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Case Study

Pinpointing the Dello Irish Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland

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INTRODUCTION

A simple painless commercial ancestral Y chromosome DNA test will potentially provide one with the names of many hundreds of individuals with whom one shares a common male ancestor, but what often perplexes people is how one can potentially match lots of individuals with many different surnames? The answer is quite simple. Roughly 1,000 years ago one's direct medieval male ancestor, the first for example to call himself 'McEvoy' was living in close proximity to others with whom he was related but who inherited other surnames like McGuinness, O'Neill, McNiece, McConville and McStay. Given that 1,000 years have passed since paternally inherited surnames were first adopted, there will be many descendants of those individuals some of whom will today undergo commercial ancestral Y-DNA testing. Hence the surnames of one's medieval ancestor's neighbours will be revealed in today's Y-DNA test results.

Surnames in Ireland can still be found concentrated in the areas where they first appeared, or in the area where ones ancestors first settled. One can therefore use census data to determine the origin of the surnames that appear in one's Y-DNA results, identifying an area common to all, and reveal one's '**Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland.**' The paternal ancestral genetic homeland is the small area (usually within a 5 mile radius) where one's ancestors lived for hundreds if not thousands of years. It is the area where one's ancestor first inherited his surname, surrounded by relatives who inherited others. It is the area where ones ancestors left their mark in its placenames, its history, and in the DNA of its current inhabitants. Since modern science can pinpoint a paternal ancestral genetic homeland it can also be used to confirm it by DNA testing individuals from the pinpointed area.

Notes of caution!

1. In Ireland each of the estimated 1,500 distinct surnames had a single founding ancestor, that's an estimated 1,500 Adams from whom anyone with Irish ancestry can trace direct descent. But science has demonstrated that only 50% of individuals with a particular Irish surname will be related to the surnames founding ancestor, the other 50% of males will have an association that has arisen as a result of what are called 'non-paternal events,' usually a result of adoption or maternal transfer of the surname.
2. Often people are looking for their DNA results to trace back to a specific area. One must remember that the results reflect one's ancestor's neighbours from around 1,000 years ago. As a result if your recent Irish ancestors were descended from 9th Century Viking raiders, 12th Century conquering Normans, or 16th Century Planters, your DNA results will reflect earlier English, Scottish, Welsh, and possibly Scandinavian origin. I have estimated that only 60% of those with Irish ancestry are related to the pre-Christian Celtic tribes of Ireland. One must approach this process with an open mind!

Dello - A Y-DNA Case Study

Interpreting the Y-DNA results

To pinpoint a paternal ancestral genetic homeland one must first identify the surnames that appear as one's closest genetic matches in a commercial ancestral Y-DNA database, see **Figure 1**. Those surnames, particularly one's that *recur* among one's closest genetic matches, will typically reflect the surnames of one's medieval ancestral neighbours. Mr Dello's closest genetically recurring surname matches as revealed by commercial ancestral Y-DNA testing are detailed in **Figure 2**.

111 Marker Matches					
Genetic Distance	Last Name	Earliest Known Ancestor	Y-DNA Haplogroup	Terminal SNP	Match Date
4	McVey	James McVey b. 1787 NC and d. 1856 OH	I-L126	L126	9/5/2013
7	McEvoy		I-Y4751	Y4751	7/18/2016
7	McCavour		I-M223		3/15/2016
7	MacAvoy	James MacAvoy, b. ca. 1845 NY and d. 1904 NJ	I-Y4751	Y4751	10/23/2015
9	Durfee	John Durfee, b.1705 Ireland	I-M223		8/15/2013
9	Whipple	Matthew Whipple ca 1590, Bocking, Essex Co., Eng.	I-L126	L126	2/10/2013
10	Parker		I-M223		11/4/2016
10	Parker	Josey Parker	I-M223		4/28/2016
10	McConville	John McConville b. 1790	I-Y4751	Y4751	3/2/2014

Figure 1: Snapshot of test subject Dello's genetic surname matches at the 111 marker level as revealed in the FTDNA Y-DNA STR database. The more Y-DNA markers two people share the more recent their shared paternal ancestor once lived. The test subject's closest genetic surname matches are **NOT RANDOM**; they are dominated by Irish surnames like McVey/McEvoy which recur among his genetic relatives.

