesiastical antiquities*) of *Kilduncy* from the register of Primate John Swayne, s.a. 1427, as referring to Dunsy Island may not be correct, although it has been accepted as such by a subsequent editor of this text.[23] In actual fact a citation of the full text of the martyrologies not merely reveals a much more plausible identification, for the *Kilduncy* mentioned in Swayne's Register for 1427, but also provides a fuller insight into the geographical extent of the cult of St Duinseach in this area. Thus, for instance, in the notes to *Félire Óengusso* we read:

> *Dunsech uirgo o Cill Dunsige i n-Ultaib: – atat dono tri cella aice i n-Ultaib. . .*
> 'Dunsech a virgin of Cell Dunsige in Ulster – now she has three churches in Ulster. . .'[24]

Given that these three churches were referred to in the notes of the martyrologies, it is perhaps unfortunate that the form spelt as *Kilwyinchi* should have occurred in the Taxation of 1306, rather than a form of the name resembling *Kylduncy*, as spelt in Sweteman's Register for AD 1427. Had the latter form appeared, Reeves might have arrived at a different conclusion from his suggested *Cill Inse*

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[19] Hogan, *Onomasticon* 192, lists a *Cell Fhindsiche i nDáil Araide*, which he, yet again, identifies as Killinchy in Co. Down – making what seems like a somewhat tentative link between *Cell Fhindsiche* and *Cell Duinsige*.

[20] O'Donovan's first-hand and expert knowledge of the topography of Ireland, ancient and modern, made his identification of *Loch Cuan* as modern Strangford Lough a skilful formality. W. Reeves, *Ulster Journal of Archaelogy* [1st ser.] 2 (1854) 53, n. i, commenting on the displacement of Early Irish *Loch Cuan* (and later anglicised Lough Cone, and the like) by Strangford Lough, states that 'In the ninth and tenth centuries it was a Danish station, and with them originated the name *Strang-fjord* [Norse *Strangfjordr*], which was afterwards adopted by the English'. It may be seen, from A. J. Hughes and R. J. Hannan, *The place-names of Co. Down, volume 2: The Ards* (Belfast 1992) 5-7, that the name of the narrow strait, or 'strong fjord', (from which the town of Strangford also gets its name) did not apply to the wider expanse of the inner lake, or *Loch Cuan*, until roughly the eighteenth century.

[21] Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities*, 186. The citation of this reference by Reeves was probably on information supplied by O'Donovan, as the latter remarked, when dealing with Dunsy Island (in the *Ordnance Survey Name Books, Co. Down*, parish of Killinchy p. 41): '*Oileán Dúinsighe* St Dunsey's island. See Irish Calendar 5th August'.

[22] A small island on Strangford Lough, situated in the parish of Killinchy, barony of Dufferin, Co. Down.

[23] D. A. Chart (ed.), *Register of Primate John Swayne, Archbishop of Armagh 1418-39* (Belfast 1935) 61, commenting on 'Gilbert McGean, rect. of Kylduncy', identifies *Kylduncy* as 'Dunsy Island, Strangford Lough'.

[24] W. Stokes (ed.), *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London 1905) 258, notes Dec. 11, lines 11-2. Cf. further similar renderings in O'Donovan and Reeves, *Martyrology of Donegal* p. 332, and from W. Stokes, *Martyrology of Gorman*, p. 236.

for modern Killinchy and – but perhaps more importantly – the same applies to Reeves's source, O'Donovan, for the latter while examining the Ordnance Survey Name Books for this parish, was doubtless attracted to his conclusion of *Cill Inse* by the suggestion of native Irish speaker Luke Killen, not to mention the nine written spellings of the name as Killinchy (dating from mainly early nineteenth-century sources and presented for O'Donovan's perusal in the OS Name Book).[25]

The assimilation of the *D-* in Duinsech to *L-* (a change which, on initial glances, is most apparently seen in this instance from the 1427 form *Kylduncy* > seventeenth-century *Killinchy*, or the like[26]) can be viewed as one coming about in the Irish language as a result of progressive assimilation. Thurneysen and McCone have discussed the instances of *-ld-* being assimilated to *-ll-* within the confines of a single word in the (late) Old Irish period,[27] although in the case of *Cill Duinsighe* > *Cill L(u)insighe* we are dealing with progressive assimilation resulting from the loose juncture of quasi-proclitic *Cill* and attributive (and stress-bearing) genitive *Duinsighe*. Of course, the occurrence of *-l + D-* is by no means always guaranteed to produce the same result, and indeed in the following examples from modern Irish we are afforded insights into the various stages involved in the assimilation, or lack of it, where quasi-proclitic final *-l* is followed by stressed attributive initial *d-*.

