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User-group identity in Scandinavian place-names

PhD (by Research Publications)

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Submitted to the Postgraduate Office, College of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Edinburgh, to be evaluated for the degree
PhD (by Research Publications)

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Content:

1. Introduction and presentation of submitted work
2. Review article 'Fashion, nostalgia and limitation. Scandinavian place-names abroad'
3. Submitted articles:

'Sjønamn på medfjella', in *Namn og Nemne* 15/1998 (:21-31) [4.500 words]

'Norse Topographical Names on the West Coast of Scotland', in *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350 Contact, conflict and co-existence*, ed. by J. Adams and K. Holman, Brepols, 2004, (:97-108) [5.500 words]

'Explorers, Raiders and Settlers. The Norse Impact on Hebridean Place-Names', in *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names*, ed. by P Gammeltoft, C Hough and D Waugh, 2005 (:141-56) [6.500 words]

'Scandinavian-American place-names as viewed from the Old World, in *Language Contact Across the Atlantic*, ed. by I Clarkson and S Ureland, Tübingen, 1996 (:255-67) [6.000 words]

(Book handed in separately :)

Mål og med. Målføre og médnamn frå Smøla, Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim 2000, pp. 305, [c. 100.000 words]



I declare that the submitted work is my own.

Edinburgh, 5 August 2008

Published work proposed to be evaluated for the degree PhD (by Research Publications)

I have from my publications over the last ten years selected one book and four articles that I believe show both theoretical and methodological consistency within the field of onomastics. I would like the following publications to be considered for the degree PhD by Publication.

Mål og med. Målføre og médnamn frå Smøla, Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim 2000, pp. 305, [c. 100.000 words]

‘Sjønamn på medfjella’, in *Namn og Nemne* 15/1998 (:21-31) [4.500 words]

‘Norse Topographical Names on the West Coast of Scotland’, in *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350 Contact, conflict and co-existence*, ed. by J. Adams and K. Holman, Brepols, 2004, (:97-108) [5.500 words]

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‘Scandinavian-American place-names as viewed from the Old World, in *Language Contact Across the Atlantic*, ed. by I Clarkson and S Ureland, Tübingen, 1996 (:255-67) [6.000 words]

In addition to the five published pieces of work I submit an essay called ‘Fashion, Limitation and Nostalgia: Scandinavian Place-names Abroad’ [12.000 words] which discusses the underlying theory in the selected published work. I find that the most appropriate way to outline this theory is in the form of an academic article where the importance of relating place-names to various user-groups is argued for.

First, however, is a short presentation of the chosen texts, outlining the main theory and argument in the respective work.

Brief presentation of the chosen texts

The main work of the selected texts is the book *Mål og med. Målføre og médnamn frå Smøla*, Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim 2000, pp. 305. In short, it is an analysis of c. 400 fishing meads, collected from written sources and from active fishermen, and supplied with land-kennings and information about usage, the location, traditions about the place and/or name etc. The main corpus of the volume is a linguistic analysis of the name inventory. As a base for the linguistic analysis, there is a detailed examination of the local dialect, including a breakdown into phonemic units, and a section on the historic and cultural frame surrounding the use of meads. Each individual name entry is supplied with information about the practical usage of the location, such as the kind of fish likely to be caught there, the fishing tools best applied, particular significance of weather, ocean currents and depths. This is done in the hope that it will create an overall picture on how the name-givers, the fishermen, experience their world and that it will expose how names are coined within this particular milieu. It is, as far as I know, the largest and most exhaustive analysis of its kind from Norway. Making extensive use

of the book in a study of meads from Shetland, Professor Gunnel Melchers (2005:165) says that 'Kruse's work is of the utmost interest for comparative studies'.

The personal background for the choice of topic for this book is mainly my own family connection to the island of Smøla. The fact that I have partly grown up on the island and therefore have knowledge and close personal ties to the landscape and people is probably not vital for such a study but it certainly is of great help. One thing is the analysis of the dialect and the phonemic transcription of the names which were made far less painful and probably a lot more accurate because of my intimate knowledge of the local dialect. Another matter, helped by the fact that I was not considered a total outsider, has to do with the special nature of meads within a fishing community. Fishing meads are often surrounded by much secrecy. They are, or used to be, the key to good fishing. You had, as a fisherman, to know the precise locations where fish were found at certain times of the day, of the year and at given currents. Further, the fewer who shared this hard-earned knowledge, the fewer had to share the catch, and, as a consequence, knowledge about good meads was guarded as well kept secrets. I was, in the early days of my project, by several people warned that it was doomed to be a failure because the fishermen would not pass on their knowledge. I did not, however, experience this problem, and I believe that this can partly be explained by the fact that I was considered a local, although not a competing fisherman. Also, the knowledge of meads is now vanishing rapidly – with new technology replacing old know-how – and most fishermen I interviewed were actually pleased to see that this information was collected and registered before it was too late.

I promised my informants that my book was not going to be a hand-book on where to find the best fishing-grounds in the area, and so I chose not to give the exact positions, neither grid nor GPS references, of the fishing-grounds. Apart from a rough indication on a relatively small scaled map the fishing-meads are only indicated by the crossing mead-lines using the names of the land-kennings of the local fishermen. This means in practice that in order to find the actual fishing-grounds you will have to be fairly local to recognize the names of the locations given.

The exceptionally local and socially limited nature of many of the names was a fascinating discovery that came out of my research. I had of course expected to find that names of locations like skerries and small islands would be known only within a limited group of people who lives close to the locations. Such names would clearly fall into the group of names which Magnus Olsen (1930) calls either 'gardens navn', or 'bygdens navn', i.e. names known only within a limited distance away from the locations by people who have use for referring to these locations in their daily life within a farm or a village. What I did not quite expect to find was that certain other names had an exclusive provenance to the local fishermen only. Points of orientation that fishermen use when navigating, such as skerries, islands, hills and mountains, very often carry names that reflect this type of useage.

The article 'Sjønamn på médfjella', in *Namn og Nemne* 15/1998 (:21-31), explores further how fishermen establish a naming practice unique to their community. The article partly utilizes name data from my book on meads and investigates an aspect of fishermen's use of names while they are at sea. Only briefly touched upon in *Mål og méd*, this topic is further documented and discussed. The article also challenges Jakob Jakobsen's theory that taboo naming is behind the often unusual onomasticon of fishermen. I propose that a type of argot within an exclusive name user group can better explain this type of naming, rather than having to construct theories of taboos in the naming process.

User group theory is also central in my criticism of WFH Nicolaisen's idea that the Norse could have left many names on the Scottish west coast littoral without ever having settled there. In the article 'Norse Topographical Names on the West Coast of Scotland', in *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350 Contact, conflict and co-existence*, ed. by J. Adams and K. Holman, Brepols, 2004 (:97-108), I argue against Nicolaisen's hypothesis, showing how it contradicts both Norse practice of naming elsewhere in their colonies as well as onomastic theory. The latter is based on a discussion about how names come about as a result of certain needs within a community and how they are not likely to be passed on outside a community without a certain degree of permanence of settlement or work situation. In her book *Northern Conquest*, Katherine Holman (2007) calls the study 'important' and refers from it in detail.

Naming practice as a reflection of an incoming group's gradual intensified use of a new landscape is argued for in the article 'Explorers, Raiders and Settlers. The Norse Impact on Hebridean Place-Names', in *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names*, ed. by P Gammeltoft, C Hough and D Waugh, 2005 (:141-56). The paper discusses the early contact and subsequent settlement pattern of the Norse on the Scottish west coast, arguing the case that there is a stratum of island names dating from the first contact the Norse had with the native population, adopting existing names on landmarks important for navigation, and after this initial contact consistently rejecting all native names. Ian Tait (2006:129) calls in a review the article a 'superb analysis'.

I have in several articles studied Scandinavian-American speech and place-names, and from these I chose to put forward the article 'Scandinavian-American place-names as viewed from the Old World, in *Language Contact Across the Atlantic*, ed. by I Clarkson and S Ureland, Tübingen, 1996 (:255-67). Here, the main topic is again how a certain user group of names will establish a name inventory unique to the group, based on tradition and need. The article demonstrates how certain naming patterns are constant over a time-span of a thousand years and how other parts of the naming process is altered as a result of changes in society and changing needs of the namers.

I believe that there is a theoretical consistency throughout the book and the articles, a theory which is developed more explicitly in the following article, 'Fashion, nostalgia and limitation. Scandinavian place-names abroad'.

References:

Katherine Holman, *The Northern Conquest. Vikings in Britain and Ireland*, Signal Books, 2007

Gunnel Melchers, 'Shetland Mead Names – Some Notes on their Structure and Character', in P. Gammeltoft, C. Hough and D. Waugh, eds., *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region. The Evidence of Names*, Edinburgh, Nottingham and Uppsala 2005.

Ian Tait, Review of *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names*, ed. by P Gammeltoft, C Hough and D Waugh, 2005, in *NOMINA* 30:126-30

Fashion, Limitation and Nostalgia: Scandinavian Place-Names Abroad

When I was in the American Mid-West I was struck by the way the Scandinavian-Americans had chosen certain cultural expressions to convey their uniqueness as a group. Cultural features with an origin in the home countries had been reinforced to an almost iconic status. The chosen items were sometimes surprises. Within the culinary section of culture the most remarkable icon was arguably *lutefisk*, a kind of cured fish that you would not think would travel well – in any sense of the word. *Lutefisk* is cod or ling that is first salted, then dried, then nearly dissolved in strong lye before it is cooked to gain a jelly-like consistency. It is a dish that is found on the Christmas table of a few die-hard traditionalists in Norway and Sweden. However, in the American Mid-West the pungent smell of *lutefisk* announces better than any poster the way to the church dinner or any other congregation of more than two Scandinavian-Americans. A popular bumper sticker, 'Legalize lutefisk', announces to the world that this car is owned by a Scandinavian-American with a sense of humour.

The need to proclaim this, as well as the need to feel obliged to consume dubious tribal food, illustrates how important it is for many people to feel part of a group. Apart from conscious choices to declare one's attachment to a faction like the one mentioned, we all are part of various social categories, patterns or groups, whether we are conscious of it or not. The following pages will argue the case that it is of importance to the historical linguist to take into consideration that emigrants form a unique socio-ethnic faction whose linguistic choices will be governed by influences that sometimes are different from those they left behind in the home country. My concern will be how this influences the naming patterns and naming motives of Scandinavians who settled outside of Scandinavia.

Before any discussion of possible motives behind place-names it is sobering to be reminded that place-names first and foremost are there as place-specific linguistic tags and that this fact also concerns the motive behind the naming process. As George R. Stewart (1975:86) says: 'all place-names arise from a single motivation, that is, the desire to distinguish and to separate a particular place from places in general'. Any further attempt to reconstruct what may have been the finer motive behind the coining of place-names is an uncertain activity. Robert M. Rennick (1984:xii) goes further:

[...] researching the naming process is, at best, a difficult undertaking. [...] Since very few namers ever recorded their reasons for naming, let alone the event that led to the naming, and traditional accounts have always been suspect, we invariably find ourselves accepting, or even seeking, *ex post facto* explanations.

Rennick here has in mind the mostly relatively young American place-names. His reminder is painfully more relevant in a European context, with place-names of a much higher age, created in time periods with very different mind frames, values and priorities.

Having acknowledged these reminders of prudence, it is, however, unacceptable to go as far as to say that any attempt to unravel the motivation behind names is futile. Rennick is right to announce caution when it comes to single names and individual namers, but as such it is a warning that is relevant to the explanation behind any individual's action in the past. When it comes to place-names, they very often fall into categories and form patterns that reflect several individuals' onomastic behaviour rather than only one individual's. My hope is that by comparing typologically similar place-names coined in the same language over various time periods and locations, we may be able to distil how certain patterns of naming behavior can change over time and space, and we may even be able to suggest possible reasons behind these changes. In order to provide ourselves with a set of tools for this task, we should first establish a few terms and concepts.

Central in the study of place-names are the terms *appellative*, which has a characterizing function, e.g. 'town', 'hill', 'river', and *name* or *proprium*, which has a

distinguishing function, e.g. Edinburgh, Ben Nevis, the Clyde. Some grammarians distinguish between (*pure*) *propria* and *characterizing names* ('*karakteriserende Navne*' in Diderichsen 1962:34, 40)

Olav Beito (1986:153-4 [my translation]) says:

Characterizing names are in a position between appellatives and pure *propria*. Like appellatives they are more or less characterizing the object, but as *propria* they are able to distinguish it from other objects of the same type.

[...]

Place-names develop from characterizing names to pure *propria* when the semantic link with the origin is uncertain or broken.

The distinction between what we could also call meaningful and non-meaningful names reminds us of the fact that place-names do not *need* to carry meaning. Meaning is an extra quality that names *may* have but certainly not *must* have. The main function of a name is as an address tag and as such it is in principle irrelevant if we understand the semantic content of it or not. A further principle, however, is that names, at the moment of coining, do carry meaning. 'Meaning' is here a wide concept including topographical terms as well as references to other implications concerning the location which is being named. It seems to be the case that the oldest names in Scandinavia basically had to be topographically justified (Pamp 1976).

The formal distinction between characterizing names and pure *propria* is theoretically unproblematic. It leaves, however, one aspect of the content side of place-names untouched, namely how names, in addition to carrying a facultative appellative meaning, also may have a further associative side to them. While the semantic, characterizing meaning to *Edinburgh* is long lost, most people will associate the name with such qualities as 'capital of Scotland' and 'where the Military Tattoo takes place' etc. Some names, more than others, have a very strong associative aspect. It is nearly impossible to think about *Venice* without instantly imagining 'canals' or *Cairo* without picturing 'pyramids'.