Test Subject	Haplogroup	Y-DNA Test Results				
		111 Markers		67 Markers		
		-4	-10	-4	-5	-6
Dello	I-M223	McVey/McEvoy/MacAvoy (x4)	Parker (x2) ¹	Strange (x2)	McCracken (x2)	O'Neill (x2)
					McGinnis/McGuinness (x3)	
					McNeese/McNeese (x2)	

Figure 2: The test subject's closest genetically recurring Y-DNA surname matches reveal an Irish paternal origin. Surnames are shown at the point at which they first occur as a genetic match, for example the first match to an individual named McVey/McEvoy/MacAvoy occurs at 107/111 markers, but not all McVeys/McEvoys/MacAvoy will match at that level. In brackets are the numbers of individuals with a particular surname that appear as a close genetic match at the 111 and 67 marker levels. The test subject's closest genetically recurring surname matches in the FTDNA database are dominated by **Gaelic Irish** surnames together with a scattering of **Scottish** surnames which reflects the close shared ancestry between both nations. The Irish associated surnames dominate among the test subject's matches which indicate that his paternal ancestor originated within Ireland approximately 1,000 years ago. ¹Members of the same close family recruited for DNA testing which may be excluded from further analysis.

Upon Y-DNA testing the test subject's closest genetic relative was named 'McVey' which is often a corruption of the more common McEvoy which also appears among his closest genetic matches, see **Figure 1** and **2**. This would indicate that the test subject's direct male ancestor was originally named 'McEvoy.' All Gaelic surnames have been extensively anglicised, and their spelling often changes considerably as one's ancestors moves further from the place of origin, and usually at the whim of an administrator who records a surname as he hears it. The multiple genetic matches to individuals named McEvoy (or variants thereof) indicates that the test subject is directly descended from a McEvoy-Adam; literally the first male (Adam) to take that surname who lived approximately 1,000 years ago (when paternally inherited

surnames first appeared). The 'McEvoy' surname is associated *exclusively* with Ireland, and a most recent paternal ancestral link with Ireland is supported by the test subject's genetically recurring surname matches which are dominated by Gaelic Irish surnames, see **Figure 2**.

The McEvoy and McVeigh Surnames

The 1911 Irish census data reveals individuals named McEvoy McEvey, Evoy, McAve, McAvroy, Mackavoy, McAvoy, McAyoy McVeigh, McVeagh, McVey and McWey; the most common of which were McEvoy and McVeigh. Since surnames arose in an agricultural based society, farmers with each surname can still be found concentrated in the area where their surname first appeared, or in the areas where one's ancestors first settled. An examination of the distribution of Catholic farmers named McEvoy and McVeigh (the two most common variants) reveals that they occur in 9 distinct groups within Ireland, see **Figure 3**. However, it would appear that the only area where McEvoy and McVeigh appear to have been used interchangeably is within Southeast Ulster, see **Figure 3**.

