

Baile Átha Cliath – Dublin

Baintear úsáid as dhá ainm ar leith chun tagairt do phríomhchathair na hÉireann, mar atá, *Baile Átha Cliath* sa Ghaeilge agus *Dublin* sa Bhéarla agus i dteangacha eile. Ábhar sonraithe é seo nuair a chuimhnítear go bhfuil an t-ainm ‘Bearla’, *Dublin*, chomh fréamhaithe céanna sa Ghaeilge agus atá *Baile Átha Cliath*. Tá cúiseanna stairiúla leis an scéal a bheith amhlaidh, an dá ainm seo a bheith in úsáid le cur síos ar an áit chéanna.

Is é *Baile Átha Cliath* atá in úsáid i measc lucht labhartha na Gaeilge mar ainm ar an bhaile leis na céadta bliain. Is forbairt é *Baile Átha Cliath* ar *Áth Cliath*, an t-ainm a bhí ag na Gaeil ar áit ag bun na Life. Is in *Vita Columbae*, a scríobh Adhamhnán timpeall na bliana 695c, atá an tagairt is luaithe dá bhfuil againn d’*Áth Cliath: vadum Clied* an fhoirm atá sa téacs Laidine sin. Is d’*áth* ag bun abhainn na Life a thagair an t-ainm sin go bunúsach. Tanalacht nadúrtha ar abhainn a bhíonn i gceist leis an bhfocal *áth* go hiondúil, ach is minic a dhéantaí an ghné nadúrtha a fhorbairt nó a dhaingniú le maidí nó le cláir adhmaid fite le chéile. Is cosúil gur *áth* a bhí forbartha ar an dóigh sin a bhí i gceist ag *Áth Cliath* nó ciallaíonn an focal *cliath* ‘fráma caolaigh’. Tá trácht ar a leithéid de chliatha caolaigh a bheith a dhéanamh ar áthanna le fáil i litríocht na Luath-Ghaeilge.

Bhí tábhacht ar leith ag baint le h*Áth Cliath* i stair Chúige Laighean mar gurbh é an bealach trasnaithe ab fhaide soir ar an Life é. Bhí an t-*áth* sin ina nasc fisiciúil idir dhá dhúiche thábhachtacha i luathstair na hÉireann, mar atá, *Maigh Bhreá*, is é sin oirthuaisceart Bhaile Átha Cliath, oirthear na Mí, agus deisceart Chontae Lú anois, agus *Cuala*, deisceart Bhaile Átha Cliath agus oirthuaisceart Chill Mhantáin. De réir *Annála Uladh* troideadh cath fuilteach ag *Áth Cliath* sa bhliain 770 idir Ciannachta Breá agus Uí Théig, treabhchas ón taobh ó dheas; maraíodh slua mór de na Laighin ach bádh a lán de na Ciannachta agus iad ag trasnú na habhann ar an bhealach abhaile.

Ní thagraítear d’*Áth Cliath* arís in *Annála Uladh* go dtí an bhliain 836 mar a thuirscítear *Céd ghabháil Atha Cliath la Gallaibh* ‘gabháil Átha Cliath leis na Lochlannaigh don chéad uair’. Cúig bliana tar éis dóibh *Áth Cliath* a ghabháil deir na *hAnnála* go raibh *Longport oc Duibhlinn* ag na Lochlannaigh ónar creachadh Laighin agus Uí Néill, is é sin lastuaidh agus lasteas den Life. Is é seo an chéad tagairt don ainm *Duibhlinn* i bhfoinsí stairiúla Gaeilge. Comhfocal den aidiacht *dubh* agus an focal *linn* atá san ainm; is dócha go gciallaíonn *dubh* ‘domhain’ i gcomhthéacs an ainm. Is do linn nó poll ar an Life tamall soir ó *Áth Cliath* a thagair an t-ainm *Duibhlinn*, áit a bhí domhain go leor le báid a fheistiú agus a thabhairt i dtír. Is cosúil go raibh an áit seo gar do Shráid na Pairliminte sa lá inniu. Is anseo a thóg na Lochlannaigh an chéad bhaile agus ghlac siad leis an seanainm Gaeilge a bhí ar an áit mar ainm air, faoin fhoirm *Dyflin* nó a leithéid. De thairbhe na Lochlannach, bhain an baile nua cliú agus cáil amach mar chalafort trádála ón 9ú céad ar aghaidh agus mar thoradh air sin glacadh leis an ainm *Duibhlinn* nó *Dyflin* mar ainm ar an bhaile i dteangacha eile; féach, mar shampla an leagan *Dulyn* atá le fáil sa Bhreatnais ón 10ú haois. Ba thábhachtaí leis na Gaeil an t-*áth* nó an longfort, áfach, agus níorbh fhada go raibh siad ag tabhairt *Áth Cliath* mar ainm ar an mbaile Lochlannach - níl ach tagairt amháin eile don ainm *Duibhlinn* in *Annála Uladh*, is é sin sa bhliain 919, mar a