Kurt Zilliacus (1975)¹ recognizes this wider definition of what a *proprium* might imply, and he suggests three components that may be attached to a name, where only the first is constituting and compulsory and the other two are facultative sides to a name:

1. the place identifying quality
2. the appellative meaning
3. the associative side

We shall here focus on the latter two aspects of the *proprium* - more specifically the place-name - and investigate if the relative importance of these two possible qualities, the appellative meaning and the associative side, might change over time and location. As a general rule we assume that all denominations initially will have sprung from some form of descriptive expression, where in most cases there will have been an appellative meaning attached to the name, which over time may or may not have been obscured - of course without any affect on the main denominative quality of the name. However, instantly or over time another aspect may be attached to a place-name. This is not attached to the semantic, appellative side of the name but is rather linked to the function the location itself will have had in history, in society or in peoples' minds in general. Place-names with a heavy associative side to them are for example *Waterloo*, *Mecca*, *Auschwitz*. Although to a Norwegian the name *Eidsvoll* easily reveals its appellative reference, it is not likely that the semantic side of the name is much present in the mind of anyone hearing this name mentioned. In most cases the dominant side of this name will be the historical symbolism it carries as the place where the constitution of Norway was signed in 1814.

The associative side of a name relates to its function within the group of users of the name, and the following discussion will be concerned with the concept of *groups of name*

¹ For a brief discussion in English see Zilliacus 1997.

users: in this context more concretely how emigrants participate in a different *onomastic community* and share a different *group onomasticon*² in relation to those who stayed behind. An onomastically based definition of a group will by its nature have members sharing some form of a common locality. In society, group and group affinity are relative concepts and so is onomastic community. An individual may belong to several onomastic communities at the same time and at different degrees. There will be varying degrees of membership of such communities in terms of knowledge, participation and identification with the community. For example, a Scandinavian immigrant to North America would to a certain degree have been able to participate in an onomastic community that shared the knowledge of major American cities, but he or she would not have been a fully fledged member of this onomastic community at the same level as a native who would have a much more detailed knowledge about the names and perhaps would have taken part in actually creating the names of the group onomasticon. As individuals we migrate over time through a number of name user groups and therefore a number of onomastica. This can be illustrated through the example of a typical emigrant from Norway to America. If he was living on the coast he would be likely to be from a combined fishing and farming community. When fishing with others, he would relate to the topography with a specialized onomasticon used only at sea. When discussing matters concerning the farm with others living there he would have used near-horizon names only familiar to the little circle of people living on the farm. With fellow farmers from the village he would have made use of names of features they would have had a shared knowledge of, such as lakes, roads, other farms, common grazing land etc. As an emigrant on board the ship across the Atlantic he would have had to make use of an onomasticon shared by other Norwegians on board, relating both to the land they had left and the land they would arrive in, and once settled on the Great Plains he would be taking part in establishing a new set of near-horizon names on his own plot of land and a new onomasticon shared with his local fellow settlers. Over time, he would also have had to communicate names with English-speaking administrators, often involving translated or phonologically adapted names. In this way an individual's onomastic repertoire will include the whole range of variety which is at his or her disposal as a member of many name user groups. The various onomastica available to us all as members of different user groups will each in principle not only have a unique inventory of appellatives and names but also a unique naming practice.

Fashion and analogy

We often see personal names as reflexions of fashion and we expect people born in a certain decade to carry names that were popular at that time, so that for example Norwegian females plumed with names like *Sunniva* and *Cecilie* are more likely to be born after 1980 than in the 1950s. In the same way we expect brand names, names of companies, shops etc. to be linguistic expressions of changing time periods. Place-names, on the other hand, we tend to experience as separate entities without any contact to other place-names, and many people have an idea of place-names as an exceptionally conservative part of the linguistic system, rather timeless and above the fashion of the moment. This, however, is not the case. Just like personal names place-names or place-name types may fall in and out of fashion. Conspicuous distribution patterns in time and space of place-names or place-name elements reveal analogy or imitative naming at work.

WFH Nicolaisen (1991:147) has rightly pointed out that there is a degree of analogy behind all naming. However, degrees can be arranged along a scale, where at the ultimate end of the scale of analogy we find distribution patterns of certain place-names that have no factual basis in the area they occur but are motivated solely by association with other place-

² The term *onomasticon*, 'list of names', is here related to the place-name, the toponym, and to the community of users, i.e. meaning 'the place-name inventory of a name user group'. This usage of the term is different to e.g. WFH Nicolaisen's (1980b:41-2), who uses the term related to the individual.

names or place-name elements. An essential question to pose in this context is at what social level this type of analogy works. Is it on the level of the individual or are there social forces behind it? Undoubtedly, WFH Nicolaisen (1980b:41-2) is right to insist that we as individuals carry our own onomasticon, a name inventory uniquely based on our personal histories, as I have exemplified above. However, when distribution patterns and changes over time are observed we must clearly emphasise the social side, the onomastic community. In order to establish various kinds of social identity language often contains semiotic systems with a function to construct in-group solidarity. Slang is an easily recognisable practise that demarcates and differentiates one particular social group, namely young people, in a kind of intra-generational solidarity, and lingo functions in the same way within speech communities formed, for instance, by certain professions. Although an onomasticon within a group is not normally defined along generational or professional lines and is not ruled by the laws of fashion in any way similar to slang or lingo, it still can be a linguistic identity maker which can generate in-group solidarity, normally defined along geographical terms but sometimes also along professional divisions (Kruse 1998).

Ethnologists have shown how group identity is easily created in expatriate circumstances. In a study of the recent influx of Norwegians in the bordering Swedish landscape of Bohuslän, Anders Gustavsson (2005) demonstrates how both the Norwegians and the Swedes experience strong identity along the lines of 'us' as opposed to 'those others'. However, the Norwegian immigrants' 'us' does not necessarily include all Norwegians but rather exclusively those who have shared the experience of being a Norwegian immigrant to Bohuslän. This type of in-group solidarity could easily spur the motivation to establish cultural and linguistic demarcations to, in this case, Swedes, but also to Norwegians back home, and, if transferred to onomastically virgin land, we can imagine that there may exist a certain motivation among settlers to differentiate themselves from those back home, based on a feeling of a shared experience.

Focusing on the linguistic side of immigrants' culture, on the settlers as a speech community, it is evident that such a group will show differences from the sort of local speech community they left behind. Even if settlers' communities could often consist of many individuals from the same region back home, there would always be settlers from other areas, resulting in generalization or centralization of dialect variation, as described among Norwegian-Americans by Einar Haugen (1953 II: 350-3), or more recently among Norwegians in Spitsbergen by Brit Mæhlum (1992). In a similar way, we must assume that dialectal features in the onomasticon tend to be levelled in immigrant societies. Although it is sometimes certainly possible to point to dialectal features in the onomasticon of settlers, the general tendency is that their toponyms are created from a blended and dialectally neutralized inventory of appellatives. Furthermore, in situations where settlers establish themselves among native speakers of prestigious languages, as the Scandinavian settlers did in North America, there will be borrowing of appellatives and also naming methods from the dominant language (Kruse 1991).

Taking this perspective as the basis, we will now discuss how Scandinavians, when they settled abroad, chose to name their new environments. Over the last 1200 years large numbers of Scandinavians have emigrated and settled new land in two distinct periods, namely during the Viking Age from *c.* 800-1050 and then again during the much more recent exodus to North America, which started as early as in the first half of the 17th century but as a large scale emigration took place only from *c.* 1850-1920. A relevant question to ask is to what degree the naming strategies were similar in the two periods a millennium apart. I will try to limit my task by mainly investigating only a few generic elements and appellatives used in the creation of names.

Same as in Scandinavia

Firstly, it is important to remind ourselves of the fact that the naming done in what we, for the sake of convenience, will call the 'colonies', fundamentally is the same as in the

homelands. As part of their linguistic inheritance emigrants from Scandinavia will have brought with them a lexicon of appellatives that could be applied to making names and they will have brought with them an onomasticon in the form of names of locations they left behind as well as a set of rules for how to make new names. The similarities are evident especially in the first period of settlement. There may be differences in frequency, distribution patterns and composition, but only rarely are the naming elements themselves and the naming practices fundamentally different in the colonies. In the second period, the exodus to America, both the lexicon applied and the rules for name making are much more innovative. However, as we will see, many of these innovations are also used in Scandinavia at the same time.

Intensely used elements in the early settled colonies, such as *býr*, *setr*, *staðir* etc., are in use at the same time in Scandinavia proper when new land is won for cultivation. Habitative elements that are no longer productive in the homelands are of course not employed in the colonies. The farm name element *-vin*, f., had been utilised in Scandinavia earlier in the Iron Age to name large, centrally located farms on good soil. These names are never composed with Christian personal names, thus the productive life of this element is not likely to have stretched into periods with Christian influence, brought to Scandinavia with Viking activities. This is confirmed by the near total absence of the element *-vin* in Scandinavian farm names abroad.³

The Viking *adventus* comes at a time when individuals are beginning to be reflected in place-names. What may be the proud settler of a newly established farm (or possibly a later user, see note 5) is proclaimed both in Scandinavia and in the colonies: *Ellevset*, (*Eilífr*) in Norway, *Torrisdale* (*Porgisl/Porgils*) in Scotland, and in *Egilsstaðir* in Iceland.

The increase in travel created a need for more precise names. In a locally restricted neighbourhood with relatively little communication with the world outside, farms can carry names like *Vík* and *Hlíð* and still be good names in the sense that they are monoreferential: no other farms within the limited group of name users carry similar names. However, when the horizon of users' onomasticon widened as a result of the Viking expeditions and the extensive settlement that followed, the precision level needed to increase so that new names became as monoreferential as possible. Adding specifics was the obvious method, and, although there are also *Wick* (Caithness), *Uig* (Hebrides) and *Vík* (Southern Iceland) in the newly settled areas, the norm is that new names were compounds: *Reykjavík*, *Keflavík*, *Njardvík*, *Grindavík* (all on Reykjanes, Iceland).

It may have been a general need to increase the precision level or it may have been an analogy arising from the practice in the colonies that reshaped a number of previously simplex names in Norway. During the Middle Ages many simplex nature names had generics fixed to them: *Njót* became *Njótarey* (before 1300), *Hvínir* became *Hvínisfjörðr* etc., and many farms that initially carried simplex names made up of habitative elements of the relatively younger type: *Setr*, *Porp*, *Pveit* and *Ruð* had specifics added to them: *Grímsrud*, *Brattarud* etc. (Rygh, Indl.:17-19).⁴

West Norwegian mountains

While I was working on a project aiming to collect all the names possible in the county of Møre and Romsdal on the west coast of Norway, we registered the following appellatives used within the county for referring to various shapes of heights in the landscape (see

³ In Shetland and Orkneys *vin* is found quite frequently in topographical names but not in habitative names (Jakobsen 1936:116-9) – a fact that indicates that the meaning 'natural meadow' must still have been alive at the time of the exodus but that it was not productive as a habitative element any longer.

⁴ Rygh points out that as a rule we should not expect a personal name in composition with *-ruð* to be the founder of the farm. Following Rygh's argument, this will often be the case also with the other relatively younger habitative elements in Norway, and we should bear in mind that it may well be the case also for similar names in the colonies.

Hallaråker 1995:166-8):

Height: *høgding, berg, bjørg, fjell, høgd, ås*
 Peaked summit: *horn, nibbe, nipe, nut, nyk, pigg, pik, snydde, tigg, tind*
 Rounded summit: *hol, holt, hovde, hø, høgd, klepp, klimp, knatt, knoll, koll, kolt, nakk(e), skolt*
 Rocky hill or level: *benk, flå, hammar, hause, hjell, hylle, knaus, knubb, lem, nabb, naus, nobb, pall, pell, skage, slå, snage, trapp*
 Ridge: *hals, hei, kjøl, kvelv, leite, pall, rabb, rande, range, rank, res, ris, rim(e), rind(e), robb, rong, rør, rygg, snate, synd, vor*
 Standing out part of a mountain: *aksel, egg, ende, hytt, nase, nos, nov*
 Hill: *bell, haug, hol, holter, klump, knubb, knøtt, kul, tuve*
 Slope: *skråning, bakke, braut, brekke, halling, kleiv, li, side, sla, slege, slå*
 Edge: *bard, breidd, brot, brun, bryn, kant, librun, rip, rør, trip*
 Rockface: *flaug, flog, flogberg, heng, staup, stup, ufs*

Similar long lists of appellatives - with local variations - are documented from other areas on the west coast of Norway. Some of these appellatives are quite local, others are regarded old-fashioned and perhaps only known to old people, again others can be classified as rare and unusual, but the majority of these appellatives are alive in the sense that their characterising meaning is known to most people, at least to those living in the countryside and who are in frequent contact with the topography described. Used in names we here see illustrated the term *nut*, m., 'pointed top' and *koll*, m., 'rounded mountain'.



Figure 1, Freikollen, photo: Per Kvalvik



Figure 2, *Malmangernuten*, photo: Magne Fitjar

Some mountain names are metaphoric; the descriptive part of their semantic content is separated and is transferred to a description of a mountain shape. Along the coast of Norway there are several mountains with one steep side named with *keip*, m., 'angle-shaped oar-rest'. Likewise, *hest*, m., 'horse' is used several places, in simplex names or as a generic, for distinctly protruding headlands or islands, presumably comparing the shape of the pronounced headland with a horse charging forward. When there is a systematic use of certain originally non-topographical terms in topographical names along the coast, implying certain characteristics with the designatum, they should qualify to be categorized as appellatives. In such cases the metaphor as such is dead because it has become lexicalised - it has become a lexeme in its own right; the transferred meaning concerning topography has become so established that it is regarded as one of the meanings of the word. Several of these original metaphors which have become part of the inventory of appellatives related to shapes of mountains are transferred from body-parts: the descriptive element in *rygg*, m., 'back-side', is used to picture a long stretched ridge shaped like the back of an animal; *aksel*, f., 'shoulder', describes the shoulder side of a large mountain, and *horn*, n., 'horn', designates peaked mountains similar to a horned animal. If we were to investigate the specific element of the names we would of course find even further variety, indicating shape, colour, location, ownership, vegetation, usage, etc. Even a function of the hills on the horizon as a sort of sun-dial is evident in frequent names such as *Middagshøa*, ('mid-day-hill'), and fishermen and sailors could have their own names for mountains when used as landmarks for navigation (see Kruse 1998). In addition to names of this kind, which still carry characterising meanings, a great number of the mountains of course carry names that eventually will have become pure propria, i.e. over time their semantic content will have become opaque to the users of the names.