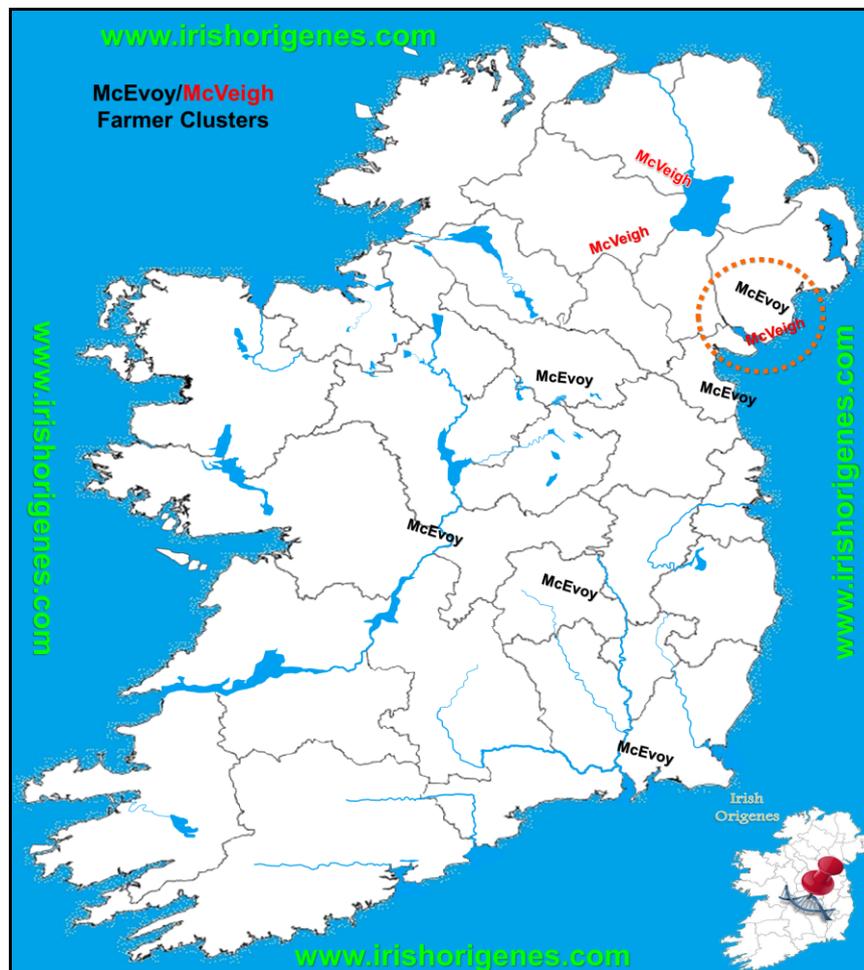


Figure 3: The McEvoy and McVeigh farming community. An examination of the distribution of farmers named McEvoy and McVeigh reveals 9 distinct groups or Clans within Ireland, one of whom the test subject shares common ancestry with. The only area where one finds McEvoy and McVeigh farmers (and where the surname was used interchangeably) is within Southeast Ulster (orange broken circle). Each surname is positioned in the location where farmers with that surname concentrate in early census data. The most common spelling is detailed in each location.

A Paternal Ancestral link with County Down

The method of using genetic surname matches as revealed by commercial ancestral Y-DNA testing to pinpoint one's paternal ancestral genetic homeland works by exploiting the link between the Y chromosome, surname and land which are typically passed from father to son through the generations. In the absence of a link to the land the process becomes more challenging. The link with the land is greatest amongst the farming community, and since farmers in Ireland can still be found farming the lands where their ancestor lived when he first inherited his surname, or where one's ancestor first settled within Ireland, one can plot where farmers with the surnames that appear in one's Y-DNA results originate, and identify an area common to all. This means for example, that a McEvoy from County Laois will upon Y-DNA testing be a genetic match to O'Mores, Lawlors and Fitzpatricks; surnames associated with the midlands of Ireland. In contrast, a McEvoy from Wexford will be a Y-DNA genetic match to individuals named O'Toole, O'Byrne and Kavanagh; surnames associated with the Southeast Ireland. Hence it is the test subject's closest Y-DNA genetically recurring Gaelic Irish surname matches that will reveal where his founding McEvoy ancestor originated.

The test subject's Y-DNA results revealed that his closest Gaelic Irish genetically recurring surname matches were to individuals named McGuinness, McNiece and O'Neill, see **Figure 2**. An examination of the distribution of farmers named McEvoy, McVeigh, McGuinness, McNiece and O'Neill reveals that they are only found together within Southeast Ulster, see **Figure 4**. An examination of the Surnames associated with Southeast Ulster (as it appears on the Irish Origenes Surnames map) reveals McEvoy and McVeigh farmers concentrated in County Down and surrounded by many of the surnames that appear as close recurring and singular genetic matches to the test subject, see **Figure 5**.

