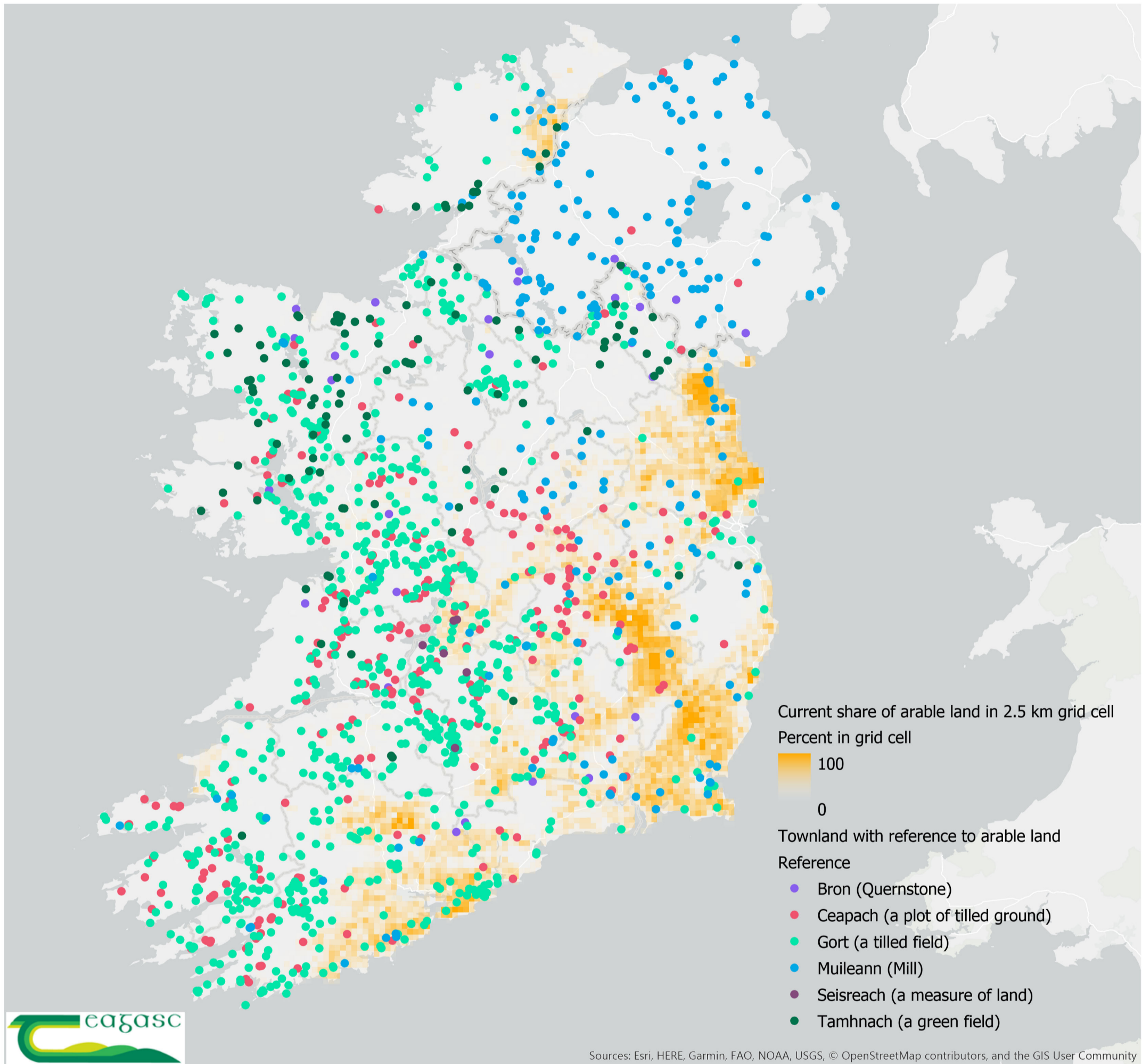


Arable farming then and now



The map shows Irish townlands with a reference to arable practices in their names and compares them to the current distribution of cropland. Looking at placenames provides a glimpse of arable agriculture in the past. The references are based on the Irish language townland names (except in Northern Ireland where these are not easily available) and have been identified in P. W. Joyce's Irish Names of Places.

The map shows the highest density of townlands referring to arable agriculture are in the West, 'Gort' (a tilled field) being the most common reference. 'Ceapach' (tilled ground) is less common but shows a similar distribution. 'Tamhnach' occurs mainly in Connacht. Other references are very rare, except for 'Muileann' which refers to a mill. The reason for 'Muileann' being most common in Northern Ireland is that it is the only reference that can be easily identified in anglicised townland names. Interestingly, the current extent of cropland shows very few references to arable land in the townland names. This does not mean there was no arable land in the past but reflects a different naming culture.

Projection: Web Mercator (auxiliary sphere)

Datasets used:
OSI National Statutory Boundaries - Townlands
OSNI Townland boundaries
Land Parcel identification System
Basemap: ESRI Grey Canvas

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