The point of this brief excursion into mountain naming on the west coast of Norway is to indicate a naming tradition as varied as the landscape it describes. Today's inventory of mountain names is created over a time period of thousands of years and many shifting usages, viewpoints and linguistic changes. Over time, the vocabulary creating the specific element of names will have changed, and appellatives will have appeared and fallen out of fashion in the sense that they may have been productively used to create names only at limited time periods.

Staffan Nyström (1988) has shown that in Daga, Eastern Södermanland, Sweden, the locals have an inventory of appellatives used for heights that is much wider than those actively used for name formation, and so, although we may be impressed by the modern west-Norwegian farmer's active knowledge of appellatives, we cannot take for granted that all the appellatives the farmer knows will be actively used to create new place-names. One way to investigate to what extent an inventory of possible appellatives is active in the sense that it may be applied to the production of new names is to examine the naming behaviour of farmers from Vestlandet when a substantial part of the population emigrated to new lands twelve hundred years ago and then again one hundred and fifty years ago. There is no reason to believe that the active knowledge of appellatives will have been less a thousand years or one hundred and fifty years ago, but will the emigrants' inventory of appellatives have been active or productive?

Of all the possibilities that probably existed to name a mountain or hill on the west coast of Norway during the Viking period, *fjall*, n., or - most frequently - the unbroken form, *fell*, is completely dominant in names of heights in the North Atlantic settlements. For example, in an exceptionally mountainous island like Harris in the Hebrides there are *Tangaval*, *Arnaval*, *Clettraval*, etc. and only exceptionally anything different. In Shetland *field* is the principle element used in hill names: *Fugla Field*, *Hamara Field*, as in Orkney *fiold*: *Sand Fiold*, *Fibla Fiold*.

There are of course many examples of creative naming also in the colonised areas. For example, there is a *Hestfjall* protruding on Grímsnes in Iceland, with the 'ears' metaphorically seen in *Hesteyru* on the mountain in a similar way to *Stemshesten* with *Hestøra* in Romsdalen, Norway (Kruse 2000:61). The distinct Icelandic mountain *Herðubreið*⁵ 'broad-shouldered' carries a very apt descriptive name. The mountain *Herðabreida* in Hardanger in Norway may of course be directly commemorated in the Icelandic name, but it is perhaps more likely that we here see the re-use of a concept, resulting in parallel names. (I will return to this point later in this article.)

Metaphoric naming is also found for instance in Shetland where ON *keipr*, m. 'oar rest', is used frequently for pointed hills, as in the parish of Tingwall where a prominent, distinctly shaped hill, which is now called *Luggie's Knowe*, used to be named *Da Kebb* (Smith 1992), in a manner reminiscent of naming traditions in the west and north of Norway.

⁵ There are actually two mountains with this name in Iceland: in addition to the well-known, 1682 m. high one in the north-east, there is a less conspicuous, 812 m. high *Herðubreið* by Eldgjá in the south.



Figure 3, *Luggie's Knowe (Da Kebb)*, photo: Andrew Jennings

It is, however, quite obvious to anyone with more than a fleeting interest in Scandinavian names that there are relatively few such names found in the areas where Scandinavians have settled abroad. Several scholars have commented upon the lack of onomastic variation in areas where the Scandinavians settled during the Viking expansion: in other words, the range of appellatives applied in names abroad is limited compared to the range of possible appellatives the colonizers could have made use of. WHF Nicolaisen (1980a:112) has this to say about Norse naming in the Scottish isles:

[...] the limited number of topographical terms which were turned into uncomponed place names is quite striking. Colonists in a hurry about their naming obviously did not have the time or the inclination to go beyond the basics in applied toponymics.

When exploring the inventory of Icelandic river-names Finnur Jónsson almost excuses his project: 'The Icelandic river names are, compared with e.g. the Norwegian, rather poor and somewhat monotonous' (1914:18 [my translation]). He finds for instance that the large number of simplex river names found in Norway are paralleled in Iceland with only a handful of names, and that the regular pattern has been to name the river after the valley it flows through: 'it is probably fair to say that each valley had a river named after itself' (Jónsson 1914:18-23). On Icelandic stream names Hans Kuhn (1966:262) observes that out of the possible west-Norwegian appellatives for 'stream, burn' – *bekkr*, *gróf*, *lækr* – only *lækr* has proved productive in the new setting in Iceland.⁶

The distribution pattern of *bekkr*, m., as an appellative and a generic, is remarkably asymmetric. Although it is the most used term for '(small) stream' in Modern Norwegian it has not made it into Modern Icelandic, nor into Scots or Gaelic as a loan-word. Although *bekk* is a very frequent generic on the west coast of Norway and it does appear on the Faroe Islands, several times on Shetland (Jakobsen 1936:15) and once in Iceland, *Kvíabekkur* (Sigmundsson 1985:132), it is nearly non-existent in the other Norse colonies, so much so that it has almost become a litmus test-word for Danish vs. Norse settlement: where the

⁶ In addition to the modern form of those mentioned by Kuhn: *bekk*, *løk*, and *grov*, we registered in 'Stadnamnprosjektet i Møre og Romsdal' the appellatives *keile*, *kvisl*, *sike/sikle*, *veke* and *ed* (Hallaráker 1995:169).

element *-beck* appears in place-names in the British Isles it indicates Danish colonisation.⁷ A possible explanation for this unusual distribution may be a semantic shift in exactly the areas on the Norwegian west coast that saw most settlers off to Iceland and the Scottish isles. In the dialects of Sogn and northwards on Vestlandet and Trøndelag the appellative *bekk* has developed a meaning, '(natural) well', which is still in use (NSL:87). If this innovation happened around the Viking period it may have created uncertainty about the usage or limited the practical application of the appellative as a generic. Interestingly, the Faroe Islands, where *bekkr* is found as a generic in old names, were settled from the southern part of Vestlandet where this new semantic content of *bekk* has not developed.

Settlers in a new setting

A difficulty settlers in the new lands had to deal with was to make their language relate to a landscape that could be rather unfamiliar to them. Part of the solution was to re-semanticize appellatives. One of the words for 'stone' in Old Norwegian, *hraun*, n., is used in a traditional way in Scotland, in e.g. the Hebridean island name *Rona*, ON **Hrauney*, to reflect the many boulders on the island. In Iceland, however, *hraun* had to make do as the term for the unfamiliar concept of 'lava', used in many place-names, as in the lava-field *Stora Hraun*. One of the ON terms for 'gully', *gjá*, f., was adopted in Scotland to refer to the many steep, narrow inlets from the sea which are unusual in Norway; as in *Glaisgeo*, and borrowed into Gaelic: *Geodh'Ghamhainn* (both Caithness). From a rather limited and semantically different usage in Norway, these appellatives get a new life with a new lexical meaning and are used exceptionally frequently to form names in new surroundings.

For the Scandinavian-American settlers a millennium later the scenario would have been similar in the sense that they came to a landscape that was different from what they knew from home. For the many who established themselves on plots on the Great Plains the experience of change must have been deep-seated when they thought back on the varied topography at home in Norway, Sweden or Iceland. Obviously, a flat, featureless, square plot of the prairie does not invite names in general, and the settlers' inherited Scandinavian onomasticon must have been felt as fundamentally inappropriate. In addition, the immigrants to America settled not on virgin land, as in Iceland a thousand years back in time, nor among a suppressed people, as on the Scottish isles, but rather in the midst of a dominant culture with different attitudes and values when it came to land, work, money and life. This will have led to a pressure on the immigrants' own culture and also their language, and it helps to explain a rather dramatic restructuring of the immigrants' semantic system and an extensive borrowing from the English-American lexicon (Hasselmo 1974:196-7). This is also seen in the choice of appellatives employed to create names on the Scandinavian-American farm, where *fil*, f., from English *field*, refers to the various cultivated strips of land; *Tobakksfila*, *Potetfila*, etc., and the farm itself is referred to with the loan-word *farm*, m., also used in names; *Olsonfarmen*, *Grøperudfarmen*, etc. It is as if the traditional words *jorde*, *åker*, etc. and *gard*, *bruk*, etc. are not fit to describe the dramatically different topographical and cultural conditions the immigrants settled into (Haugen 1953:Chapter 20; Kruse 1991).

Not only lexical topographical appellatives but also elements uniquely used in names may gain intensified use in the new surroundings. A known and proven element that exists in Scandinavia may locally be developed under new naming motives. The Swedish scholar Bengt Pamp (1991:159) classifies a name-giving motive as 'analogical affix name-formation' when a generic element of a sufficiently high frequency achieves status as being particularly valuable in naming a certain type of locality. An example of this is the element *-by*, in Old Norse *-býr*, m., 'farm', which is more frequent in the English Danelaw than in Denmark (Kisby 1982:99). With a personal name as specific it becomes the *chic* way among the Scandinavians to coin names for new, small, independent agricultural units in

⁷ Complications to this pattern arise of course in areas like the north of England where *beck* is a productive loan-word in the dialect.

early 10th century England. In Normandy there are *c.* 590 names with the element *-tot*, in Old Norse *topt*, f., 'house site' or 'house ruins', i.e. many more than in Norway and Denmark added together (Stoltenberg 1994:42-58). The element *bólstaðr*, 'farm' is used rather sparingly in Norway. Only just over one hundred farms carry this element, showing a significant concentration to northern Vestlandet. In the Norse parts of Scotland, on the other hand, there are about 240 settlements carrying this element, showing that it had become a fashionable term to use in order to name farms that were established in the latter part of the 9th century (Gammeltoft 2001:39 and 80).

Interference

Settlers' choice of farm name elements may show interference from languages they have been in close contact with, as we earlier saw examples of in an American setting. The interference can be of two types. Firstly, a relatively little used farm name element in Scandinavia wins support from a frequently used similar-sounding element in the contact language. Although the element *-gardr*, m., 'farm' is used to form habitative names in both Sweden and Norway, it is obvious that the frequent use of *-gardr* in the Scandinavian names in Russia, such as *Holmgardr* and *Kænugardr*, must be motivated by Slavic *gorod* 'city' (Kuhn 1966:264).

I believe that something similar can be behind the so-called Grimston-hybrids in the Danelaw area. It was initially Kenneth Cameron (1971:147-63) who identified this group of names in which he saw a Scandinavian qualifier, usually a personal name, and an Anglo-Saxon generic. In the name *Grimston* Cameron thus saw the Scandinavian personal name *Grimr* followed by the English element *tūn*, which he found to be evidence of bilingualism among the Scandinavian settlers and the English natives. Since the Scandinavian word *tún*, n., 'hedged plot with farm-house' or 'farmstead' was not often used to form place-names, Cameron was convinced that the element we find so productive in the Danelaw must be an Old English borrowing into Scandinavian in the area. We must, however, be open to other explanations behind these so-called hybrids. First, we must allow for the possibility that personal names like *Grimr* can have survived long after Scandinavian speech in general died out, and so such names could easily have been coined by speakers of English still calling each other, in an old manner, with Scandinavian names. The other, more likely, possibility is that such names are pure Scandinavian creations. When it is claimed that only a fairly low frequency makes it an unlikely candidate for name-building in the colonies, we must tread with caution. As we have seen, the frequency of names in the colonies can differ significantly from what is usual in the homeland. There is, however, very good reason to believe that *tún* was actually a productive place-name element during the early medieval period in Scandinavia and Iceland (Sandnes 1997, Sigmundsson 2006). The element *tun* in the so-called Grimston-hybrids may, in other words, be a genuine Scandinavian naming element that was there as a possibility in the Scandinavian onomasticon practised on the British Isles. It may have become popular as an element to denote a farmstead with support from English *tūn*, but even so it can be seen as a Scandinavian naming practice.

A second type of contact interference occurs when a totally new element without any backing in Scandinavian is taken up as a productive element among the settlers. The Scandinavian settlers in Normandie borrowed the local habitative element *ville*, originally from Latin *villa*, and in use long before the Viking period. The most intensive use of the element, however, takes place in the 10th and 11th centuries, when the province was under strong Scandinavian influence, typically composed with a Scandinavian appellative, e.g. *kirkja*, 'church' in *Querqueville*, or most usually with a Scandinavian personal name, e.g. *Gunnúlfr* in *Gonneville* and *Ketill* in *Quetteville*. According to Jean Adigard des Gautries (1954:375 ff.) there are 169 names with *-ville* compounded with a Scandinavian personal name, and in addition 86 that may be either Frankish or Scandinavian. The frequent use of this element indicates the influence the local, native language had on the incomers' choice of expressions to coin their new acquisitions.

On Scottish ground one can point to the borrowing of Gaelic *àirigh* which originally

had the meaning 'milking place' but by the end of the Viking Age had taken the meaning 'upland shieling', so that the *ærgi* in Norse show a near complementary distribution with the element *setr* to the north, on Lewis and the Northern Isles. The borrowing and complementary distribution pattern possibly relates to Somerled's domination from 1156 of exactly the area with *ærgi* as a Norse borrowing from Gaelic (Macniven 2006:178 and 190-2).

The analogical use of the mentioned habitative elements in the Scandinavian settlements dating back to the Viking period does not seem to be outside of what is factually correct. The elements will denominate a certain type of farm and not be used for anything else. This is also the case when whole names turn up in these colonised areas in patterns which are likely to be analogically motivated.

Imitation and analogy

In medieval Scandinavia there seems to be a need for the settlers to use names that are factually correct, in other words, names must reflect the topography. Is this also the case in the new settlements? Part of the answer to this question is touched upon in the discussion around a group of farm names in Iceland that have parallels elsewhere. Svavar Sigmundsson (1991) is of the opinion that names like *Uppsálar* and *Heiðabær* in Iceland are not necessarily *réttnefni*, or factually accurate names but that such names could have been given without considering that the semantic content of the name corresponded to the locality itself. Svavar thinks that the namegivers would have chosen such names because they were well known rather than because of their semantic accuracy. Hans Kuhn (1949:62-3) and Þórhallur Vilmundarson (1996) are of the opinion that hardly any of these names are given without considering the semantic content. Þórhallur shows for example that the 23 farms named *Uppsálar* in Iceland are all located high in the terrain or higher than other farms in the vicinity (1996:401). As an element on its own *-sálar* (plural of *-sálar* 'room') is not used to form names. There are, in other words, no **Neðrasálar* or **Bjarnasálar*. It seems, on the other hand, that the composite *uppsálar*, meaning 'up(per)+house(s)' has become a set way to denote farms located higher than other farms, not only in Iceland but also in Norway (Rygh:NG I, 1897:138), where there are 40-50 such named farms, and in Sweden, where there are about 20. It may be that the famous *Uppsala* in Sweden or one of the Norwegian farms with this name are implicitly referred to in some or even all of the Icelandic names but as long as the new farms carrying this name reflect the factual topography we should not take it for granted that commemoration is the motive behind such names. What we know is that the denominations are semantically transparent appellative reflections of the landscape. The further motive behind the quite high frequency of these names in Iceland can be due to a local Icelandic fashion/analogical naming practice and not necessarily memorial naming with the famous *Uppsala* in mind.