In modern Irish the most common term form for 'chimney' is *simléar, simleoid, simné* and the like,[28] but at *LASID* point 43, Carraroe Co. Galway, Wagner recorded both the form *simléar* and variant *poll deataigh*, i.e. 'smoke-hole', which was pronounced [paul ˈdʲati:]. However in Portacloy, Co. Mayo, *poll deataigh* was recorded as [poˈʟʲati],[29] while in Teileann, SW Co. Donegal, the forms [pïʟʲæ·ti] and variant [poʟæ·ti] were heard.[30] These variant forms of *poll deataigh* in the modern language illustrate how random the sandhi can be in cases of this type, with

[25] For the work involved in compiling these *OS Name Books*, including listing contemporary spellings from local tithe applotment books, surveys, clergy, landlords etc., and O'Donovan's task of examining these forms and recommending a standard anglicised official spelling – in addition to proposing an Irish original, see A. Ó Maolfabhail, 'An tSuirbhéireacht Ordanáis agus logainmneacha na hÉireann 1824-34', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 89 C (1989) 37-66 (esp. 40 ff.); and A. J. Hughes, 'Irish place-names: some perspectives, pitfalls, procedures and potential', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 14/2 (1991) 116-48 (pp. 121-2).

[26] To date, my 20+ collection of seventeenth-century forms all show *Killinchy*, or minor variants *Killinchie* etc.

[27] On cases such as Old Irish *maldacht* 'malediction' > *mallacht*, or converse *lase nad·reildsem-ni* 'when we have not polluted', *for·réillsem* < *·r-éilnisem*, cf.: R. Thurneysen, *A grammar of Old Irish* [*GOI*] (Dublin 1946) §153 (f); and K. McCone, 'The Würzburg and Milan Glosses: our earliest sources of "Middle Irish"' *Ériu* 36 (1985) 85-106 (at pp. 85-6).

[28] See H. Wagner, *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects* vol. 1 (Dublin 1958) map 168 'chimney'.

[29] Not on *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects* [*LASID*] vol. i, map 168, but see H. Wagner, *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects* vol. 3, Dialects of Connaught, (Dublin 1966) point 57, p. 306 '*deataigh* [poˈʟʲati] > smoke hole (as in old thatched houses)'.

[30] Again not on *LASID* vol. i map 168 but cf.: 'In áit an fhocail *deatach* atá coitianta i nGaedhilge na Mumhan agus i nGaedhilge Chonnachta (feic Cois Fhairrge t. 101) tá an focal *toit* [tötʃ] i dTeil[ionn], ach tá *deatach* insa chomhfhocal *poll deataigh* [pïʟʲæ·ti] *Teilionn*; ([poʟæ·ti] cainnteoir 15) "a chimney" i dTeilionn fosta'. H. Wagner, *Gaelige Theilinn* (Baile Átha Cliath 1959) 223-4 §17. Stress was not indicated here by Wagner but it is doubtful, in the light of genitival *deataigh*, if one can regard *poll deataigh* as a compound noun (*comhfhocal*) and one would imagine that these forms would have been stressed as *[pïˈʟʲæ·ti] or [pïʲʟʲˈæ·ti], and *[poˈʟæ·ti] or [poʟˈæ·ti].

assimilation absent in the Galway example, yet present in those from Mayo and Donegal. Indeed in Teileann the fact that we find not merely [pïʟ'æ·ti], i.e. forward assimilation of consonant *d-* to *l-*, but also [po̤ʟæ·ti], i.e. forward assimilation of consonant quality,[31] gives us an excellent insight as to how the native Co. Down Irish speaker Luke Killen (and generations before him) could have been prompted phonologically to perceive and re-analyse Old Irish **Cell Duinsige* (via forwardly assimiliated forms **Cill Luinnsighe* > **Cill Linnsighe*, pronounced *[k'ï'ʟ'ïɴ'ʃi]*, [k'ïʟ'ïɴ'ʃi] as *Cill Inse* 'Church of the Island'. In actual fact, if one considers the phonological proximity of assimilated **Cill Linnsighe*, [k'ï'ʟ'ïɴ'ʃi], [k'ïʟ'ïɴ'ʃi], to a more lexically apparent *Cill Inse*, i.e. [k'ï'ʟ'ïɴ'ʃə] or [k'ïʟ'ïɴ'ʃə], then the folk etymological re-interpretation of **Cill Linnsighe* as *Cill Inse* becomes all the more understandable. Thus when one had the replacement of earlier nominative *cell* in this and other place-names with oblique case *cill*,[32] then one could imagine a similar development for *Cell/Cill Duinsighe* > **Cill Linsighe*, along the lines of *poll deataigh* > *poll l(e)ataigh*:

	forward assimilation of *d-* to *l-*	forward assimilation of consonant quality[33]
Post OIr. *Cell Duinsige* 1427 Kylduncy	*Cill Luinsighe* 1306 Kilwyinchi[34]	*Cill Linsighe* 17th c. Killinchie etc.