thuaiscítear gur bhris na Lochlannaigh cath ar na Gaeil inar maraíodh Niall Glúndubh, rí Éireann.

Cé gur beag an trácht atá ar Dhuibhlinn i bhfoinsí Gaeilge, is suimiúil an rud é go bhfuil dánta sa *Dinnsheanchas*, a cumadh am éigin idir an 10ú agus an 12ú haois, mar gheall ar *Dhuibhlinn* agus ar *Áth Cliath* araon.

Faoin am ar ghlac na Normannaigh seilbh ar Bhaile Átha Cliath sa bhliain 1170 is cinnte go raibh iomrá forleathan ar chathair *Dyflin* ar Mhór-Roinn na hEorpa agus gurbh é sin an fáth nach rithfeadh sé leo a mhalairt d’ainm a thabhairt air. Faightear an t-ainm *Dyflin* faoi fhoirmeacha ar nós *Diveline*, *Develin*, *Dyvelyne*, *Divelyn* etc. i gcáipéisí sa Fhraincis Normannach. Níor mhiste a lua, áfach, go bhfuil foirmeacha d’Áth Cliath – *Adcleth*, *Hathcleyth* – le fáil i gcuid de na cáipéisí céanna, ach is beag iad. Is díol suime mar shampla go ndeirtear sa dán fada *Le Chanson de Dermot* gurbh é *Áth Cliath* an t-ainm a bhíodh ar *Dhuibhlinn* aroimhe: *deueline*, *Une cite mult loe Que hathcleyth iert einz nome*. Bhí foirmeacha mar *Divelin* coitianta go dtí an dara leath den 16ú haois; is í an fhoirm *Divelin* a úsáideann *Campion* i gcónaí i *Historie of Ireland*, le tagairt don chathair ach is suimiúil gur *Dublin* atá aige mar ainm ar an chontae. Tá an fhoirm *Dublin* le fail ón 13ú céad chomh maith. Is ón fhoirm laidinithe *Dublin(i)um* agus ón aidiacht *Dublinensis* a tháinig sé sin ní foláir, ach ar feadh i bhfad is dócha nach raibh in *Dublin* ach foirm scríofa a bhí éagsúil go maith leis an fhoirm labhartha.

Ar feadh an ama seo, áfach, is leagan nó leagan eile den ainm *Áth Cliath* a mhair i measc lucht labhartha na Gaeilge, is é sin formhór mór na ndaoine sa tír anuas go dtí an 18ú haois. Cuireadh an mhír *baile* leis an bhunainm am éigin roimh an 15ú haois – rud a tharla i gcás ainmneacha a lán bailte eile ar fud na tíre go háirithe cinn a bhfuil *Áth* mar chéadmhír acu: *Baile Átha Luain*, *Baile Átha an Rí*, *Baile Átha Buí*, *Baile Átha Troim*, ach féach freisin *Baile Shláine*. An tagairt is luaithe a dhéantar in Annála Uladh don fhoirm fhada seo is faoin mbliain 1368 í mar a luaitear, ‘o baile Atha-Cliath co baile Atha-Luain.’ Faoin mbliain 1473, tuairiscítear in Annála Uladh gur tugadh Eadbhard Nuinseann, mac Bharún Dealbhna, go Baile Átha Cliath, áit ar cuireadh chun báis é. Is fiú a lua go ndeir an staraí Angla-Éireannach Richard Stanihurst agus é ag scríobh c.1570 gurbh é *Bally Ath Cliath* a thugadh na Gaeil ar an chathair. Áit ar bith ar mhair an Ghaeilge mar theanga bheo an phobail is í an fhoirm *Baile Átha Cliath*, nó leagan ciorraithe ar nós *Bleá Cliath*, a úsáideadh i gcónaí mar ainm na príomhchathrach.