Figure 4, Sullom, Shetland, photo: Peder Gammeltoft

The fact that *-salir* is not otherwise productive in Iceland or in Scandinavia may of course be seen as evidence for the whole name having been transferred. There are, however, parallel examples of an intensive use of composite elements in place-names, both in Scandinavia and in the colonies. In a similar way to the composite *uppsalir* having achieved a meaning '(farm) houses located high in the terrain' and systematically used to create names that factually express this location, the composite element *sólheimr*, m., has gained a meaning 'sunny homestead' and is behind the creation of several names in Norway and in the colonies. As an element in its own right *-heimr* is by the start of the Viking period no longer productive in the creation of farm names.⁸ The only time it is seen used in the colonies is in the composite *sólheimr* which is found in 11 farms on Iceland, one on Shetland (*Sullom*) and one on Islay (*Solam*). There are also about 70 farms named *Solheim* (and *Solem* etc.) in Norway, and like their Icelandic and Scottish namesakes they are mainly farms located relatively high up on sunny spots and outside the earlier settlement area (Jakobsen 1936:54; Macniven 2005:495-6; NSL:415-6). It is evident that *-heimr* as an element plays a different role in these names than it did in names from earlier in the Scandinavian Iron Age. It may be fair to say that the stereotypically used composite proclaims the end of the productive life for the element *heimr* both inside and outside of Scandinavia.

In an almost reversed way to *uppsalir*, the habitative element *bólstaðr* shows a curiously restricted, almost stereotypical usage in Norway and a much more unrestricted application in the colonies. In Norway there are two main specifics with which *bólstaðr* is compounded, namely *mikill*, adj., 'large' – used in nearly half of the Norwegian names – and *heilagr*, adj., 'holy', in modern names typically as *Myklebust* and *Hellebust*. In Scotland a much greater variety of specifics is used, as e.g. in *Kirbister*, *Grimbister*, *Swanibost*, *Melbost* and *Westerbister*. Peder Gammeltoft, who has analysed the distribution of this element, explains the difference as a form of extensive 'imitative naming' in Norway, with the use of a limited number of set specifics attached to *bólstaðr*, while in Scotland the element was adapted to a new environment without such a restrictive naming motivation

⁸ Several farm names with *-heimr* are found on Shetland, for example *Cauldhame* < **Kaldheimr*, *Stuttem* < **Stuttheimr*, *Sodom* < **Suð(r)heimr*. This, and the fact that *vin* is frequently used in nature names, indicates a very early, possibly pre-Viking, Norse settlement of Shetland.

(Gammeltoft 2001:227 and 273-4). The expression 'imitative naming' in this context may be associated with imitating existing names, which is probably not the case. The Icelandic *bólstaður*-names illustrate this. As in Norway we see an extraordinary restriction in the use of this element in Iceland; there are four simplex *Bólstaður* and there are 12 *Breiðabólstaður* out of altogether 16 mentioned in medieval sources. Svavar Sigmundsson (1996) points to the eight *Breiðabólstaður*-names in Scotland and thinks they must be the inspiration behind the Icelandic names. This makes sense when we consider how Scotland seems to have been a stop-over for many of the Icelandic settlers *en route* from Norway. There is, however, no reason to believe that one particular Scottish *Breiðabólstaður*-name is commemorated in the Icelandic names.

In the examples mentioned with *uppsalir*, *sólheimr* and *miklabólstaðr* a more apt expression than 'imitative naming' is 'analogy', referring more to an unusual frequency or distribution with a basis in the onomasticon of a name user group's unusual compositional restriction concerning the elements used to create the names, rather than a single individual's naming motive. However, when it comes to what until now have been referred to as 'elements', I think that *uppsalir*, *sólheimr* and *miklabólstaðr* ought to be regarded as compound appellatives, as integral parts of the lexicon and with the capacity to construct place-names. Peder Gammeltoft (2001:225-7) rejects *miklabólstaðr* as a compound appellative on the ground that it does not have 'general currency throughout the speech area while it formed part of the onomasticon' as not one single example of **Miklabólstaðr* is found in Scotland or Iceland. There is, however, no need to establish a criterion that an appellative will need to be found 'throughout the speech area'. Such a criterion will reject any form of regional or dialectal aspect of an onomasticon, e.g. many entries from the list of appellatives relating to height registered from the county of Møre and Romsdal, simply because they are not found outside Møre and Romsdal.

As we have seen, a little used appellative concept in the homeland can at times be used with increased frequency in the colonies to create both habitative names and nature names. Three islands in Nordland in the north of Norway, which are or used to be attached to the mainland only at low tide, are called *Offersøya*: ca. 1430 one is written *Orfyrisøy*, in 'classical' ON **Órfyrisey* or **Órfirisey*, f., 'tidal island', from **ór-fjara* 'out at ebb tide' (NG XVI:60, 299, 334). There are many more such characteristic islands in Scotland, with a long stretch of sand, a so-called tombola, exposed as a causeway over to the island at low tide. Accordingly, WFH Nicolaisen (1977-80:119-20) can list 30 islands from the Western and Northern Isles with names with an origin in **Órfyrisey*: *Oronsay*, *Orfasay* etc.⁹ Nicolaisen finds the **Órfyrisey*-names the prime example of what he calls 'connotative names', i.e. names which 'display a predominantly associative meaning'. He says about the island names that 'the association of "tidal" must have been overwhelming compared with all other potential associations, like size, shape or colour; it therefore produced an instance of naming which would be difficult to match.' Nicolaisen argues that frequent Norse names in Scotland such as *Lerwick* and *Sandwick* qualify for this category and he thinks they will have been given 'connotative names' because those who named these bays will have had an instant association about 'clay, mud' and 'sand' respectively (Nicolaisen 1995:391).

The motivation for giving a natural feature a name corresponding to its most striking feature is not controversial, in fact it is what onomasticians in general would agree is the most obvious naming principle in most circumstances, and there is certainly no reason to believe that it will not be a motive behind naming in new settlements. However, I find there is no real ground for establishing a term 'connotative names' and claiming that as a naming motive it is particularly over-represented in new settlements. The main cause of the possible over-frequency of certain names in the colonies is most likely to be related to a factual difference in the topography and how this difference was experienced by the settlers. If it is the case that there is an over-representation of *Sandvík*-names in Scotia Scandinavica

⁹ From Nicolaisen's list *Orsay*, Islay, should be subtracted, because it is not a tidal island and therefore the name cannot mean this (Macniven 2006:355).

compared to the west coast of Norway, it may simply be because there is a higher frequency of 'sandy bays'. Anyone from Vestlandet landing on Orkney or the Hebrides will have been struck by the many bays with sandy beaches, inviting the use of names reflecting this feature. As a name, however, *Sandvik* needs to be as monoreferential as possible within a certain speech community. Thus, in spite of a number of sandy bays on Tiree, there is only one denotatum named *Sandaig*. It is an obvious name, but it can only be employed once within the user group onomasticon.

Names reflecting central topographical features in a landscape are, however, of importance in a chronological perspective. In Scandinavia simplex topographical names used as habitative names, like *Vik* and *Dal*, are in general regarded as very old and it is likely that this principle can guide us well also in the Scandinavian colonisation areas (Kruse 2004).

Commemorative names in the North Atlantic?

My quest to convince runs the risk of becoming a dogmatic mission and I must therefore concede that there are indeed old names that probably are commemorative, both in Scandinavia and in the Scandinavian North Atlantic. A unique example from Scandinavia is the case from Västergötland, first considered by the Swedish scholar Hugo Jungner (1920). Some 30-40 km apart are two identical sets of the place-names *Friggeråker*, *Lovene*, *Slöta*, *Saleby*, *Synnerål* and *Holma*. Clearly the two sets of names are interrelated and one set may well be commemorating the other. (See a further discussion in Brink 1996:65-7.)

Younger in time and set in the Scandinavian expansion area is the case indicated by Hermann Pálsson (1996:16-18). In central eastern Lewis in the Hebrides are the names *Leirehbagh*, *Eshaval*, *Ceose* and *Lachasay*, and in Iceland, in a region for which the *Landnámabók* claims firm Hebridean connections, is the parallel set of names on neighbouring locations: *Leiruvágr*, *Esja*, *Kjós* and *Laxá*. The three first names in both sets are relatively unusual and the parallel appearance cannot easily be dismissed as coincidence.

A.W. Brøgger (1929:70-71) points to the simplex Norwegian area-name *Voss* maybe reduplicated in Uist, and the complex island-name *Mostr* found again in Mainland.

Also, the name *Romsdal*, again in Uist in the Hebrides, may be the recycled valley name from northern Vestlandet. Admittedly, it is difficult to come up with alternative etymologies for a name like this, but we must recognise that our failing to do so may also be because there is a lack of old written forms of the name and there may be unmapped sound changes from Norse to Gaelic or similar shortcomings. I want to maintain that as a naming motive commemoration is likely to have been a minor, even negligible factor until we reach more modern times, and that we should be careful not to suggest shortcut conclusions around parallel names or peculiar distribution patterns. A couple of examples will demonstrate this.

The name *Dimun* forms an interesting pattern in the North Atlantic over the area where the Norse settled, used to denotate topography with two features. The name even occurs in Norway in the form *Dimna*, an island with two hills, near to Ulsteinvik, Sunnmøre (Nes 1989:69). The name is clearly of Celtic origin, where the *di* is the feminine form of the numeral *da* 'two' and the second element probably linked to Irish *muinn* 'neck, top'.¹⁰ We don't know the background to this name and its distribution, nor who coined it and who spread it, but the fact that the name springs from a language other than Norse and that it is found in areas where Celtic slaves will have lived makes this name unusable as an example of Norse naming habits in the North Atlantic.

Hermann Pálsson (1996:12) has pointed to the unusual distribution of the mountain name *Hekla*. The name of the famous and impressive Icelandic volcano has several parallels in Norway, and the Icelandic and many of the Norwegian names are probably a

¹⁰ As far as I know, this is the only place-name in Norway which, with a degree of confidence, can be claimed to be of Celtic origin.

metaphorical comparison to ON *hekla*, f. 'cape' referring to the 'snow-caped' summits of these tall, rounded mountains.¹¹ However, the name also appears in the Outer Hebrides, not only once but twice: in South Uist and in Mingulay, and in the extremely wet and mild climate of the Hebrides these comparatively small hills can certainly not be accused of carrying anything like a snow-caped summit. Therefore, because the Icelandic *Hekla* is factually referring to a snow-caped mountain, we must assume that those who coined the name of the volcano actually were referring to the semantic meaning of the word that was used as a metaphor to make up the name. What we see in the Hebridean *Hekla* names, on the other hand, could possibly be nostalgic naming in the sense that one or two of the *Hekla*-mountains in Norway will have motivated those who coined the Hebridean names to recollect the hills from back home in Norway. Can we, however, be sure of the exact meaning of the metaphoric *hekla*? Could it not be that the meaning 'cape' could also refer to 'fog' or 'cloud' just as much as to 'snow'? If so, the Hebridean *Hekla*-names could be said to be just as factual as the Norwegian and Icelandic names.

It may of course be the case that some 'ready-made', complete, uncoded names are recycled, and if so, then probably for commemorative reasons. I do, however, agree with WHF Nicolaisen (1980a:115) who suggests mildly, that commemoration and nostalgia do not stand out as powerful factors in 9th century Scotland, and that their effect on the creation of new nomenclature should not be overrated. If it was the case that uncoded, 'instant' names were transplanted in a more or less systematic way from Scandinavia to the colonies we should have expected to find names that were old in Scandinavia at the time of the Viking expansion, such as those with the old element *-vin*, 'meadow', and old, obscure nature-names. Such names are extremely hard to find in the North Atlantic colonies, and if we think we find them, we should be careful to claim any unusual names with parallels in Norway as transplanted names.

The Icelanders' unique record of the early settlement of their island, the *Landnámabók*, informs us in amazing detail where the settlers came from and where they located their new farms. Although it only presents the background to a few hundred settlers out of several thousand, it still provides a snapshot of Scandinavian settlers' naming strategies in a nameless land. It is telling that there is not one single clear example of a settler who named his new farm after his old farm in Norway (Rygh 1898:8).

A narrow doorway

There is a remarkable lack of teophoric names in the Scandinavian settlements in the North Atlantic. This area was settled by people who were pagan, yet there is very little trace of this fact in the place-name material available to us. There are many pagan graves but scarcely any indisputable names celebrating deities such as *Ullr*, *Óðinn*, *Pórr*, *Njörðr*. What we do find, however, are names warning about the supernatural, about trolls, as in *Traligill*, *Inchnadamph*, and *Trallisker*, Barra, both Scotland. It is as if the settlers may have felt that they came to landscapes inhabited by spirits, but that the local supernatural beings were not the gods they knew from their homeland. In a similar way, the names attached to the places they knew back home appear so intimately attached to the place itself that they could not easily be transferred to a new setting. Certain generics from their onomasticon could be applied to name the new landscapes but it seems as if the old names themselves in general were not transferable.

It is as if there is a rather narrow onomastic doorway open to emigrants. As we have seen, even in the homeland only parts of the living inventory of appellatives are likely to be productive for naming purposes. At the moment of exodus the emigrants are victims of the fashion of the moment, especially when it comes to naming their newly established settlements, and, finally, they will often have to face a new type of topography in their new homelands, a topography that may not be the same that their vocabulary is adapted to.

¹¹ *Hekla*-names on rugged comb-like ridges in Norway might rather refer to *hekle*, f. 'tool with spikes to clean flax' (NSL:205).