For which cf.

poll deataigh Galway	*poll leataigh* N Mayo and Teileann	*poll lataigh* Teileann

An indication of the tendency of *-l + D-* to give *-l + L-* in place-names, on some occasions, yet remain as *-l + D-*, on others, may be implied from the Kildaree names discussed by Ó Riain, i.e. OIr. *Cell Dar Í* > *Kildaree*;[35] while for the change *-l + D-* > *-l + L-* one may note converse evidence contained in the forms of the name resembling *Cenél Duacháin* recorded in the various Irish annals[36] as a variant of more historical *Cenél Luacháin*, identified as a district in the barony of Carrigallen in modern Co. Leitrim, and for which cf. alliterative: *ar Cheinél laochdha Luacháin* ('on the warrior-like Ceinél Luacháin') in a poem ascribed to Seaán Mór Ó Dubhagáin († 1372).[37] The original in *L-* in *Luacháin* is confirmed by

[31] I.e. In terms of palatal versus non-palatal quality.

[32] '*Ceall*, more commonly *cill* (dat. sg.) in later place-name forms', D. Flanagan, 'Common elements in Irish place-names: *ceall*, *cill*', *Bulletin Ulster Place-Name Society* [2nd ser.] 2 (1979) 1.

[33] Only with a change from palatal to non-palatal in the case of *deataigh* > *leataigh* > *lataigh* but vice versa for *Duinsighe* > *Luinsighe* > *Linsighe*.

[34] The form *Kilwyinchi*, while over a century earlier than *Kilduncy*, reflects stage 2 of the process and reflects the continual need for a more detailed stratification of written forms than is currently available. One further thing emerging from the 1306 and 1427 forms is that we are dealing with monosyllabic [-i(:)] for Old Irish bisyllabic *-ighe* (see note 75 below).

[35] Only via a re-interpreted *Cill Dá Rígh*, discussed in further detail below.

[36] Details in Hogan, *Onomasticon* 218.

[37] Carney, J. (ed.), *Topographical poems* (Dublin 1943) 24, line 650.

Hogan (*Onomasticon* 221) who identifies *Cenél Luacháin* as the 'race of Luachan, son of Onchú, and 4th from Cumscrach branch of Conmaicni Réin'. Further support for *Cell Duinsige > Cill L(u)insighe* is provided by the example of *Killaloe*, Co. Clare,[38] as the form *Kildelo*, attested in a charter dating to AD 1200,[39] shows a similar development for: OIr. *Cell Duinsige > 1427 Kilduncy > Killinchy*, in that OIr. *Cell Da Lúa*, 'Church of Da Lúa', *> Kildelo* 1200, has since undergone assimilation to yield *Killaloe*.

The important fact, then, to emerge from the demonstration of the assimilation of *Cill Duinsighe* to *Cill L(u)insighe* is that one is now in the position to firmly establish that modern *Killinchy*, goes back to an earlier 1427 *Kilduncy*, ultimately Early Irish *Cell/Cill Duinsige*, and in the wake of this realisation one must now surely reappraise the statement in relation to St Duinsech contained in the martyrologies:

> *atat tri cella aice and*
> 'she has three churches there [in Ulster]'.

Before embarking on such a reappraisal, however, one shall first establish the most likely Irish form of the name *Duinsech*. M. A. O'Brien listed an Old Irish female name with long *ú*, i.e. *Dúinsech*,[40] a view followed by D. Ó Corráin and F. Maguire[41] who opted for 'St. Dúinsech of Ulster whose feast-day is 12 December', and who viewed *Dúinsech* as being ultimately derived from *dún* 'fortress',[42] although they did concede that 'It is possible that another name, *Duinnsech* "brown-haired girl" is confused with it'. As to the issue of *Duin(n)sech* or *Dúinsech* for the Strangford Lough saint, it seems that we should represent this as *Duinsech* with short *u*,[43] not solely on the basis that the three edited texts of the martyrologies of Óengus, Gorman and Donegal all have short *u*, but on the more convincing phonetic evidence.

The modern anglicised form of the name Killinchy is generally pronounced [kə'lintʃi], but given the native Gaelic local reinterpretation from historical *Cell Duinsige > Cill Inse*, as recorded from Luke Killen,[44] then we cannot now automatically view *Kilduncy* (1427) > *Killinchy* (17th century) as simply an example of

[38] Nollaig Ó Muraíle, An Oifig Logainmneacha, kindly pointed out the example of Killaloe (Co. Clare) to me following a version of this paper delivered in Maynooth 29/6/91.

[39] Cited in Hogan, *Onomasticon* 188 s.v. *Cell da lúa*.

[40] M. A. O'Brien (ed. R. Baumgarten), 'Old Irish personal names', *Celtica* 10 (1973) 230, §44.

[41] D. Ó Corráin, and F. Maguire, *Gaelic personal names* (Dublin 1981) pp. 79-80 s.v. *Dúinsech*: *Dúinseach*.

[42] 'This [i.e. *Dúinsech*] is probably a female form of *Dúnán*, itself a pet-form of a longer name beginning in *dún*- 'a fortress'. Ó Corráin and Maguire, *Gaelic personal names*, pp. 79–80.