Áth Cliath – Baile Átha Cliath

ad **Vadum Clied** (695c)

Coscraadh **Atha Cliath** ria Ciannacht for Hu Teig (770)

Céd ghabháil **Atha Cliath** lá Gallaibh (836)

Dunadh di Gallaibh **Atha Cliath** (845)

Tetacht Dubgennti du **Ath Cliath** (851)

Amlaíb 7 Ímar do thuidecht afrithisi du **Ath Cliath** a Albain (871)

Indarbha ngennti a hEre .i. Longfort **Atha Cliath**. (902)

Sitriuc ua hImair do derghiu **Atha Cliath** per potestatem divinam. (920)

Cluain Moccu Nóis do orcain o Gallaibh **Atha Cliath** (936)

Cath Temrach ria Mael Sechnaill m. nDomnaill for Gallaibh **Atho Cliath** 7 na nInsedh i rroladh derg-ar Gall 7 nert Gall a hErinn (980)

Sitriuc m. Amlaim do innarba a **hAth Cliath** (994)

Sloghud la Brian m. Ceinneitigh... **co hAth Cliath**. (1014)

Murchadh m. Diarmata ri Laigen 7 Gall do ec 7 sepultus est **i nAth Cliath** (1070)

Gilla Pátraic espoc **Atha Cliath** do

Duibhlinn - Dublin

Longport oc **Duibhlinn** (841)

Geinnti for **Duibhlinn** beos (842)
Orgain Biror 7 Saighre o genntibh di **Duibhlinn** (842)

Bellum re ngentibh occ **Duibhlinn** for Goidhelu du i torcair Niall m. Aedho ri Erenn (919)

bathadh (1084)

Ar mor for Gallu **Atha Cliath** (1088)

Domnall comarba patraic do thecht co **hAth cliath** (1105)

Maidm ria nDomnall H. mBriain 7 ria Gallaibh **Atha Cliath** for Laighnibh ... (1115)

Tochustal Saxan 7 Gall **Atha Cliath...** do ghabhail forbhaisi for Bretnaibh. (1165)

Sluaghadh la Ruaidhrí hUa Concobair i midhe co rogaibh braighti Fer Mídhe. Assidhe **co hAth Cliath** co rogaibh braighti Gall 7 Mic Murchada 7 Laighen uile (1166)

Ath Cliath do milledh do Dhiarmait Mac Murchadha 7 do Almurchaibh tuc leis anair (1170)

Tanic [Henricus potentissimus rex Angliae] iar sin **co hAth Cliath** 7 ro gabh giallu Laighen 7 Fer Midhe 7 hUa mBriuin 7 Airgiall 7 Ulad (1171)

Hathcleyth (1225c)

Edbhard mac Baruin Dealbna do ghabail 7 a breith co **baile Atha cliath** 7 a milledh and (1473)

Geróit, Iarla Cilli Daraa adnacul a Tempull Crist

Dyflina á Irlandi oc Dyflinarskidi (1100)

Divelin (1176)

Dwelin (1176)

Henricus *Dublinensis* archiepiscopus (1224)

Deueline (1225c)

Diveline (1225c)

Dyvelin (1225c)

Arceusqe *de Dyuelyn* (1336)

a mBaile Atha Cliath (1513)	
Bally Ath Cliath (1570)	Dyvelin (1571) Castle of Divelin (1571)

Two different names are used to refer to Ireland's capital city, namely *Baile Átha Cliath* in Irish and *Dublin* in English and other languages. This is somewhat surprising when one considers that the 'English' name *Dublin* is as rooted in Irish as *Baile Átha Cliath* is. History, of course, holds the key as to why these two names are used for this one place.

Baile Átha Cliath is the form which Irish speakers have used when referring to the city for many centuries. *Baile Átha Cliath* is a development of *Áth Cliath*, the name which the indigenous Irish used of the area around the river Liffey. The earliest reference we have to *Áth Cliath* is in *Vita Columbae* written by Adomnan around the year 695c and the form used in this Latin text is *vadum Clied*. This name originally referred to a ford at the mouth of the Liffey. The word *áth* means 'ford' and it usually refers to a natural shallow in a river. This natural feature, however, was often supplemented by or strengthened with sticks or wooden boards woven together. It is likely then that *Áth Cliath* referred to a ford which had been developed in this way as the word *cliath* indicates a 'wattled frame'. References to the making of such structures are to be found in early Irish literature.