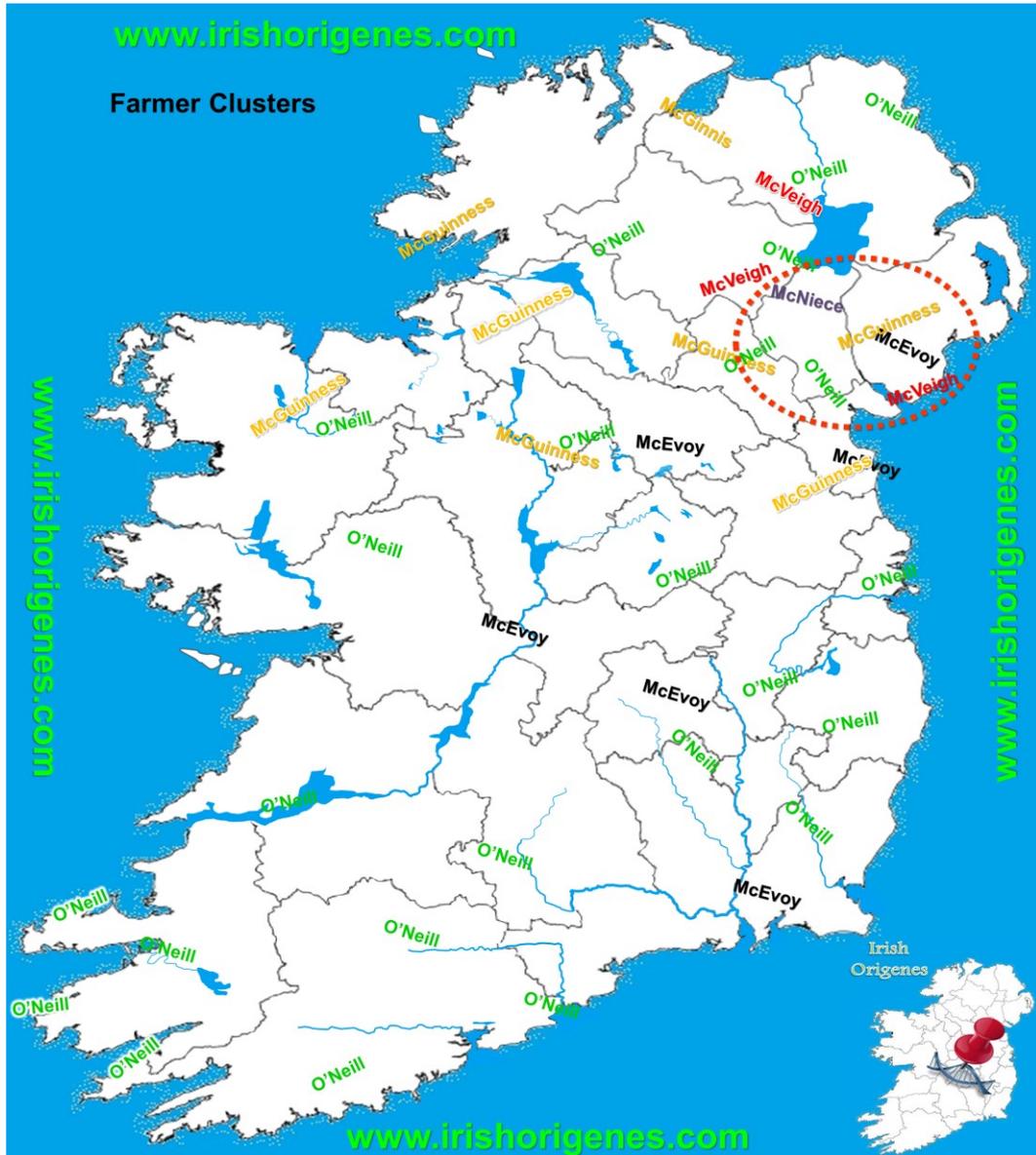


Figure 4: Overlay mapping of McEvoy, McVeigh, McGuinness, McNiece and O'Neill farming clusters reveals a paternal ancestral origin within Southeast Ulster. The McEvoy, McVeigh, McGuinness, McNiece and O'Neill surnames appear among the test subject's closest recurring genetic matches and by overlaying their respective farmer clusters it reveals that they only occur together within Southeast Ulster (red broken circle). It was in Southeast Ulster that a tribal group of related males lived, and among whom arose the surnames that were revealed as close recurring genetic matches to Mr Dello. Each surname is positioned in the location where farmers with that surname concentrate in early census data. The most common spelling is detailed in each location.



Figure 6: The Clan territories of Southeast Ulster. The test subject's Gaelic Irish 'McEvoy/McVeigh' ancestors (red arrows) lived in an area dominated by their McGuinness and O'Neill genetic relatives (orange arrows). The Gaelic Clans of Ulster employed the services of mercenary Scottish Clans like the MacDonalDs to keep the Norman Families to the south at bay. Image taken from the Irish Origenes Clans of Ireland map which was reconstructed based on Irish castle locations and their historically associated Clan or Family.