[43] Note, however, the exception, with varying *u* and *ú* in 'DUINSEACH, ógh, ó Chill Dúinsighe', O'Donovan and Reeves, *Martyrology of Donegal* 332, 11 Dec.

[44] Co. Down does not feature in this century as a prominent Gaeltacht area, although for the availablility of native Irish speakers at the time of the Ordnance Survey, see C. Ó Duibhín, *Irish in County Down since 1750* (Cumman Gaelach Leath Cathail 1991) pp. 20 ff., especially p. 27 where we are told that 'In the townland of Clontaghnaglar [par. Kilmore, barony Castlereagh Upper], O'Donovan (1834) met an old man named Killen who gave him the names of three or four parishes (Down Letters p. 88)'. *Clontaghnaglar* is two townlands (one mile) from *Killinchy in the Woods* and 4 miles SW from *Killinchy*.

orthographic Common Classic Gaelic *ui* giving [i] in Irish.[45] Besides, nearby *Dunsy Island* is currently pronounced [do̞nsi], and 17th-century anglicised forms of this name occur as *Islandunshagh*, *Iland Duns* etc., and this evidence stongly suggests a short *u* in an Irish, **Oileán Duinsighe* 'Duinseach's Island', and must surely indicate that mainland *Killinchy* also contains a short *u*-vowel, i.e. *Duin(n)sech*, rather than the form *Dúinsech* as suggested by O'Brian, and Ó Corráin and Maguire above.[46] My fuller discussion of the typology of early Irish female names using the suffix *-sech* cannot be undertaken here but it is sufficient to point out in the current context that there are semantic parallels to support a proposed *Duin(n)sech* 'brunette' (< *donn* 'brown')[47] with names such as *Fin(d)sech*,[48] *Céirsech* and *Crónsech* < *find* 'white, fair', *cíar* '(jet)black' and *crón* 'reddish brown').[49]

Returning, then, to the issue of Duinsech and her three churches, one can safely identify the townland and parish of Killinchy (Co. Down) as one of these churches, while modern Dunsy Island (parish of Killinchy) would be another, if Reeves's observations are to be accepted:

> There is no ecclesiastical building upon the island, nor the tradition that such ever existed there; but there can be little doubt that the spot was once held sacred as large numbers of human bones, indicative of a cemetery, were discovered, within the memory of those alive, on and around the site now occupied by a farmhouse.[50]

[45] 'Similarly *ui*, as in *duine*, *cuid*, *uisce*, retains its *u* sound in Scottish and Manx (compare the Manx spellings. . . *dooiney*, *cooid*, *ushtey*), whereas Irish has in general assimilated it to the following palatal consonant and made it an *i* sound'. T. F. O'Rahilly, *Irish dialects past and present* (Dublin 1932) 141-2. O'Rahilly dates the change [u] > [i] in Irish to the 17th century but while the forms *Kilduncy* (1427) > *Killinchy* (17th c.) seem to comply with this viewpoint, one must be cautious as 17th-century *Killinchy* < *Kilduncy* (1427) may equally well reflect local Irish *Cill Inse* (via *Cill Duinsige* > **Cill L(u)innsighe* > *Cill Inse*), rather than historical OIr. genitive *Dunsige* [duN′ʃiˑɣ′ə] > [do̞N′ʃi] > [dɨN′ʃi].

[46] Note also [do̞nsi] and [do̞nʃi] in the minor name *Dunsey Well*, barony of Lecale, Co. Down, discussed below.

[47] For examples of this name note *Obitus Duinsichae*, *uxoris Domnaill* 'Death of Duinsech, wife of Domnall', S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (ed.), *The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)* (Dublin 1983) s.a. 639 (= *Duinsech ben Domhnaill*. . .; J. O'Donovan (ed.), *The Annals of the Four Masters*, s.a. 635); and *Duinnseach* daughter of Duach Teangumha wife of Muircheartach son of Earc, in Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn : the history of Ireland* (ed. D. Comyn vols 1–2; P. S. Dineen, vols 2–4, [London 1902–14]) iii, 72.

[48] With regard to *Find* note *Finsech* and variants *Findse(a)ch*, cf. P. Ó Riain (ed.), *Corpus genealogiarum sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1985) §708.80.

[49] For *Crónsech*, *Céirsech*, two of the seven daughters of *Tarbin*, see ibid. §666.2.