In the new Scandinavian settlements in North America this doorway appears even narrower compared to that of their fellow emigrants a millennium earlier. Appellatives employed to produce place-names in Scandinavian America are considerably fewer, fashion seems to have limited the choices even more and the prairie most of them settled on will have been very different from what the settlers were used to from their homelands and would probably have been uninviting to appellatives they mentally attached to the topography back home. Even in areas with a more familiar landscape, only a very limited number of generics is used (Kruse 1991 and Kruse 1996:260-1). Still, in one respect the more modern settlers had a wider choice. While in the old colonies one really will have to look hard to find commemorative or nostalgic names, in the more recent Scandinavian settlements in America this type of naming becomes the norm for larger settlements.

We observe that this shift has happened already in the first Scandinavian effort to colonise America after the Middle Ages. *Nya Sverige* or *Nova Svecia* was the Swedish attempt to win a piece of the colonial cake by organising a settlement along the Delaware River from 1638. In a map called *Nova Svecia, anno 1654 och 1655*, drawn by Peter Lindström (Holm 1702:32), we notice, interestingly, quite a number of Indian names, we find, as expected, descriptive names, but we also discover a group of names that are new in a Scandinavian setting, namely names that clearly refer back to places or persons in Sweden, and with an obvious intention behind the name which is precisely to commemorate this place or person. Peter Minuit, the Dutch leader of the Swedish expedition, had been instructed to rename Sable Island *Christina* after the queen, and the merchant port to be founded at Minquas Kill in the bay of Delaware were to be named *Stockholm*. Because of bad weather they never reached Sable Island, the merchant port was given the name *Christina*, and *Stockholm* was not used as a name in the new colony (Utterström 2001:63). Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the intention to mark the territory with linguistic Swedishness. The proud presence of the ambitious new national power in the Baltic region is announced in names such as *Nya Göteborg*, *Upland*, *Nya Korsholm*, *Nya Wasa* and *Finland*. This is naming with a mission. The colony was to be established with military presence, but also through onomastic branding.

The Swedish effort did not succeed for very long, neither militarily nor linguistically. The colony was captured by the Dutch in 1655 and none of the Swedish names are still in use. The colony does, however, represent the first conscious and planned effort by Scandinavians to name a new landscape with what we may call an ideological intention behind it.

settlement or another form of link to Scandinavia are strictly speaking not Scandinavian-American names in the sense that they have not been created by Scandinavian speakers. Common names like *Denmark*, *Norseville*, *Swede Creek*, *Scandinavia*, and sometimes names like *Stockholm* and *Gothenburg*, will very often have been given by English-speaking American administrators and cartographers in order to identify Scandinavian settlements. *Swenoda Lake* (Min.) was created by taking *Swe+no+da* from Swedish, Norwegian and Danish, since the area was settled by people from all three nations and the administration needed a characterising name.

Many other, and often smaller Scandinavian-American settlements, however, will have been coined by the immigrants themselves in order to establish links to their old roots. When the Finnish name for Finland, *Suomi*, and a Swedish poetic name for Sweden, *Svea*, is used, we can be certain that these are settlements which were named by the immigrants themselves, as it is doubtful that the American administrators would know such insiders' names or expressions.

The terms *transplaced* and *transferred* names are useful terms when discussing the naming motives behind the Scandinavian-American place-names (Rudnyčkyj 1952). *Transplaced names* are original place-names from Scandinavia that will have been recycled and put into use in order to denominate a completely new location in the new settlements. Examples of transplaced Scandinavian-American names are: *Stockholm* (e.g. Maine, SDak.), *Oslo* (Min.), *Smolan* (Kans.), *Erdahl* (Min.) *Malmo* (Min. and Nebr). The transplaced name will typically be the name of the region, town or village whence the immigrants originated e.g. *Sogn* (Min.); or it will carry iconographic implications of historical or national importance to the respective country of origin: *Eidswold* (Min.), *Upsala* (Flor., Min. and Ont.), *Vasa* (Min.). In the latter example it is not evident whether it is the Swedish royal house Vasa or the Finnish town Vasa that is being commemorated. (The Finnish town, founded 1606, is named after the royal house.) Most likely it is the royal house that lies behind the American name and the name will then fit into a group of typically American town-names where an original surname stands alone, without a generic, as in *Washington*, *Jefferson*, and, with Swedish background, *Tegner* and *Lindstrom*. Unusually, the 'Swedish Nightingale' *Jenny Lind* is honoured with her full name and without an added generic by a town in California.

Names of persons, ideas or mythical places which are adopted as place-names can be classified as *transferred names*. Such names may have strong national or ethnic implications for the settlers or may be 'respectful' names taken from a Christian context or Norse pagan mythology. The many Scandinavian-American transferred names for places like *Gimli* (Man.), *Viking* (Alb.), *St Olaf* (Iowa), are original American creations declaring a romantic link to the ethnic past in the Old World. A parallel cultural transfer or re-use of the names of figures and beings from Norse mythology and national tradition was popular in Scandinavia towards the end of the 19th century - on villas, for example *Breidablikk*, *Gimle*, and social clubhouses for young people, *ungdomshus*, for example *Valhall*, *Lidsjalv*, *Mjølner*.

From a synchronic perspective, place-names may have different implications for different user-groups. To an American administrator names like *Stockholm* and *Oslo* were good names as they indicated a predominantly Scandinavian settlement, while for the Scandinavian settlers themselves they carried what we could call nostalgic implications.

From a diachronic perspective, a static definition of connotation does not accommodate the fact that 'meaning' may change over time. *Gimli* and *Voss* in North America were suitable place-names to the settlers not because of their semantic content but because they carry certain other useful connotations. It would have been their nostalgic attributes, although a secondary development, which would have made them attractive as names in a new setting. Both transplanted names and transferred names may thus be said to be carriers of a secondary connotation in their new setting, namely an emotional historic link to an inherited ethnic tradition and place of origin.

The Scandinavian-American names give us new insight into a development of naming

motivation that certainly is not limited to the Scandinavian immigrants (see Stewart 1975:118-26). In the introduction to his book on Kentucky place-names Robert M. Rennick (1984:xii) says:

[...] American place-names, including most of those with obviously non-English origins, are either significant in terms of their meanings to the namers or in their historical association with the places they identify; or else they merely identify these places.

The motivation behind an American name often stands out as a statement in the sense that the place-name tells us more about the name-makers than the place itself.

In modern Europe we see a similar tendency. In planned naming in bureaucratic settings, e.g. naming streets in newly built suburbs, a street name like *Heron Road* is not very likely to refer to unusual sightings of a particular bird in the area but is rather chosen because of its associative hint of idyll and tranquillity – just the benefits the house-owners hope to purchase when they settle in suburbia. In a similar way, the oilfields in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea have since the 1970s in a more or less systematic manner been given names from Norse mythology or Norwegian folk tales: *Valhall*, *Norne*, *Troll*, *Smørbukk* etc. The value added to such names lies in their positive connotations to Norwegian culture although, it may be argued, it is difficult to imagine anything further afield from traditional folk culture than this high-tech modern industry.

This flight over an onomastic landscape spanning more than a millennium and crossing two continents has, I hope, shown that namers change priorities over time and space. In brief, we witness a change from an onomasticon that used to be purely descriptive to one that carries ever more extra-descriptive associations. Although we are used to thinking about place-names as an especially conservative part of our language, the actual making of place-names as an ongoing process is very much influenced by changes in society. The oldest stratum of place-names that we can identify in Scandinavia, those on important natural localities like islands and rivers, have all – as far as we know – sprung from appellatives that provided factual descriptions of the locality. Place-names from the Viking period are not any longer only descriptive. Many farm-names from this period celebrate the individual who founded the farm, reflecting the big social upheaval that the break-up of a society founded on ancestry and kinship implied. From now on farms belong to individuals. Finally, during the Scandinavian exodus to North America we see how farm names more than ever attach the owner to the farm, but there is by now a new element added in that many of the Scandinavian-American names express a strong sense of a common geographical origin and historical heritage, products of a school programme with a mission to foster ideas like the necessity to belong to a nation and an ethically defined group.

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Sjønamn på médfjella

Av Arne Kruse

The article discusses the names of mountains that fishermen refer to when they locate fishing-grounds that are at the meeting point of two straight lines over locations on shore. These are names that are used only at sea and they will often be different from the names on the map. After presenting evidence of such names from the fishing community of Smøla, Nordmøre, there is a discussion concerning the motivation behind such names. The author is critical of the tradition – initiated by Jakob Jakobsen in his work on Shetland – claiming that this type of naming is a product of name taboo among fishermen. The author would rather see these names as any other coastal name, denoting the mountain by describing the shape, colour, location or function of the place.

Ein eldre fiskar frå Veiholmen utanfor Smøla fortalte at han ein gong hadde besøkt ein kollega på Steinsøyneset på Fast-Smøla og ville ha han til å vise seg *Langberga* som han ofte låg på sjøen og tok méd etter og som jo måtte vera i grannelaget. Fiskaren frå Steinsøyneset kunne ikkje hjelpe han, for både lokaliteten og namnet var han heilt ukjent. Veiværfsfiskaren kunne vidare skildre korleis han forundra oppdaga at det han til da einast hadde sett frå sjøen og trudd var eitt samanhengande høgdedrag, viste seg å vera fleire ulike haugar og berg.

For å minnst médmerka må fiskaren ha namn på dei, og da er det slett ikkje uvanlig at han for lokalitetane han tek seg merke i, brukar heilt andre namn enn dei offisielle kartnamna. Slike stadnamn som berre blir nytta av fiskaren når han er ute på sjøen og særleg når han tek seg méd, kan vi (etter Jakobsen 1901 og Slyngstad 1951) kalle *sjønamn*. Målet med denne artikkelen er å vise bruken av sjønamn innom eit lokalt fiskarmiljø og deretter diskutere kva motivasjonen bak denne namnetypen kan vera.

Det kan verke som om til og med sesongfiskarar som kom inne frå fjordane innom Smøla og som altså kom ifrå grannelaget til fjella som vart bruka som médmerke, kunne byte namn på desse fjella når dei var på skreifisket på grunnane utom Smøla. Dette har vi i alle fall eit vitnemål om i *Hemneboka*, der Kolbjørn Aune (1979:159) skriv: "Når fiskarane låg uti Brattværstunga (utfør Smøla) og fiska skrei, skal dei ha bruka Hogsgåsa (fjell i Hollamarka) som med, men da kalla dei fjellet for Hemnkuttu."

Denne måten å gi médmerka sjønamn viser seg i namna på noen skjer ved Smøla – såleis *Nordgrunnskjeret* og *Sørgrunnskjeret* i Svartskjera sørom Haugjegla fyr. Skjera blir bruka til å méde opp fiskegrunnane Nordgrunnen og Sørgrunnen. Mønsteret viser seg òg i namna på ein del tuver inne på Fast-Smøla – slik médar f.eks. *Bukkberga* inne på Smøla opp fiskegrunnen Bukken utanfor Veiholmen og *Torskknotten*, den nørdeste av tuvane ved Skarpneset (ho er no dels bortskoten), médar opp Torskdjupet.

Fiskarane brukar gjerne *haud* og *spord* om delar av holmar og skjer som dei tek seg merke i. Når dei treng å vera meir presis enn berre å nemne skjeret eller holmen, men vil ha médlina til å gå over høgaste delen, heiter dette *haudet* på holmen eller skjeret, medan eit lågare strekk av lokaliteten blir kalla *sporden*. Ei médline for å méde opp Tørrisbåen ved Veiholmen er 'Hystinden over *Skalshaudet*' og ei line for å finne Melklakken utom Brattværet er 'Kjerkjebakkan sør på *Skalssporden*'. Begge brukar holmen Skalmen som merke, men altså ulike delar av han. Andre eksempel er *Buskjerhaudet* og *Haugjeggelhaudet*, utan at eg har hørt *spord* bruka om dei lågare delane av desse lokalitetane.

Det er først og fremst médfjella lengst unna som får sjønamn. Når ein driv dei ytste fiskeplassane utafor Smøla, er det ofte uråd å ta seg meir enn eitt godt merke for kvar médline i den flatlende Smøla. Det andre merket i kvar médline blir da gjerne søkt inne i fjellbruna. Skikken med sjønamn kjem klårast til uttrykk når smølværingane tek seg méd inne i fjella som grensar mot Romsdalen. Dette er strok dei aldri ferdast i, og som følgje av dette får médfjella 'feil' namn i høve til det som står på kartet. Dei nærmaste fjella inne på Tustna, i Aure og på Hitra får meir eller mindre kartrette namn, det vil i praksis seie stort sett dei same namna som dei som bur attmed fjella brukar. Vi må tru dette kjem av at samkvemmet med desse områda har vore større. Hit inn drog øybuarane på handelsferder og for å hente ved og trevirke og plukke bær, og herifrå kom eit jamt tilsig av sesongfiskarar til skreifisket kvart år.

Når fiskaren lagar seg namn på médmerka sine, ser det ut som om to prinsipp blir følgt. Anten namngir han fjellet etter den fiskegrunnen han médar opp, eller så lagar han namn ut frå forma på fjellet. Eksempel på merke som får namn etter fiskeplassar er *Ottersbakkinden* og *Hystinden* som médar opp plassane Otters-

bakkan og Hysa i Veiahavet, og for å vise at det ikkje berre er sjølv fjelltoppane som kan nyttast til médmerke, kan vi nemne *Kjeldskaret*, midt på Hitra, som médar opp Kjelda i Brattværshavet. Eksempel på fjell som har fått namn etter forma det har frå synsstaden til fiskaren, er namn som *Flattinden* (Luten ved Eide), *Gand* (frå norrønt *gandr* m. 'stav, kjepp'), og *Hitterkeipen* eller berre *Keipen* (ein årekeip-liknande fjellformasjon på Skårfjellet inne på Hitra).

I artikkelen 'Klakkan – namn og natur' seier Ola Stemschaug (1973:16) at kjært barn har mange namn når han fortel at den karakteristiske Gjelaklakken i Aure blir kalla *Kløftin* på Smøla. Det er rett nok, men dette kjære barnet har faktisk enda fleire namn, for på Brattværet, Dyrnes og Råket kan ein òg seie *Gyltan* eller *Kløftfjellet*, medan fjellet på Veiholmen og på Brattværet som oftast blir kalla *Gilklakken* eller *Gilklakkan*. I médoppskrifter frå Vest- og Sør-Smøla som daterer seg ein eller to generasjonar attover i tid, skriv dei *Rostollen* eller *Råstolen* om det same fjellet. I *Den norske los (DNL)* og i *Fallboka for Møre og Romsdal* (Uksnøy 1959) heiter dette fjellet også *Rostolen* på landtoningane.