Mr Dello's Irish Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland

A close examination of the distribution of McEvoy and McVeigh farmers in early census data reveals that they concentrate in the farmland that surrounds the eastern Mourne Mountains in South County Down; and it is there that the test subject's Irish paternal ancestral genetic homeland is to be found, see **Figure 7**. It was there that the test subject's paternal ancestor lived approximately 1,000 years ago when he first took the McEvoy surname. His paternal ancestor lived among a Gaelic Irish tribal group among whom arose other surnames like O'Neill, McGuinness, McNiece, McStay and McConville. When one's ancestors have lived in an area for long enough, one will often find evidence of their association with that area in the surrounding castles and placenames. Strikingly, the McEvoy/McVeighs and their O'Neill, McGuinness, McStay and McConville genetic relatives have all left evidence of their long ancestral links with the surrounding area in its castles and townlands, see **Figure 7**. The 'townlands' are Ireland's oldest placenames and many mark the precise origin of a Clan or family. The test subject's McEvoy/McVeigh ancestors will also have left evidence of their ancestral links with this area in its history and in the DNA of the current inhabitants.

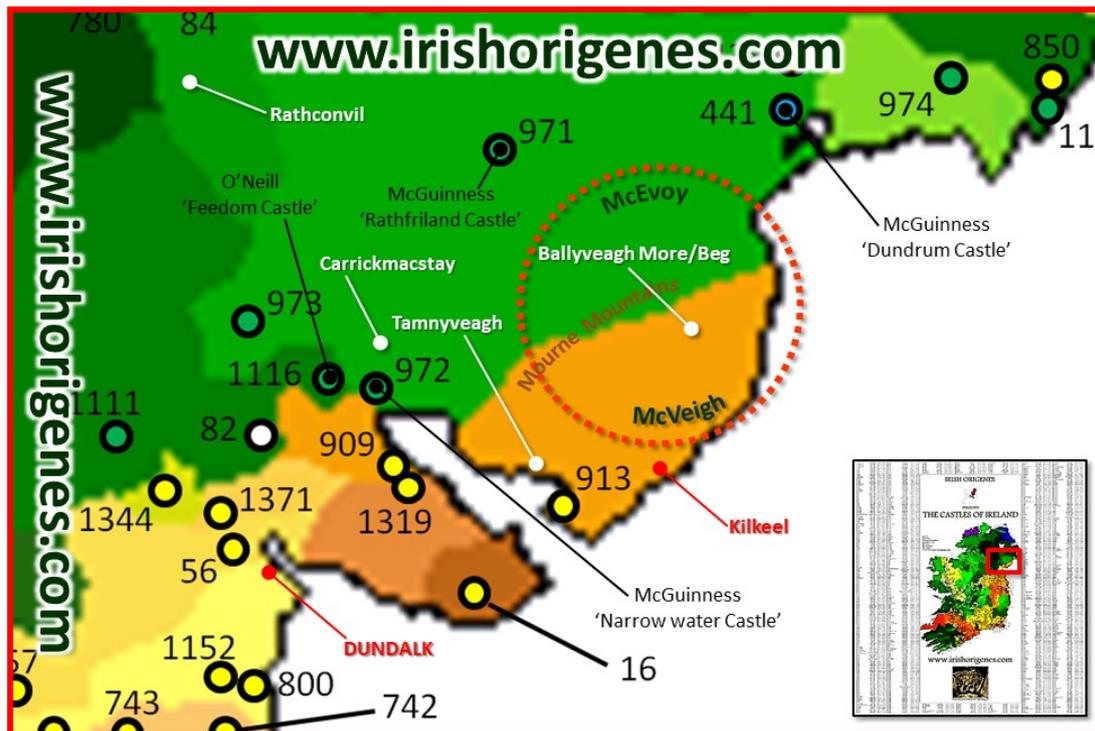


Figure 7: Mr Dello's Irish Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland. The test subject's Irish paternal ancestral genetic homeland (orange broken circle) lies in the farmland that surrounds the eastern Mourne Mountains in South County Down. His McEvoy founding ancestor lived surrounded by male relatives who acquired other surnames like O'Neill, McGuinness, McNiece, McStay and McConville; almost all of whom have left evidence of their long ancestral links with this area in its castles, townlands and placenames. His McEvoy ancestors will undoubtedly have left evidence of their long ancestral links with this area in its history and in the DNA of its current inhabitants. Image taken from the Irish Origenes Castles of Ireland Map.