[50] Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities* 186. No report of this island is contained in *An archaeological survey of Co. Down* (Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1966), but then again the earliest ecclesiastical remains described for Killinchy in this source are two Presbyterian churches of 1739 and 1846, p. 345. A. E. Hamlin, 'The archaeology of early Christianity in the North of Ireland' (PhD thesis, Faculty of Arts, Queen's University Belfast 1976) p. 633-4 has notes on the island but these are mainly summarised from Reeves and O'Laverty, and she kindly confirmed to me that she did not visit the site. With further regard to the apparent disappearance of traces of the site on Dunsy Island, the *OS Name Books, Co. Down*, par. *Killinchy* p. 41, notes that the island was 'Under tillage' in the 1830s. Raven's *Map of the Clandeboye Estate, 1625-5* (photostats Public Records Office Northern Ireland T870/1, p. 60) has a small outline sketch of Iland Duns, but no buildings or cemetery are marked – although this cannot be used as evidence against the existence of the ruins of an early church here as one does not know if Raven actually set foot on the island. Thus the physical traces of Duinsech's churches appear to have all

Having identified two of the three churches of St Duinsech in the parish of Killinchy, then, the existence of Dunsy Rock, just half a mile to the east of Dunsy Island may be looked to for a third. While it is certainly reasonable to associate this rock with Duinsech, as O'Donovan has done,[51] the description of the place in the OS Name Books as 'A low rocky isle nearly covered at high tide', tends to make one doubt its suitability as a church site, and to view it as merely associated with the saint due to its proximity to the more substantial and inhabitable Dunsy Island. But if one rules out Dunsy Rock as a church site, where, then, is one to locate the third church of Duinsech? The answer would appear to lie in the neighbouring parish of Killyleagh.

In the modern parish of Killyleagh (straddling the baronies of Dufferin and Castlereagh Upper, Co. Down) there is the townland of Killinchy in the Woods.[52] Reeves,[53] and O'Laverty[54] all rendered this name as representative of an earlier Irish *Cill Inse na Coille* 'Island Church of the Wood', making the point that it was to distinguish this Killinchy from the nearby parish and townland of Killinchy.[55] It is true that this addition of attributive 'in the Woods' was to help distinguish Killinchy (in the modern parish of Killyleagh) from the other mainland Killinchy, but the proposed original Gaelic form of the name put forward by these scholars is in need of revision. The appendage of 'in the Woods' to the townland of Killinchy in the parish of Killyleagh does not originate in the English language, for while we have *Killinchy in ye Woods* from the latter half of the seventeenth century,[56] it is obvious that this is a direct translation of an earlier underlying Irish form, as in the early part of that century we find *Killynchienekillye*, and the like. Furthermore, it also emerges from sources of this date that modern unqualified Killinchy was also, on occasions, distinguished by a qualifier, thus from the Inquisitions of Ulster, 4 July 1605 we have:

rector' de **Killinhcenemaghery**. . .[57]
and
ecclesiam voacat' **Killinchenekille** in le Upper Clandebuoye[58]

In the light of the three OIr. *Cell Duinsige forms, as implied by the notes accompanying *Félire Óengusso* (and other martyrologies), then the two 17th-century forms, *Killinchenemaghery* and *Killinchenekille*, clearly point to

but vanished - which only serves to further underline the importance of the toponymistic and textual remains in this case.

[51] 'Dunsy Rock *Carraig Duinsighe* "St. Dunsey's Rock", *OS Name Books*, parish of Killinchy, Co. Down p. 42.

[52] Situated in the barony of Castlereagh Upper, the townland of *Killinchy in the Woods* is about four miles SW of the townland of *Killinchy*.

[53] Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities*, 10, note **d**.

[54] O'Laverty, *An historical account* 345-6.

[55] Unfortunately, the *OS Name Book*, for the parish of Killyleagh, is not available, but one would imagine that O'Donovan also held this view in this now lost(?) volume of *OSNB*.

[56] E.g. S. Pender (ed.), *A Census of Ireland 1659* (Dublin 1939) 89.

[57] *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariae Hiberniae asservatarum, reportorium* vol. ii (Dublin : His Majesty's Printers 1829) 1 Jac. I.

[58] *Inquisitionum etc.* ii, 2 Jac. I, col. B.

Irish language forms: *Cill Duinsighe na Machaire,*[59] i.e. 'Cill Duinsighe (or 'Church of Duinseach')[60] of the Plain'; and *Cill Duinsighe na Coille(adh)* 'Cill Duinsighe of the Wood', in order that these two *Cill Duinsighe* churches could be distinguished. The third, island church, if it was ever designated *Cill Duinsighe*, was certainly distinguished (in later times at any rate) by the form *Oileán Duinsighe* 'Duinseach's Island' – as can be implied from *Ilandunshagh* (1624),[61] or the translation *Dunshagh-ile* (1605).[62] Indeed in a document dating to AD 1696 the modern townland Killinchy in the Woods is referred to as *Killinchinekelly*, while the modern unqualified townland and parish Killinchy is styled *Killinchy in plain*,[63] where one has an apparent translation of early 17th century *Killinchenemaghery* < Ir. *Coill Duinsighe na Machaire*).