Det er som sagt médfjella i sør, dei i sørvest på Nordmøre og på grensa til Romsdalen, som har dei mest avvikande namneformene i høve til kartnamna. Det er ikkje just lett for utanforståande å finne fram til fiskegrunnen Langbenken ved Veiholmen ved hjelp av denne médlina: Skalmen og *Andre Tinden* innfor *Trei Hesten*. Veiværsmølarane brukar desse merka i sør, vestfrå mot aust: (*Første*) *Hesten*, *Andre Hesten*, *Tredje Hesten*, *Første Tinden*, *Andre Tinden*. Stemshesten, det mest havnære av fjella i sør, blir på Smøla til vanlig kalla *Hesten*, og dei to toppane innanfor heiter *Andre Hesten* og *Tredje Hesten*, på kartet respektivt Melen og Talstadhesten.

Av og til kan utmerkingsleddet i sjønamnet vera likt utmerkingsleddet i kartnamnet og hovudleddet ei laging for å framheve at det er snakk om ein del av fjellet. *Hestnasen* er såleis den ytste delen av Stemshesten og *Hestøra* den høgaste delen, lenger inn. Ein anna slik laging er *Fonnarumpa* (nordsida av *Fonna* ved Kjørsvika). Dette er presiseringar som dei som bur attmed lokalitetane, ikkje brukar og knapt vil forstå, for namnet som fiskaren brukar, skildrar ofte karakteristiske formasjonar i landskapet som berre kjem fram frå fiskaren sin synsstad ute på havet. *Langfjellet* strekkjer seg utover frå Tonningen, sett frå Nord-Smøla, men er eigentlig fleire heilt ulike åsryggar på Nord-Hitra, og *Langberga* ser ut som eit samanhengande høgdedrag sett frå Veiholmen, men inneheld eigentlig fleire, m.a. Grønnaugen, i nord-vest på Fast-Smøla.

Innom dei to utrorshava frå Brattværet og Veiholmen er det relativt stort samsvar i namna på médmerka, sjølv om noen merke kan vera ukjende innom eitt av utrorshava fordi dei ikkje er brukande der. Det er likevel mulig å spore

somme skilnader i nemningsbruken på presiseringar som blir nytta for å snevre inn lokalitetane. Slik er *Fonnarumpa* bruka på Brattværet mens dei på Veiholmen vil seie *nordkanten på Fonna*. Derimot kan fiskarane på Veiholmen seie *Tustnareva* om sørkanten av Tusna, mens dette ikkje er ei gjengs nemning andre stader. *Verktåa* er ei artig laging som eg har hørt hopaværingar bruke om vest- og nordsida av haugen som det store segelmerket Verken på Veiholmen står på.

Ånesskaget (nordsida av Ertvåg fjellet, som veiværingane elles namngir som *Ånesfjellet*) og *Gullsteinskaget* (nordsida av Skarven på Tustna), er lagingar som relaterer lokaliteten til gardar som smølværingane kjenner godt: Åneset og Gullstein. At det er kystfolk som har laga desse fjellnamna, ser vi i og med bruken av hovudleddet *-skag*, som til vanlig blir bruka om eit høgvore nes som strekkjer seg ut i sjøen. Liknande lagingar til kjende gardar under fjella, er med hovudleddet *aksel*: *Ormbostadaksla* (Ormbodstadsfjellet på kartet), *Vikaksla* (Vikafjellet på kartet) og *Bergsaksla* (Bergsfjellet på kartet). Leddet *aksel* er elles i landet mykje bruka i fjellnamn med ei form som kan jamførast med kroppsdelen *aksel* (NSL). *Gyltuva*, som dei brukar på Sør-Smøla, heiter på kartet Skarven og ligg ved Gyl. Det einaste médfjellet i dette stroket som ikkje inneheld gardsnamn, er *Blåfjellet* (ovom Rodal), som òg er det som ligg lengst unna, men likevel har same namn som på kartet. (Når blåfargen på fjellet er den karakteristikken vi finn att i namnet, er vel dette eit teikn på at namngivarane neppe er dei nærmast fastbuande til fjellet, men heller folk som har sett det på ein viss avstand.) Desse namna inni Aure og Halså er det veiværingane som brukar, for kjem ein lenger vest, kjem Fast-Smøla i vegen og fjella her inni blir ikkje brukande til oppméding. I sørkant av Fast-Smøla nyttar fiskarane på Brattværeshavet det velkjente *Reinsfjellet* med snøflekken som er så vinnlig til finméding. Dei brukar òg det kartrette namnet på *Tussan* lengst inne i Halså, og skal dei finméde, deler dei toppane opp i *Første*, *Andre* og *Trei Tussen*. Til oppméding på Brattværestaren blir *Tinden* eller *Soltinden* bruka, f.eks. på Hysklakken: 'Belgen i *Soltinden*'. Sett frå Smøla ligg denne attom Reinsfjellet og er på kartet kalla Åbittinden. Avstanden hit inn ved Eresfjorden i Romsdalen er om lag 8 mil (!), og namnet *Soltinden* avspeglar trulig at ein treng 'godt sjåe' med klarvær og gjerne *sol* for å kunne bruke dette merket.

I tillegg til fjella på Tustna, kjem fjella på Stabblandet klårt fram kvar ein så er på Smøla. *Stabben* blir mykje bruka som médfjell saman med dei svært så karakteristiske *Storøret* og *Litløret*. Dette er namn som òg står på kartet. I alle fall dei to siste er fjellnamn som neppe er laga på dei nærmaste gardane til fjella, men som er laga av folk som har sett dei på avstand, helst sjøfolk og fiskarar som har hatt bruk for å merke seg formasjonen og som har likna den med to oppstikkande øre på eit dyr.

Mymauren er ein hump som kjem fram på nordsida av Stabben, sett frå Veiholmen. Dette er etter alt å dømme sjølve Stabben (827 meter) som da kjem litt nord for det som lokalt heiter Inderbergsalen (908 meter) og som til saman utgjer ein samanhengande rygg i nord-sør retning på Stabblandet. Namnet *Mymauren* verkar pussig på eit fjell, og det er ikkje lett å tenkje seg noen samanheng med insektet. Trulig har vi her å gjera med eit forvanska namn som botnar i eit solmerke eller dagtidmerke; *midmål*. Dagtidmerke finn ein ofte i fjellnamn, der namn som inneheld f.eks. *nons*, *durmål* og *rismål* fortel når på dagen sola stod over fjellet, sett frå ein bestemt stad. Uttrykket *midmål* fortel berre om eit merke mellom to andre, men er knytta til morgonen eller føremiddagen. Dette passar med Veiholmen som synstad. Den dramatiske forvanskinga *midmål* > *mymaur* er det parallellar til i Nordland, der Finn Myrvang (1996:21) viser at fleire stadnamn på *memor(ra)* og likeins utmerkinga *Memaur-*, *Memur-*, *Memør-* har opphav i *midmål*.

Bukktinden har form som ein keip, altså avrunda på eine sida og bratt på hi sida, og kan dermed liknast med andre fjellnamn på *bukk*, som trulig viser til profilen på horna til ein geitebukk. Er dette tilfelle, vil fiskeplassen Bukken ved Brattværet, som médst opp etter *Bukktinden*, ha fått namn etter dette médmerket, noko som er heilt vanlig. Det som kompliserer ei slik forklaring, er at Bukken òg er namn på fiskeméd på Sør-Smøla og ved Veiholmen, og her kjenner ein ikkje til *Bukktinden* hverken som namn eller médmerke. På Veiaha- vet médar ein derimot Bukken etter *Bukkberga* inne på Smøla. Desse er noen runde knollar austom Langberga på Vest-Smøla, og dei har slett ikkje skap som bukkehorn. Det kan her vera tale om at geiter og bukkar heldt til her, men eg har ikkje greidd å slå fast at dette er eit lokalt namn ved Dyrnes eller Råket. Her er det altså duka for å diskutere kva som kom først; namnet på fiskegrunnen eller namnet på médmerket? I mangt vil det vera sannsynlig at desse médmerka er namngitt etter fiskegrunnane, ikkje minst fordi dette er det vanligaste namngivingsmønsteret, men òg fordi det ikkje er noko médmerke som kan forklare namnet på fiskegrunnen Bukken på Sør-Smøla. Ein kompliserande faktor er det at dyrenemne ikkje ser ut til å vera vanlig i médnamn, i motsetning til i andre skjergardsnamn. Mellom dei meir enn halvanna hundre médnamna eg har registrert berre rundt Veiholmen, er det berre to namn med dyrenemne: *Bessan* (trulig av norrønt *bersi* m. 'bjørn') og *Grisen*, og begge kan forklarast som elliptiske lagingar til namn i médlinene: *Besskjeret* og *Grisskjeret*.

Hovda (1961:202 ff.) har fleire eksempel på at sjønamn på fjella langs norskekysten kan vera av høg alder. På utrorshava frå Smøla verkar *Gand* (sjå lenger framme) og *Aran* (til gno. *ari* m. 'ørn') som gamle namn. Namnet på fiskegrunnen Solåberget ved Veiholmen kan gjøemme det gamle usamansette sundnamnet

**Soli* (om dette namnet, sjå Stemschaug 1972) som vi finn att i dei moderne namna *Solskjeløya*, *Solem/Solheim* og *Solåsundet* (gjerne skrive *Solemsundet/Solheimsundet*). Eit arkaisk drag er det òg når det mykje bruka médfjellet *Tonningen* på Hitra i store delar av det dativlause området på yttersida av Smøla blir denotert i ei stivna dativform, *Tonninga*.

Det viktigaste formålet desse sjønamna tener, er å minne fiskaren på kva for eit merke som médar opp kva for ein plass. Dette kjem til uttrykk t.d. når dei fleste fiskarane på Veiholmen og Steinsøysundet nyttar namnet *Ånesfjellet* som médfjellsnamn omframt på grunnen *Onglan*, der fjellet blir kalla *Ongeltinden*. Dette må vel òg vera grunnen til at eitt og same fjellet som veiværingane médar i, får tre-fire ulike namn etter kvar ein médar ifrå. Fjellet (som på kartet er Luten ved Eide) heiter *Ottersbakktinden* frå fiskegrunnen *Ottersbakken*, *Falltinden* frå *Fallet* og *Gapstinden* frå *Gapet*. I tillegg kan dette fjellet òg bli nemnt usamansett, berre som *Tinden*.

For médet *Fallet* har eg av ulike fiskarar fått desse oppskriftene av same médlina: «Åttersbakktind i indre Skarpestuven», «Indre Skarpestua i Falltind» og «Skarpestuven i gapstinnene». Namnsettinga er ikkje fastare enn at ein altså kan høre både *Falltinden*, *Ottersbakktinden* og *Gapstinden* bruka som médfjellsnamn når ein fiskar médar opp plassen *Fallet*. Såleis opplever vi òg at namnet og lokaliteten *Nygrunntinden* (Snøtind ved Eide) blir nytta når fiskarane médar seg til på andre fiskeplassar enn Nygrunnen. Dette fjellet kan dessutan ofte bli nemnt med det deskriptive namnet *Flattinden*. Det hender seg at også skjer kan få ulikt namn frå ulikt hald. Eit skjer i Remman vestom Veiholmen heiter *Gloppstøskjeret* når det médar opp uersmédet *Gloppstøet*, og *Besskjeret* når det médar opp seiberget *Bessan*.

Dette at same médmerket kan ha ulike namn sett frå dei ulike fiskeplassane, er ikkje mykje omtala av dei som har skrive om slike sjønamn. Arnfred Slyngstad (1951:36) nemner det, men den som skriv mest utførlig om det, er Amund Helland (1896:224). Da han på slutten av førre hundreåret dreiv og samla inn fiskeméd på Nordvestlandet, støyte Helland på fenomenet:

og saa kan det være, at samme Fjeld ude paa Havet har forskjelligt Navn efter de Med, i hvilke de benyttes; det Fjeld, som i et Med heder Vargetuen, heder i et andet Med Vestklaktuen, idet selve Fjeldet faar Navn efter den Grunde, til hvilken den benyttes som Med.

Dette viser at sjønamna ofte ikkje er stort anna enn hugselappar for fiskaren og som oftast klart sekundære i forhold til dei langt viktigare médnamna. Skiftar han fiskeplass, blir denne nye plassen eit nytt og eit så viktig senter at eit namn

på eit orienteringspunkt for å lokalisere plassen får namn etter fiskeplassen, sjølv om fiskaren nyss kan ha bruka det same punktet under eit anna namn frå ein annan fiskeplass berre noen hundre meter unna.

At fiskarmiljøa har sjønamn på lokalitetane dei médar etter, ser ut til å vera vanlig. Vi finn det nemnt her og der i stadnamnlitteraturen, f.eks. i boka *Namn i fjellet*, der Jørn Sandnes (1968:44) skriv:

Her ute på Folda hadde dei Namdalsbukken eller berre *Bukken* til segelmerke. Det var sjømannsnamnet på Heimdalshaugen, langt inne i landet, [...].

I den meir spesialiserte litteraturen om namn frå kysten nemner Arnfred Slyngstad (1951:35–42) denne nemningstradisjonen frå Sunnmøre, og Per Hovda (1961:202 ff.) har fleire døme på det same langsetter norskekysten.

Svale Solheim (1940) hevdar i boka *Nemningsfordomar ved fiske* at sjønamn på médmerka er utslag av nemningsfordomar som fiskarane har når dei driv fiske. Solheim meiner at sjønamna er laga fordi fiskarane har motvilje mot å nemne namn som har med landjorda å gjera når dei er ute på havet, dvs. den same typen fordom eller tabuførestelling som gjer at fiskarane, når dei er på sjøen, tradisjonelt har unngått å nemne ord som har med landjorda å gjera, og da spesielt klauvdyr som *gris*, *hest*, *ku* og rovdyr som *ulv* og *bjørn*. Denne siste tabuførestellinga veit vi fanst (og finst kan hende framleis?) på Smøla, som langs resten av kysten.