Prehistoric Irish

Mr Dello's Irish-associated genetic matches are a mix of Gaelic Irish and Scottish surnames which is not uncommon and simply reflects the close shared ancestry between both nations; the result of many population movements back and forth over millennia. Distribution mapping of the Scottish Strange (Strang) and McCracken surnames (which appear as close recurring genetic matches in Figure 2) reveals that they are both associated with Southwest Scotland which lies closest to Southeast Ulster, see **Figure 8**. In fact, extensive Y-DNA Case Studies conducted at Irish and Scottish Origenes have identified the principal tribal markers within pre-Norman Gaelic Ireland, almost all of which (including the test subject's I-M223) have a Scottish equivalent along Scotland's west coast, see **Figure 9**. While the vast majority of these paternal tribal markers stem from the Celtic wave of migrations that began arriving in Britain and Ireland from around 800BC, the test subject's genetic marker predates the Celts, and represents the most notable of the pre-historic genetic markers found within Scotland and Ireland.

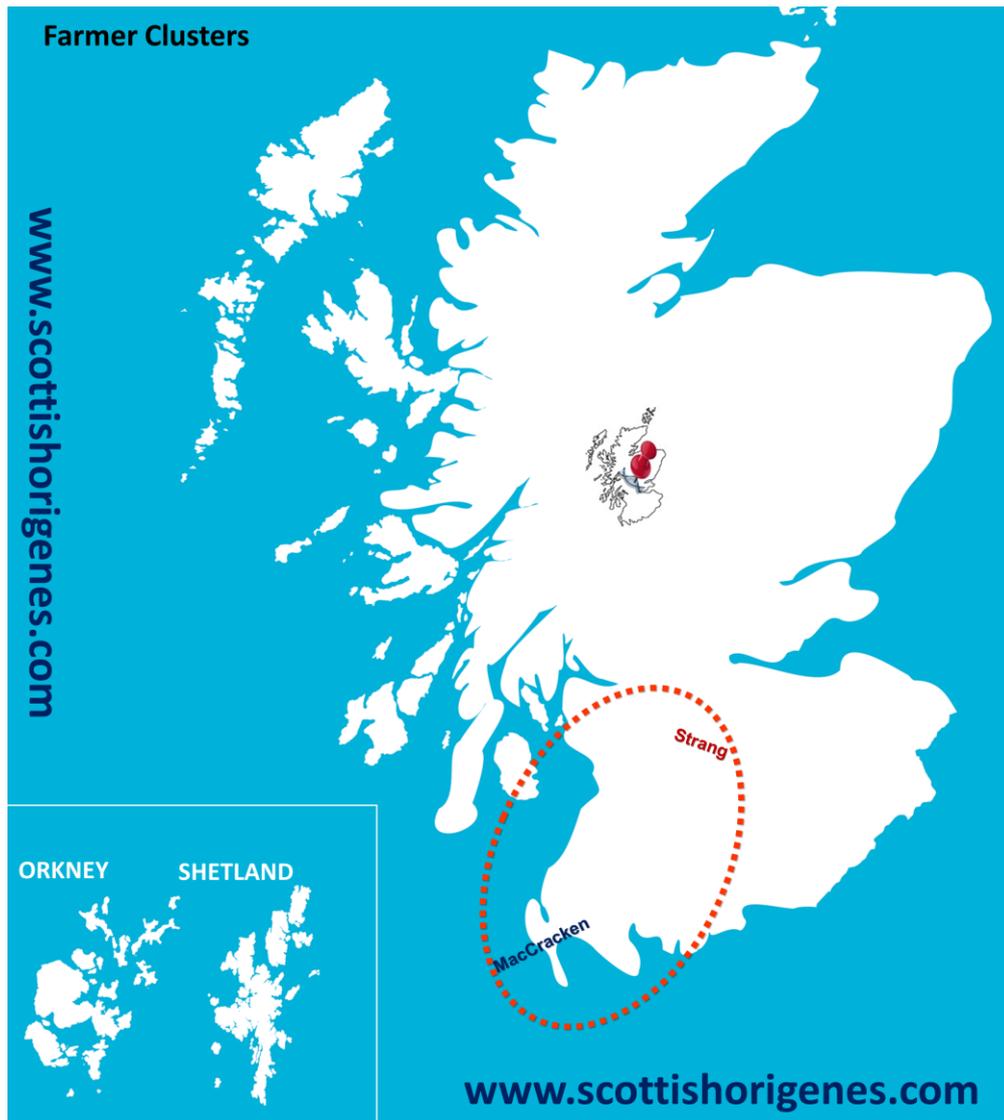


Figure 8: The McCracken and Strang surnames are associated with Southwest Scotland. Distribution mapping of McCracken and Strange farmers reveals that they are associated with Southwest Scotland (**red broken circle**) where the test subject's I-M223 Y-DNA genetic marker occurs within the Scottish male population. Each surname is positioned in the location where farmers with that surname concentrate in early census data. The most common spelling is detailed in each location.