On the issue of '*na Coille*' versus '*na Machaire*' as distinguishing soubriquets, one may note in the text of the Life of Colmán maic Lúacháin, the two sub-branches of the *Uí Dubáin* are distinguished as follows:

> *Dá aicme immurgu robátar hi Fidh Dorcha ar cind Colmáin maic Lúacháin, id est* **Huí Dubáin Caille 7 Húi Dubáin Maige**.
> 'There were two tribes in Fid Dorcha before Colmán son of Lúachán, viz. the **Huí Dubháin of the Wood** and the **Huí Dubháin of the Plain**'.[64]

Following on from this, one must now review the following two entries, *cell inse an mhachaire* and *cell inse na coille*, contained in Hogan's *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (p. 196), for while these are correctly identified (in regard to geographical location) as the modern anglicised place-names Killinchy and Killinchy in the Woods (Co. Down), their ultimate origins lie firmly with St Duinsech.

The fact that Duinsech should have three churches ties in rather well with the trilogy of sites associated with St Dar Í, in what are now modern Counties Mayo and Galway, as Ó Riain interprets all three Kildaree townlands as ultimately

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[59] *Machaire*, while originally a masculine io-stem, was also listed as feminine in the medieval Irish Grammatical Tracts (O. J. Bergin, 'Irish Grammatical Tracts', §21, Supplement in *Ériu* 8 (1915) i.) [E. G. Quin et al. (ed.), *(Contributions to a) Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials* (*DIL*) ([Dublin 1913–76] compact edition 1990) s.v.] and for details of alternance between feminine and masculine in a late Early Modern Irish text, see B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *Párliament na mBan* 232, s.v. *machaire*. One may also note how another townland in Co. Down indicates a similar feminine form, as *Ballynemaoir* (AD 1662, earlier *Ballymagher* 1605) was interpreted as representing an original Irish *Baile na Machaire* by R. Hannan, 'Ballymisert – baile fearainn i bparóiste Ard Mhic Nasca' *Ainm* 3 (1988) 79.

[60] Even though a folk etymological reinterpretation in later spoken Irish led to something like *Cill Inse na Machaire*.

[61] M. C. Griffith (ed.), *Calendar Patent Rolls James I*, Dublin 1966) 587b. Cf. further *Iland Duns* (Raven map 1625), *Islanddunshagh* (*Inquisitionum*, 1644).

[62] *Calendar Patent Rolls James I* 1 Jac. I.

[63] Both 1696 forms *Killinchy in plain* and *Killinchinikelly* are found in T. K. Lowry (ed.), *The Hamilton manuscripts* (Belfast 1897) 148.

[64] K. Meyer (ed.), *Betha Colmáin maic Lúacháin* [Todd Lecture Series xvii] (Dublin 1911) §39. Cf. further the SE Ulster distinction between the two sub-divisions of the *Uí Méith* with *Uí Méith Mara* 'The Uí Méith by the sea', i.e. modern Omeath, Co. Louth; and *Uí Méith Macha* 'the *Uí Méith* of the Plain* (alt. *Uí Méith Tíre* 'The inland *Uí Méith*') now the modern barony of Monaghan (Co. Monaghan) – references in *AFM* s.a. 1178, note c., and Hogan, *Onomasticon* 676.

derived from *Cill Dar Í* 'Church of St Dar Í'.[65] It is also noteworthy that (similar to the example of Killinchy, Co. Down), the modern townland Kildaree (parish of Crossmolina, Co. Mayo) had also undergone a folk-etymological reinterpretation, with the aid of some phonological prompting, among the local inahabitants by the time of the 19th-century Ordnance Survey. Ó Riain points out that the Irish form listed in *OSNB* (Co. Mayo) was *Cill Dá Rígh* 'Church of the Two Kings', adding that in the *OS Letters*, (vol. i, p. 49) for the same county, mention is made of a 'grave in which two kings are said to be interred'.[66] This reinterpretation of *Cill Dar Í > Cill Dá Rígh* is, of course, perfectly understandable given the semantic obscurity of the Old Irish personal name *Dar Í*. M. A. O'Brien, writing on '*Der-*, *Dar-* and *Derb* in female names'[67] pointed out that *Dar-*, *Der-* was not, as Meyer had previously thought, merely a ghost word in early glossaries and that it is possible that it represented a reduced, proclitic form of **ducht(a)ir*, a Goedelic reflex of the the old Indo-European word for 'daughter'. *DIL* s.v. *der* shows that the word was mainly confined to the glossaries in the late Old Irish period, and subsequently.[68] The widespread use of the term *ingen*, which glossed *dar*, is verified by the fact that it now dominates in the modern period.[69] Similarly, the normal word for 'yew' in the modern Gaelic dialects is *iubhar*,[70] where the older word *éo* has now fallen into disuse, apart from its fossilisation as a non-transparent topographical item.[71] Indeed in early glossaries *éo* is frequently, but not exclusively, glossed *iubhar*.[72] Even in Middle Irish material, however, we see that while *éo* may have been used, at least in a literary register, its old historical o-stem declension (nom. sg. *éo < *ivos*, gen. sg. *í*, *íi < *ivi*) was replaced by a masculine k-stem inflection, due to the influence of *éo* 'salmon',[73] with the result that apart from preservation of o-stem genitive *Í* in personal names, such as *Fer Hí* 'Man of (the) Yew', *DIL* cites examples of 3 *éo* '(yew-)tree' with k-stem gen. sg. *iach*, e.g. *iuech* (: *sciach*).[74]

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[65] In addition to the Mayo example of *Kildaree*, mentioned above, Ó Riain adds two further Co. Galway townlands of that name in the parish of Templetogher, barony of Ballymoe; and parish of Killursa, barony of Clare, Burke, *Townland Index* 434.