Solheim refererer hyppig til det Jakob Jakobsen (1901) observerte på Shetland. Da Jakobsen rundt hundreårsskiftet samla inn ordtilfang og stadnamn på Shetland, oppdaga han at

Det var tidligere en gjennomført skik blandt Shetlands-fiskerne, at de, medens de vare på søen, ikke måtte nævne de som landmærker brugte steder ved deres almindelige på landjorden gængse navne, da dette ellers kunde medføre uheld for fiskeriet. Tabunavnene indeholde som oftes ord, der betegne landmærkernes udseende, således som disse vise sig, når de ses fra fiskemedene (1901:209).

(Det Jakobsen kallar tabuord og tabunamn er eigentlig noa-ord og noa-namn, fordi desse er 'tillatne' ord og namn som unngår tabuet.) Det er ingen grunn til å tvile på observasjonen, og han er sentral i diskusjonen om namnetabu. Det kan likevel settast spørsmål ved om kor vidt det er rett tolka, dette som Jakobsen noterte seg.

W. B. Lockwood (1956) skriv om tabu i fiskarspråket på Færøyane i ein

artikkel som er sterkt påverka av Jakobsen og Solheim. I denne artikkelen kjem den metodiske veikskapen som desse to etablerte, tydelig fram, for Lockwood gjer som dei: namn på méd og formasjonar på land som heiter noko anna på sjøen enn på land, blir automatisk slått i hartkorn med noa-nemne på f.eks. visse dyr som utan tvil har hatt tabuførestellingar knytte til seg, og fordomar blir sett på som sjølve motivasjonen bak såvel noa-nemna som sjønamna (ibid. 19–21).

Arnfred Slyngstad (1951:36–38) er kritisk til Solheims datagrunnlag og slutningar og seier: "[...] eg meiner dei fleste av desse tinga kan forklarast lettast utan å sjå det som fordom." Slyngstad kvir seg likevel for å komma med eigne slutningar, fordi han finn at materialet han har er for lite.

Sjølv om tilfanget frå Smøla også er lite, kan ein likevel få lyst til å hjelpe til med å avmystifisere sjønamna; til å hevde at dei er produkt av noko anna enn nemningsfordomar. Materialet frå Smøla er dessutan minst like stort som det Jakobsen har frå Shetland, og det kan vera på sin plass raskt å sjå nærmare på datagrunnlaget til Jakobsen – han som etablerte idéen om at sjønamn hadde opphav i tabuførestellingar – for å sjå etter om namnematerialet hans er så forskjellig frå sjønamna frå Smøla og om det er grunnlag for å komma med dei konklusjonane Jakobsen gjer. I kapitlet "Sønavn (tabunavn) for fremtrædende steder (fjælde, høje, pynter m.m.) på land, der af fiskerne bruges som landmærker" summerer Jakobsen (1901:209–219) først opp det som er typisk for sjønamna han har funne. Dette kan vera at det blir brukt eit element som betyr omtrent det same som landnamnet, f.eks. 'bygð' i staden for 'tún'; eit usamansett namn blir bruka for eit samansett namn, f.eks. 'Bø' for 'Kjorkabi'; eller så kan det bli laga om "på det i forvejen gængse navn", slik at ei eintalsform kan bli gjort om til fleirtal, ei diminutivsending kan bli lagt til namnet, og til slutt kan det vera at noen få namn inneheld lån frå keltisk. Deretter kjem ei liste med vel 25 sjønamn på landmerke som òg har gitt namn til médet dei blir bruka til. Noen typiske namn frå lista er "Bloomberg [...], *blå-berg, sønavn for «Rønís hill» [...] på grund af dets blålige farve i den store afstand", "de Smi [...], sønavn for en gammel smedje (on. smiðja), brugt som landmærke", "de Segel [on. «segl», sejl], sønavn på forbjærget «de Hevda» (Fe) [høfði]" "de Tinds [...], tre høje, der, sete fra nogle fiskemed, vise sig som tre kegleformede spidser; on. «tindr», tinde". Det særeigne ved materialet frå Shetland, der talemålet elles er skotsk-engelsk, er at sjønamna stort sett er på norn, dvs. eit norrønt-basert språk, men dette opphavet er felles også for alle dei andre stadnamna på Shetland. Elles er dette namn og namnetypar vi kan seie er typiske i eit fiskarmiljø og som vi umiddelbart kjenner igjen frå f.eks. Smøla (da sjølvsagt bortsett frå mulige keltiske namn). Her er sjønamn som refererer til form og farge på topografi som

er langt unna, som viser til delar av ein større formasjon eller til formasjonar som berre kjem fram på sjøen og som fortel om lokalisering nær kjente stader. Det er ikkje lett å sjå at noen av namna på Jakobsens liste skal ha med tabuførestellingar å gjera – kanskje bortsett frå to av dei: "de *Bønhus* [...]; på dette sted må en gammel kirke have stået (on. «bænhús», bedehus)" (Jakobsen hevdar andre stader at det på Shetland var ein nemningsfordom knytta til kjerka) og "de *Fremd* [...], klippetop på den vestlige side af Burrafirth-bugten i Unst. *fremd* er tabuord på søen, betegnende «hoved» (spec. hoved på fisk), egl. «forparti»; afledning af adv. «fram», frem." Heller ikkje desse namna er overtydande, fordi begge ser ut til å vera det einaste namnet Jakobsen har registrert på lokaliteten; dei er altså ikkje noa-namn eller omskrivingar av namn som ville vera tabu på sjøen. Vi veit ikkje om det faktisk har stått ei kjerke her eller om det har eksistert eit landnamn med 'kjerke' i seg, og i det andre namnet med *fremd* er også sjølv tabunamnet med 'hovud' hypotetisk og det er vel lite trulig at det har eksistert. I begge tilfella kan vi seie at fiskarane har laga namn ved å bruke appellativ som kunne vera noa-ord for andre ord med nemningsfordomar knytta til seg. Tabuførestellingane knytte til desse to namna ligg altså på ordplanet og ikkje på namneplanet. For å kunne føre prov for namnetabu måtte vi ha hatt namnepar av typen *Jomfruland* og *Aur*, der det første namnet har komme opp som eit noa-namn i staden for det gamle namnet. Overskrifta og innleiinga på kapitlet i Jakobsens bok etablerer altså førestillinga om at sjønamna er tabumotiverte, men ut ifrå det datagrunnlaget han faktisk legg fram, er dette, etter mi meining, ei feiltolking.

Eg finn ingen grunn til å tru at sjønamna på médfjella som blir bruka utanfor Smøla, er utslag av nemningsfordomar, og dei ser ikkje ut til å vera laga ut ifrå eit behov for å omskrive det eksisterande namneverket. Det kan nok vera at eitkvart namnet som fiskarane brukar på médmerka sine, kan ha opphav i ei tabuførestelling, men neppe meir enn andre namn langs kysten. Eg trur ein bør nøytralisere sjønamna og heller sjå dei som element av eit regionalt fagspråk. Eit tradisjonelt fiskarfagspråk vil m.a. romme noa-nemne på visse dyr som det har vore tabu å nemne ved sitt rette namn på sjøen, og det vil romme lokale namn på dei viktigaste geografiske orienteringspunkta i området, men uten at det treng å vera tabuførestellingar attom desse. Sjønamna blir nytta i ein situasjonsbetinga kontekst for å lette kommunikasjonen innom ei bestemt yrkesgruppe som har behov for geografiske orienteringspunkt, og som lagar namn på desse ut frå heilt alminnelige prinsipp ut frå forma eller funksjonen lokaliteten har. Som del av eit regionalt fagspråk vil kunnskapen om sjønamna kunne verke inkluderande; han viser at ein tek del i eit yrkesmessig og geografisk avgrensa fellesskap, og dermed også ekskluderande; kan ein ikkje terminologien, står ein

òg utanfor den lokale yrkesgruppa og den nedervde felles fagkunnskapen til denne gruppa.

Det Jakobsen valde å sjå som tabuførestellingar på Shetland, kan i alle fall delvis òg forklarast ut frå meir prosaiske, økonomiske forhold. I siste halvdel av førre hundreåret opplevde Shetland ei drastisk omlegging av fiskeriet, ikkje minst ved at store, havgåande båtar kom frå Skottland og Nederland og ytte dei tradisjonelle, små shetlandske fiskebåtane konkurranse på fiskegrunnane. I denne situasjonen kan vi tenkje oss at shetlandsfiskarane rett og slett fann nytte i å halde på dei gamle norn-elementa i fagterminologien sin som elles no var avlidne fordi det ikkje lenger var bruk for dei. Shetlandsfiskarane hadde relativt nylig teke i bruk skotsk-engelsk som dagligspråk, men enno kunne dei mange ord frå det gamle norrøn-baserte språket, og når dei held på dei gamle norn-namna i médmérka sine, kan ein sjå det som eit defensivt tiltak for å sikre at den gamle kunnskapen om kvar fisken var å finne ikkje kom på framande hender. Ved å bruke ein eksklusiv terminologi – både namn og nemne – kunne dei utelukke konkurrentane frå ein viktig økonomisk ressurs. At eit slikt tett arbeidsfellesskap av natur er språklig eksklusivt, ser vi ikkje berre eksempel på frå Shetland, men òg frå Isle of Man, der manx-gælisken lenge vart bevart som fiskarspråk på sjøen. Alexander Fenton (1968–69:121) hevdar det er ei direkte line mellom shetlandsfiskarane og det han kallar deira tabuspråk og ei anna yrkesgruppe som har det eg vil kalle eit karakteristisk fagspråk, nemlig dei norrøne skaldane. Alle som har forsøkt å lesa skaldekvada veit kor eksklusivt det intrikate systemet av kenningar er! Men eg vil tru at motivet bak kenningane, som bak sjønamna, ikkje treng å vera magiførestellingar, men heller ein trong til å vise at ein rår over eit sett språklige kodar som hører ein yrkestradisjon til.

Hovudårsaka til at fiskaren ofte opererer med andre namn enn dei kartverket har, er nok ganske enkelt at fiskaren ikkje kjenner dei lokale namna, fordi han aldri har vore på desse stroka inne i fjordane og fjellheimen. Det er jo slett ikkje uvanlig at ein kan bu eit langt liv på ein stad og aldri kjenne namna på tindane inne i fjellbruna. Desse lokalitetane er så langt unna at dei til vanlig er uviktige og dermed ikkje treng å nemnast ved namn. Det er først når fiskaren har bruk for médmérke at fjella blir såpass viktige for han at han treng namn på dei. Da vil dessutan dei lokale, kartrette namna ofte vera 'dårlige' namn, fordi dei gjerne refererer til lokalisering nær gardar fiskaren ikkje kjenner, eller topografi som ikkje kjem fram frå fiskarens synsstad. Fiskarane på Smøla og dei lokale fastbuande attmed fjella som grensar til Romsdalen, utgjer to heilt forskjellige grupper av namnebrukarar, og namna dei brukar på same lokaliteten, avspeglar gjernast den ulike forma lokaliteten har frå forskjellige synsstader eller den ulike nytta dei har av lokaliteten.

Kartverket følger regelen om at det lokale namnet, basert på lokal uttale, skal skrivast på kartet. Dette betyr så klart at ingen av sjønamna på fjella vil komma på offisielle kart. Det er grunn til å minne om at slike namn likevel er gode stadnamn og at det ikkje er noko mindreverdige over dei, for innan si bestemte brukargruppe har desse namna ein viktig funksjon, og dei peikar ut visse lokaliteter på same måte som alle andre stadnamn. Som vi har sett, verkar det òg som om fleire av dei er gamle namn. Det vi kan vera heilt sikre på, er at desse sjønamna snart vil gå i gløymeboka, for bruken av *méd* og *méd*merke forsvinn no raskt, og vi kan lett førestelle oss at obskure, uskrivne sjønamn på *méd*fjella knapt vil kunne overleva lenger enn namna på dei gamle fiskegrunnane.

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SCANDINAVIA AND EUROPE 800–1350

Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence

Edited by

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and

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BREPOLS

Norse Topographical Settlement Names on the Western Littoral of Scotland

ARNE KRUSE

To be an immigrant with an interest in onomastics in Scotland is a sobering experience. While in Norway there is a single Germanic onomasticon (with Sámi and Finnish strata in certain areas), Scotland — with a topography quite similar to Norway — shows a multitude of ethnic strata that is both exciting and a bit off-putting in all its complexity. Aware of my own linguistic limitations, I will in this essay try to steer clear of detailed etymological analyses. Instead my intention here is, as a foreigner dealing with a research tradition that is not his own, to share some thoughts of a more general nature. I intend to discuss some aspects of the most central work in Scottish onomastics, W. F. H. Nicolaisen's *Scottish Place-Names*,¹ and in particular the chapter on Scandinavian names, which is, of course, the most interesting chapter for a Scandinavian reader.

Years after it was first published, *Scottish Place-Names* is still referred to, quite justifiably, as *the* authority on the interpretation of individual Scottish names, as well as on onomastic theory. In a book with so many new observations, overviews, and ideas, it is hardly surprising that there are aspects of it which one finds rather unexpected or with which one even disagrees. I would like to discuss the slight surprise I had whilst reading the chapter on Scandinavian names, focusing on an attitude towards settlements bearing topographical names that I find rather unfamiliar.

Here is a central quotation from the chapter on Scandinavian names, where Nicolaisen comments on the distribution map of names containing the generic *dalr*:

There is no reason to think that it has ever meant anything but what it still means in Norwegian today, i.e. 'a valley'. [...] It must be remembered that *dalr* primarily refers to natural features, although the name of a valley was quite often, at a later date, transferred to a settlement situated in it. A distribution map of *dalr*-names is therefore

¹ W. F. H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1976).

not a map of permanent Norse settlement but rather of the sphere of Norse influence. It includes those areas adjacent to permanent settlements in which seasonal exploits such as hunting and fishing and summer grazing were carried out, and probably the odd military raid or friendly visit. In most of those undertakings Norsemen must have been accompanied by Gaelic-speakers as otherwise the names concerned would not have come down to us because of a break in communication. [. . .] the distribution of *dair* (Map 8) serves as a reminder that 'settlement area' and 'sphere of influence' are not the same and that the Norsemen must have known the western coastal districts of the mainland from Cape Wrath to the Mull of Kintyre extremely well even if they never (or hardly ever) had any permanent farms or other settlements there. It would be risky to read any more out of, or into, these maps.²

In the quotation it seems to be taken for granted that the Norse arriving on the west coast littoral would have ignored the arable and cultivated land in the area. This is certainly not obvious, as this was a most valuable resource to an agrarian-based people. Let us, however, for the time being, follow the assumption that the Norse were only seasonal visitors to the mainland and that they, in contact with the local population, left behind their own names for the area. The first part of this essay will be a discussion of this hypothesis in the light of onomastic theory.