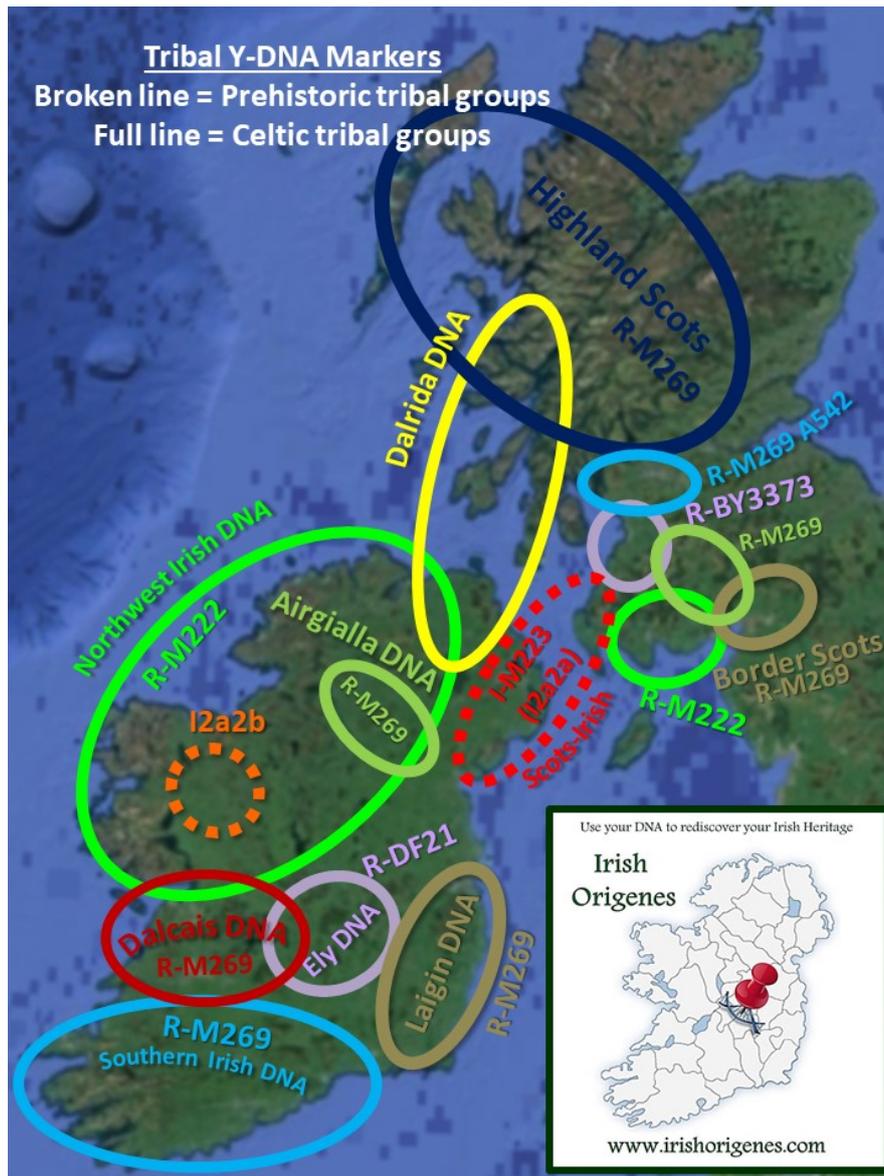


Figure 9: The Principal Y-DNA Tribal Markers of Ireland and Scotland. Scotland is Ireland's closest neighbour and there have been many movements of people back and forth between both nations over millennia; which is reflected in the principal Y-DNA tribal genetic markers found within both nations. Coloured circles demonstrate groups that share a common origin. The test subject's **I-M223** haplogroup is unique in that it is the only pre-historic marker identified to date that occurs with equal frequency within Scotland and Ireland (which makes it a truly quintessential Scots-Irish DNA marker).

How to confirm a pinpointed 'Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland'

One must keep in mind that this is a scientific DNA approach to identifying an origin.

As such, the connection to an identified area can be confirmed by Y-DNA testing McVeigh or McEvoy males from the farmland that surrounds the eastern edges of the Mourne Mountains in County Down.

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