Áth Cliath was of particular importance to the history of Leinster as it was the most easterly crossing-point of the Liffey. The ford was a physical link between two important districts in early Irish history: *Maigh Bhreá*, denoting northeast Dublin, east Meath and south Co. Louth and *Cuala*, denoting south Dublin and northeast Wicklow. According to the *Annals of Ulster* a bloody battle was fought at *Áth Cliath* between the Ciannachta Bhreá and the Uí Théig, a tribe from the southside; a large number of the Laighin were killed but many of the Ciannachta were drowned crossing the river as they returned home.

Áth Cliath is not referred to again in the *Annals of Ulster* until 836 where it is reported that the ford fell to the Vikings for the first time, *Céd ghabháil Atha Cliath la Gallaibh*. Five years after they had captured *Áth Cliath*, the *Annals* tell us that the Vikings had a stronghold, *longphort*, at *Duibhlinn* from which they pillaged Laighin and Uí Néill, that is north and south of the Liffey. This is the first reference to *Duibhlinn* in historical sources in the Irish language. *Duibhlinn* is a composite name made up of the two elements *dubh* and *linn*. *Dubh* is an adjective meaning 'black', but in the context of the name, 'deep'; *linn* is a noun meaning 'pool'. Thus *Duibhlinn* referred to a pool on the Liffey a little east of *Áth Cliath*, a place deep enough to moor and dock ships. This site was apparently close to where Parliament Street is today. It was here that the Vikings built the first town and they made their own of the name which the indigenous Irish had called the area, transmuting *Duibhlinn* into variants such as *Dyflin*. As a result of the Vikings this town became famous as a trading port from the 9th century onwards and accordingly the town was referred to in other languages as *Duibhlinn* or *Dyflin*. The form *Dulyn*, for example, is found in Welsh from the 10th century. The ford was of more interest to the indigenous Irish, however,

than the port and before long they were calling the Norse town *Áth Cliath*; there is only one other reference to the form *Duibhlinn* as such in *Annála Uladh* and this occurs under the year 919 where it is recorded that the Vikings did battle with the Irish, a battle in which Niall Glúndubh, king of Ireland, was killed.

Although there is little reference to *Duibhlinn* in Irish-language sources it is worth noting that there are poems in the *Dinnsheanchas*, composed some time between the 10th and 12th centuries, about both *Duibhlinn* and *Áth Cliath*.

By the time the Normans captured Dublin in 1170 the city of *Dyflin* was very widely known on continental Europe and for this reason it did not occur to them to rename it. *Dyflin* is found in various forms and spellings in Norman-French documents: *Diveline*, *Develin*, *Dyvelybe*, *Divelyn* and suchlike. It must also be said that a small number of different forms of *Áth Cliathn*, such as *Adcleth* and *Hathcleyth*, are found in the same documents, although not at all as often. It is interesting to note that in the long Norman French poem *The Song of Dermot* it is stated that *Áth Cliath* is the name that was formerly used of *Duibhlinn*: *deueline, Une cite mult loe Que hathcleyth iert einz nome*. Forms such as *Divelin* were common down to the second half of the 16th century: *Divelin* it is the form which Campion uses in his *Historie of Ireland* to refer to the city but he uses *Dublin* when speaking of the county. After the 13th century the form *Dublin* is also found. It derives from the latinized form *Dublin(i)um* and from the adjective *Dublinensis*, but for a long period *Dublin* was probably just a written form differing greatly from what people actually used in speech.

Throughout all this time, however, the city was referred to by some version of *Áth Cliath* by speakers of Irish who, it should be remembered, constituted the largest linguistic group in the country until the 18th century. The element *baile*, ‘town’, was prefixed to the name some time in the 15th century – something that happened to many names of towns which had *Áth* as their first element: *Baile Átha Luain* (Athlone), *Baile Átha an Rí* (Athenry), *Baile Átha Buí* (Athboy), *Baile Átha Troim* (Trim), although note also *Baile Shláine* (Slane). The earliest example of this longer form in the Annals of Ulster is the following entry dated 1368, ‘o baile Atha-Cliath co baile Atha-Luain.’ By the year 1473, the Annals of Ulster reports that Edward Nugent son of the Baron of Delvin was brought to *Baile Átha Cliath* where he was executed. It is worth mentioning that the Anglo-Irish historian Richard Stanihurst, writing c. 1570, says that the Irish called Dublin *Bally Ath Cliath*. Wherever Irish has been the living language of the people since, the form *Baile Átha Cliath*, or a variant contracted form such as *Bleá Cliath*, has always been used to refer to the capital.