[66] Ó Riain, *Celtica* 21 (1990) 565.

[67] M. A. O'Brien, *Celtica* 3 (1955) 178-9.

[68] E.g. *der .i. ingen* in *Corm Y* 492; *dear .i. inghean* in *O'Cl. Lec. Gl.* 557.

[69] Cf. Wagner, *Linguistic atlas. . .* i, map 105. Indeed the evidence of Ogham *inigena*, and the paucity of *dar/der* in Old Irish sources, suggests the replacement of **ducht(a)ir* by *inigena* is a very old one in Goedelic. However, for confirmation of O'Brien's brilliant postulation of Celtic **ducht(a)ir*, see now the Gaulish form *duchtir* from the lead inscription of (Hospitalet-du-)Larzac, *Études Celtiques* 22 (1985) 167.

[70] See, for example Joyce *Irish place-names* i, 511.

[71] E.g. modern *Mayo < Magh Eo* 'Plain of Yews', or the numerous names containing the element *eochaill* 'yew-wood', Joyce, id. 509-13, and Hogan, *Onomasticon* 519 and 398.

[72] E.g. *eo .i. ibur*, *Revue Celtique* xiii 222, 28; *Eo Rosa ibair e. . . dair dano eo* 'The Eo Rosa it is a yew (*ibair*). *eo*, moreover means a (?)tree (*dair*)'. For the general meaning 'tree' cf. *eo .i. lignum .i. crand* in *LB O'Dav.* 779; *eo .i. crand* in *Corm Y* 1272.

[73] I.e. *DIL* 1. *éo* 'salmon', a word now universally replaced by *bradán* in the modern dialects.

[74] For genitive *iach* of *DIL* 1. *éo* cf. *i medon iach* 'in the middle of a salmon', *Hy* v 72; *bás iach* 'death of a salmon', K. Meyer, *Triads of Ireland* (Dublin 1906) 12 §92. See also, Thurneysen, *GOI* §319(c).

In the light of these developments then, one can see how the nontransparent elements in the name *Dar Í* 'Daughter of (the) Yew' would result in the reinterpretaion of *Cell Dar Í* 'Church of Dar Í', pronounced *[kʲiʟdarˈiː], or [kʲiʟdaˈriː] as *Cill Dá Rígh* 'Church of (the) Two Kings', when OIr. *ríg* with final gutteral spirant [-ɣ],[75] became [ri:] in Mayo Irish.[76] The loss of the final gutteral spirant in gen. sing. *ríg* would certainly have been complete by the time of the 14th-century text which contained the example of *Cill Dá Rígh* cited by Ó Riain.[77]

These foregoing examples of Old Irish place-names *Cell Duinsige* and *Cell Dar Í*, occurring in local Gaeltacht speech as reinterpreted *Cill Inse* and *Cell Dá Rígh*, clearly indicate that caution must be used in treating the Irish-language material in the Ordnance Survey Name Books of the nineteenth century. Initially, one must, of course, try to distinguish, on the one hand, between the Irish forms in these books that were proposed by John O'Donovan himself on the basis of his own assessment of the fairly recent anglicised spellings of these names available to him during the course of this extensive and large-scale survey (in most cases recent 18th and 19th-century spellings),[78] and on the other, between the forms he recorded from the local Irish speakers whom O'Donovan – to his eternal credit – tirelessly endeavoured to seek out and interview during his years of fieldwork. We are, naturally, indebted to this great scholar for saving from obscurity thousands of such valuable names of the latter category, as a high percentage of these late orally-recorded Irish-language forms shed great light on many hundreds of names. In some cases they even display a remarkably conservative nature as can be seen from the Ordnance Survey Name Book for the parish of Saul, Co. Down where local Irish speaker John McGreevy rendered the anglicised place-name Saul as *Sabhall Phádraig*[79] and with which we might compare the tradition, dating at least a millenium previous to McGreevy's day, of Díchú offering a barn (*saball*) as a church to

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[75] Thurneysen, *GOI* §318. On the fusion of final dental *-dh* with velar *-gh* 'as far back as the the thirteenth century' and the subsequent disappearance of [-ɣ], [-ɣʲ] in (almost) all other positions, except initially, cf. O'Rahilly *Irish dialects* 65 ff. Note also *Kilwyinchi*, n. 34 above, indicating [-i(:)] for earlier *-ige*, [-iɣʲə] by AD 1306.

