



**TIPPERARY HISTORICAL JOURNAL
1995**

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ISSN 0791-0655

Borrisoleigh or Two-Mile-Borris?

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The Urban Archaeological Survey of Tipperary North Riding was completed during 1994 by the Office of Public Works.¹ In the course of historical research to augment the field survey, it became obvious that there is some cause for confusion arising out of the toponyms employed for the towns of Borrisoleigh and Two-Mile-Borris in historical documentation. This note and the accompanying Table may enable future researchers to distinguish more clearly between the two.

In the Ordnance Survey Letters² *Buirghéis a Dhá Mhíle* is given as the Irish translation of Two-Mile-Borris. *Buirghéis Léith* is given as the ancient name of the town, however, and it was so named after the nearby church of Liath Mochoemog. Borrisoleigh was referred to in the Civil Survey of 1654-6³ as Borres lleigh. This placename derives from the position of the town in the territory referred to as lleigh. That territory is clearly marked on the Down Survey map of County Tipperary, where Borrisoleigh appears as Borreshleagh, and Two-Mile-Borris appears as Buresleagh. The potential for confusion is obvious.⁴

Although in antiquity both towns were referred to by almost identical names, only Borrisoleigh has kept a version of that name to the present day. As a result, one initially presumes that placenames in the source material which resemble the name Borrisoleigh could only refer to that town. Representative samples of such names are Burisse Leighe,⁵ Borreisleaghe⁶ and Burges Lieghe.⁷ All of these actually refer to Two-Mile-Borris, and the identifications of these and other forms of the name are based on a number of clues.

Borrisoleigh is in the modern barony of Kilnamanagh Upper, whereas Two-Mile-Borris is in the barony of Eliogarty. The placename Eliogarty is ancient; as early as 1416⁸ a lordship of "Burgageleyth" was referred to there. In 1516⁹ the "Blakecastell of Burisee Lieghe" in Eliogarty was noted, and a series of references during the sixteenth century make it clear that a mill was associated with the Black Castle.¹⁰ This little complex of the Black Castle, with its accompanying mill in the cantred of Eliogarty, is obviously Two-Mile-Borris, which is adjacent to the townland of Blackcastle and is on the Black River in the barony of Eliogarty.

The research undertaken during the compilation of the Urban Survey was done principally to augment the field survey and was quite cursory. Nevertheless, the majority of the references encountered, which at first glance could have referred to Borrisoleigh, actually referred to Two-Mile-Borris. Among the references to Borrisoleigh there is a mention of "Walter Bourke of Boreyse",¹¹ who was presumably a relative of Richard Bourke, whose name appears on a seventeenth-century plaque at Borrisoleigh Castle.¹² Other references to Borrisoleigh are to be found in The Civil Survey of 1654-6,¹³ where ". . . the castle and bawne of Borres" at Borres lleigh were noted, and on the Down Survey map of County Tipperary. Two-Mile-Borris and Borrisoleigh were probably of about equal size and importance during the medieval period. The preponderance of references to Two-Mile-Borris, however, is presumably due to the importance of that town to the Earls of Ormond and to the survival of the Ormond deeds.



TABLE
Various forms of the placenames Two-Mile-Borris and Borrisoleigh

A. Two-Mile-Borris

Name	Date	Source
Burgage of Milath	1302-6	Cal. Docs. Ire., p. 282 ¹⁴
The lordship of Burgageleyth	1416	Ormond Deeds, p. 14
Olaygach	1469	Cal. Papal reg., p. 780 ¹⁵
Burgesle	1479-80	Cal. Papal reg., p. 718
Burisse Lieghe	1516	Ormond Deeds, p. 36
Boreishlee	1521	Ormond Deeds, p. 65
Burres Leogh	1527	Ormond Deeds, p. 110
Burgeisleaghe	1530	Ormond Deeds, p. 141
Borreisleaghe	1536	Ormond Deeds, p. 169
Borreysleaghe	1542	Ormond Deeds, pp. 221, 241
Burresleagh	1542	Ormond Deeds, p. 394
Burges Lieghe	1571	Ormond Deeds, p. 200
Burges Lieghe	1572	Ormond Deeds, p. 227
Burgesleagh	1576	Ormond Deeds, p. 277
Burries Liegh	1591	Ormond Deeds, p. 47
Burgeslieghe	1593	Ormond Deeds, p. 204
Burries	1614	Ormond Deeds, p. 172
Borresliegh	1654-6	Civil Survey ¹⁶
Buresleagh	1650-58	Down Survey map

B. Borrisoleigh

Name	Date	Source
Burgage of leth	1302-7	Cal. Docs. Ire., p. 282
Burgagetoun	1358	Ormond Deeds, p. 42 ¹⁷
Ileigh	1592	Ormond Deeds, p. 52
Boreyse	1601	Cal. State Papers ¹⁸
Borres	1654-6	Civil Survey
Borreshleagh	1650-58	Down Survey map

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to the Commissioners of Public Works for their permission to publish this article. Thanks also to Jean Farrelly, Director of the Urban Archaeological Survey, and to Mary Tunney and Liz FitzPatrick of the Archaeological Survey Office for their help and advice.

FOOTNOTES

1. Farrelly, J. and Carey, H.: *The Urban Archaeological Survey of County Tipperary North Riding*, 2 vols. (Office of Public Works 1994), unpublished.
2. O'Flanagan, Rev. M. (compiler), *Typescript of letters relative to the antiquities of the County Tipperary, collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1840* (1930), vol. 1, p. 161.
3. Simington, R. C. (ed.): *The Civil Survey, A.D. 1654-6, County of Tipperary*, vol. 1 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1931), p. 89.



4. *Memorials of the Dead*, vol. iv, no. 2 (1899), pp. 302-3 contains a good example of the kind of difficulties that can arise.
5. Curtis, E.: *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-*, vols. i-vii (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932-43), vol. iv, p. 36.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 169.
7. *Ibid.*, vol. v, p. 227.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 14.
9. *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 36.
10. *Ibid.*, vol. iv, pp. 65, 110, 141; vol. v, p. 227 and vol. vi, p. 47.
11. Mahaffy, R. P. (ed.): *Calendar of State Papers relating to Ireland . . . 1601-03* (HMSO London 1912), p. 33, dated 13 August, 1601. A Walter Bowrk of lleigh was also mentioned under the year 1592 in *Ormond Deeds*, vol. v, p. 59.
12. Farrelly, J. and Carey, H.; *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 7-8.
13. Simington, R. C. (ed.): *The Civil Survey, A.D. 1654-6, County of Tipperary*, vol. 1 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1931), p. 89.
14. Sweetman, H. S. and Handcock, G. F.; *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland* (London 1886), vol. v, p. 282, no. 718.
15. Bliss, W. H. Johnson, C. et al.; *Calendar of entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal letters 1198-1304* (etc.), vols. i-xv (London 1893-).
16. Simington, R. C. (ed.); *op. cit.*, vol. ii.
17. Bradley, J., 'The medieval towns of Tipperary', in Nolan, W. (ed.): *Tipperary History and Society* (Dublin 1985), p. 57, identified this placename with Borrissleigh, but the reason for doing so is not given.
18. Mahaffy, R. P. (ed.); *op. cit.*, p. 33, dated 13 August, 1601.