[76] On the realisation of initial orthographic *r-* followed either by front *i* or *e*, in addition to back *a, o* or *u*, as non-palatal [r-] in Mayo, with only occasional reflex [r-ʲ] for older *re-, ri-*, cf. S. de Búrca, *The Irish of Tourmakeady* (Dublin 1958) §489; and for *rí* as [ri:] in Modern Irish generally cf. M. Ó Siadhail, *Modern Irish* (Cambridge 1989) 84.

[77] P. Ó Riain, 'A misunderstood annal', *Celtica* 21 (1990) 565, n. 29.

[78] While D. Flanagan points out, *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-Name Society* [series 2] 4 (1981-2) 63, that the forms proposed by O'Donovan in the *OSNB* 'are, at a rough estimate no more than 70% accurate', one should recall that working conditions – dealing mostly with synchronic anglicised spellings of tens of thousands of townland names in a short space of time – hardly constituted ideal conditions for the more usual high standards O'Donovan produced in, for example, the illuminating notes accompanying his edition of *The Annals of the Four Masters* His identification of modern sites for place-names in early Irish sources was, on the whole, superb.

[79] *OSNB*, parish of Saul, p. 17. It is difficult to decide with absolute certainty if the translation 'Patrick's Barn', which follows *Sabhall Phádraig* in *OSNB*, was entered by O'Donovan or cited as a translation by McGreevy, aged 85 in 1834. Wagner, *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects* i, map 189 has *scioból* for all Irish dialects, but shows reflexes of *sabhall* in Manx, and Rathlin Island. Wagner, and C. Ó Baoill, *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects* iv (Dublin 1969), p. 197 no. 189, confirms *sabhall* as the normal term for 'barn' in Scottish Gaelic.

Patrick in the Tripartite Life.[80] In this same text the site of the church is referred to as: *baile ita Saball Pátraic indiu* 'the place where **Saball Pátraic** is today'.[81] Thus while this latter example of *Sabhall Phádraig* demonstrates the potential antiquity of many of the Irish forms collected from local native Irish speakers in the course of the OS six-inch survey of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and listed in the *Ordnance Survey Name Books*, the examples from local Gaeltacht speech from this same source along the lines of *Cill Inse* and *Cill Dá Rígh*, underline that these forms are by no means always guaranteed to be infallible as such material can, on occasions, unwittingly disguise the earlier etymological forms of the place-names in question, as one has been able to clearly indicate for OIr. **Cell Duinsige* and **Cell Dar Í (i)*.

Returning, then, to St Duinsech, it would appear that the cult of this saint was not confined to the shores of Strangford Lough,[82] as I have discovered, quite by chance, that a modern minor name would also connect her to the parish of Kilclief (barony of Lecale Lower, Co. Down).[83] Following a brief mention of St Duinseach on Strangford Lough during a public lecture,[84] I was approached by a Mr Paul Campbell who informed me that there was a well on his farm called *The Dunsey Well*, and he was kind enough to supply me with the following information:

> We have a well which is reputed to be a holy well and which was used for butter making as it was never known to run dry in the summertime. Mr. James Fitzsimmons of Tullyfoyle, Kilclief told us when we bought the place many years ago that the well was Carraig Dunsey Well.[85]

This stray reference, then, would seem to indicate that the virgin Duinseach was quite a significant ecclesiastical figure with fairly substantial following in east County Down generally, but that her main powerbase lay around the area of her three churhes Killinchy, Killinchy in the Woods, and Dunsy Island in Strangford Lough, or older Loch Cuan. By far the most rewarding aspect of this investigation is the fact that these latter three place-names allow us to make much more sense of the passage from the Martyrology of Gorman, and similar martyrologies:

> *Duinsech óg ó Chill Duinsighe i nUltoibh, ⁊ atat tri cealla aice ann.*
> 'Duinsech a virgin from Cell Duinsige in Ulster, and she has three churches there'.[86]

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[80] *Is ann sein roédbairt Díchú do Pátraic in Saball* 'Then Díchú offered the Barn to Patrick', K. Mulchrone, *Bethu Pátraic: the Tripartite Life of Patrick* 36.24.

[81] Ibid. 36.15 (my emphasis).

[82] I.e. the immediate area around modern Killinchy.

[83] I.e. *Cell Cleithe* Hogan, *Onomasticon* 181-3.

[84] The Queen's University Belfast, 23/4/90.

[85] Private correspondence to me, dated 24/4/90, from Mr Paul Campbell. A subsequent visit by me, 27/1/91, to interview Mr James Fitzsimons (aged 93) resident in Ardglass revealed that he called it *The Dunshy Well*, pronounced [dǫnʃi], while his twin brother Frank, resident in Downpatrick, rendered it *The Dunsey Well*, pronounced [dǫnsi]. Neither Fitzsimons brother had any knowledge of local traditions relating to St Duinseach, but their phonology clearly suggests a connection with St Duinseach. The well itself is still there to this day.

[86] Reeves and O'Donovan, *Martyrology of Gorman* p. 236, see note 24 above for fuller references.