Traditional onomastics has been dominated by etymology. Aspects such as the relationship between the place-name and the user-group(s) of the name, and the function of the name as a means of communication, have only more recently appeared on the agenda of place-name researchers. However, an early pioneer in the discussion of such aspects was the Norwegian Magnus Olsen.³ He stressed that we, as individuals, all have a certain inventory of names stored in our memory. Certain people will know certain names within an area, according to the need which the individual has for the names. Olsen divided the place-names of an area into three types, depending on the creator and/or the user of the names. First, there are names connected with the farm; second, names that are used within the village; and third, names used by people travelling through the area. A farmer knows the detailed landscape within his farm and will need to use names in this microsphere to refer to the landscape within the farm when communicating with others living on the farm. Farmers are not likely to know the names of all the locations on a neighbour's farm. However, within the wider neighbourhood, farmers will together be able to refer to locations by names within the village or the local community. These might include local roads, important natural features, shared areas of utilization, such as common grazing in the hills, and other farms within the community. Finally, according to Magnus Olsen, merchants, fishermen, pilgrims, and other kinds of travellers, for example, along a coast, will be unfamiliar with the names of all the farms in a particular region, but they will know names of importance to them along a wider area of

² Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, pp. 94, 96.

³ Magnus Olsen, *Hvad våre stedsnavn lærer oss* (Oslo: Stenersen, 1934).

travel routes.⁴ Names known by people travelling, Olsen says, are names of larger areas and points of orientation, that is, easily recognizable topographical features, such as islands, larger fjords, and headlands.

A weak point in Olsen's theory is that he does not clearly distinguish between the creator of a name and the user of a name, but it seems that he has in mind the actual creators of the various name types.⁵ In a recent article, Ola Stemschaug questions the very existence of names created by travellers.⁶ He argues that travelling will often be the *reason* for giving a location a certain name, but the actual creators of the names will be locals. Seafarers may have their own names for locations along a coast, but these names will only exceptionally become widely accepted denotations of the locations. In other words, travellers as a user-group of names may have a different onomasticon than locals, but their name inventory will normally not become generally accepted.

A very clear example which illustrates this is the Swedish names of the rapids along the Dniepr, recorded in c. 950 in the writings of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus.⁷ These are obviously names coined by Swedes struggling with their boats past the difficult rapids of the river. Importantly, the Swedish names have not survived outside this account. They were frozen in time, being recorded from the onomasticon of a very limited user-group who only had the need for the names as long as their travels took them along the Dniepr. As they were only used by people passing by, the Swedish names had no chance of survival in competition with local names which could be passed on through many generations. There was no reason for the locals to accept new, foreign names from visitors for a topography that they already had names for in their own language.⁸

⁴ Olsen, *Hvad våre stedsnavn*, pp. 10–12.

⁵ See, for example, Magnus Olsen, *Ættegård og helligdom: Norske stedsnavn sosialt og religionshistorisk belyst*, Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Serie A: Forelesninger, 9a (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1926), p. 18. This book has also been published in English as *Farms and Fanes of Ancient Norway: The Place-Names of a Country Discussed in their Bearings on Social and Religious History*, trans. by Th. Gleditsch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).

⁶ Ola Stemschaug, 'Vegens navn – kva er det?', in *Ortnamn i språk och samhälle. Hyllningsskrift till Lars Hellberg*, ed. by Svante Strandberg, *Nomina Germanica*, 22 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1997), pp. 253–65.

⁷ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. by Gyula Moravcsik and trans. by Romilly J. H. Jenkins, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, I, rev. edn (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967).

⁸ For a discussion on these names, see Knut-Olof Flak, *Dneprforsarnas namn i Kejsar Konstantin VII Porfyrogennetos' 'De administrando imperio'*, *Lunds universitets årsskrift*, N. F. Avd. I, Bd. 46, Nr 4, Slaviska institutet vid Lunds universitet, Slaviska och baltiska studier, 1 (Lund: Gleerup, 1951).

There are some names coined by travellers which are now widely used, for example, *Norway* ('the northern way'), *Strait of Magellan*, and *Easter Island*. These are names obviously not coined by locals. However, the latter two are typical examples of the type of names which a dominant, map-making culture has given to the world. The point is that such names normally denote large areas or distinct features along major travel routes, and they are not likely to be frequent. It is highly unlikely that any farm names or names of valleys and bays will be coined by non-residents or by people that are not neighbours of the farms or topographical features.

The names with the generic *dalr* that Nicolaisen refers to denote either modern farms or relatively small valleys — both categories of names which typically belong to the nomenclature of the local community. This is the group of people who have the greatest need for such names as a means of reference, and this is the group of people who will have preserved the names through time, preventing them from falling into oblivion.

It is time to mention that Nicolaisen's own view has mellowed somewhat over the years.⁹ However, in a comparatively recent article on the place-names of Arran, Nicolaisen reintroduces old thoughts.¹⁰ He sees Arran as part of the Norse 'sphere of influence', along with the mainland littoral. About the Norse place-names on the island, he has this to say:

[It is] not the nomenclature of a settled people but of occasional, albeit fairly regular but not always welcome, visitors. It is a nomenclature that experiences the island from the sea, not only visually but also while exploring and utilising it. It is a sailor's toponymic vocabulary and that of the fisherman and the hunter and the herdsman involved in transhumance.¹¹

And in characteristic style he gives the underlying semantics of the names:

[...] they are the names of seasonal intruders depleting the rivers and grazing their heifers and their yearlings on shielings on the best grassland easily accessible from the shore. These names are more like onomastic graffiti: 'Skorri was here' proclaims *Scorradel*, 'Skapto rules O.K.' announces *Skaftigill*.¹²

This seems insupportable to me. Although it is more than likely that if the Norse were non-residents in the area, they would have had their own names for the

⁹ See, for example, W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Place-Name Maps – How Reliable Are They?', in *Studia Onomastica: Festskrift till Thorsten Andersson*, ed. by Lena Peterson and S. Strandberg (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1989), pp. 262–68 (p. 265), where he hints that the absence of primary settlement names may even reflect 'less permanence of occupation, or at least a very different attitude towards the land'.

¹⁰ W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Arran Place-Names: A Fresh Look', *Northern Studies*, 28 (1992), 1–13.

¹¹ Nicolaisen, 'Arran Place-Names', p. 8.

¹² Nicolaisen, 'Arran Place-Names', pp. 8–9.

landscape they utilized as fishermen, hunters, and herders, it is unlikely that such names would enter the onomasticon of the locals resident in the area. I have researched such an in-group's onomasticon, viz. how fishermen in Norway use their own names on land-kennings, that is, mountains or other topographical features they need in order to navigate.¹³ I found that names used by fishermen whilst fishing typically never leave the narrow context within which they exist. They only exist as long as there is a professional need for them, and they hardly ever influence the names that people living next to the mountains have for the mountains. Consequently, they will, as a rule, never appear on a map.

While this is the case within a stable monolingual and monoethnic society like the west coast of Norway, the additional problem of an ethnic and linguistic barrier would have had to be crossed in Scotland. How and why would Norse names have won general acceptance within a Gaelic-speaking community to the degree that they were passed on to future Gaelic-speaking generations? In the first quotation, Nicolaisen suggests a solution to this problem by saying that the Norse would have had local Gaels who came with them on their expeditions to the mainland coast and that these Gaels picked up the Norse names and passed them on to future Gaelic generations. However, in a situation like this, the opposite to the suggested scenario is more likely to have happened. We know from history that in similar situations, where newcomers have made use of natives as scouts and interpreters, the normal way of communicating place-names is that the locals pass on their own native names to the newcomers. The maps of Africa, America, and Australia are scattered with names that have been handed down to us from locals informing Europeans of the onomasticon of the area. All in all, it is difficult to see why and how the local, resident Scots, inspired by those of their own who were in Norse service, would have suppressed central names in their name inventory in place of names coined in a totally different language to their own.

The word order and the specifics in the compound names show that there is no question of any borrowing of Norse appellatives into Gaelic at the time. The names in question are clearly coined by speakers of Norse. Therefore, could it be that the resident Scots actually adopted the language of the Norse visitors? Even if this were the case, it still would not be the answer to the very high frequency of Norse names on the west coast littoral. Place-names usually survive a language shift, because names, contrary to words, need not carry meaning. As long as there is population continuity within a given area, the fundamental onomasticon of the population is likely to survive, even if the population happens to switch language. For example, the names of major settlements and large natural features are still Gaelic in areas of Scotland where the Gaelic language itself has succumbed to English. Therefore, a language shift in itself cannot explain why so many important place-names on the Scottish west coast are of Norse origin.

¹³ Arne Kruse, 'Sjønamn på médfjella', *Namn og Nemne*, 15 (1998), 21-31.

The most reasonable explanation for the many Norse names in this area is an ethnic shift; an ethnic (and with it a linguistic) discontinuity which would have seen the Norse taking over substantial parts of the mainland west coast in the form of settlements. Only an ethnically Norse community explains the pattern and frequency of the Norse names that have survived to the present. Furthermore, both the distribution and the sheer number of names of Norse origin indicate a continuum of settlements where Norse was once spoken along the western littoral.

If the Norse were able to leave names for locations they explored and used as visitors, we would expect to have found Norse names spread over a much wider area than we actually do. It is surely not out of the question that the Norse would have explored and also have made certain use of the more inland areas of Scotland, at least as far in as the sea lochs penetrate the Highlands. However, Norse names are not found very far inland. There are many Norse names along the outer coast of the mainland but hardly any single, isolated names at any significant distance from other Norse names. Either an area has several Norse names or none at all. Such a distribution pattern indicates a Norse continuum along significant parts of the mainland coast. Here a fairly unbroken chain of Norse settlers would have meant that most farmers had Norse neighbours not very far away in both directions along the coast.

To illustrate what a Norse speech continuum might have looked like, we can briefly focus on two areas on the west coast, one up towards the north and one in the south. Ian Fraser has analysed the names along the coast of Wester Ross, from Loch Broom to Loch Carron.¹⁴ He lists forty Norse names (including one single habitative name, *Ullapool*) from this section of the coastline and twelve Gaelic names, most of which he regards as post-medieval.¹⁵ Implicitly, Fraser clearly regards the names as denotations of settlements.

On the east coast of Kintyre (see figs 1 and 3 in the article by Jennings in this volume), from Tarbert to Campbeltown, we see the same pattern again. The modern settlement names are mostly of Norse origin (again with one habitative name, *Smerby*, probably from **Smjörbyr*), and at least some of the relatively few purely Gaelic names are of a secondary type, for example, *Dippen* 'dark half-penny-land' and names with *achadh* 'field'. It is very difficult to see such stretches of Norse names as anything but products of Norse-speaking neighbourhoods.

Nicolaisen's hypothesis that it was Norse visitors and not settlers who left their onomastic imprint on the coast of the mainland is closely linked to the idea that the Norse topographical names are not settlement names — so closely linked that the argument sometimes feels circular. Nicolaisen starts his discussion on the distribution of *dalr*-names by stating, 'There is no reason to think that it [i.e. *dalr*] has ever

¹⁴ Ian A. Fraser, 'Norse Settlement on the North-West Seaboard', in *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain*, ed. by Barbara E. Crawford (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), pp. 92–105 (p. 98, fig. 21).

¹⁵ Fraser, 'Norse Settlement', p. 97.

meant anything but what it still means in Norwegian today, i.e. "a valley".¹⁶ He argues that in spite of the fact that many such names now denote farms, they would initially have denoted a topographical feature and only become attached to a settlement at a later stage. A name like *Crossaig* in Kintyre would then have been used by Norse visitors to designate the bay itself, and likewise *Carradale* and *Torrisdale* to denote the respective glens; only at a later stage were the names used to denote the settlements in the said locations.

One must admit that it is true that *dal* in modern Norwegian means nothing but 'valley'. However, one is discussing *names*, not appellatives, and the semantics of the name *Dal* in modern Norwegian is not so clear-cut. In Norway today, simplex primary topographical names without the definite article like *Dal*, *Nes*, and *Vik* designate settlements. Many of these simplex topographical farm names are likely to have come about during the transition to permanent settlement, around the time of the birth of Christ.¹⁷ The earliest farms were 'super-farms' which actually occupied whole valleys or whole headlands. One can easily understand why neighbours within an area could best refer to these early settlements by indicating their location, and that with names like *Dal* and *Nes* the descriptive appellative side to the name and the address location of the settlement were semantically inseparable. In modern usage, such names are clearly dominated by the settlement itself and not so much by the topographical location of the settlement. From my own area in Nordmøre, Norway, 'nedi Dala' first and foremost designate the houses and/or the people living there. I believe this is a very early development. If there is a settlement within the area of, for example, a valley or bay, a topographical name — if it still makes sense to the users — will have dual *designata*; it will refer both to the topographical feature and the settlement itself, and the latter will probably be the most important.

Nicolaisen has coined the term *instant names* for 'ready-made' names that the colonists brought with them, like *Breiðvík* and *Sandvík*. We could also claim that the Norse brought with them a set of *instant name connotations*, where, among other things, certain types of names carried more prestige than others. The most prestigious of all would certainly be the topographical names for settlements. As a rule, even today in Norway, the early type of topographical names designate the largest farms, positioned on the best and most central land within an area. It is likely that the Norse settlers in the Viking Age would have chosen to use such prestigious names for the very first names of new settlements.

The importance of social ranking in place-names is seen when nineteenth-century Norwegian immigrants to America were told to choose a family name — patronymics were still the norm in Norway at that time. Very many chose to use a place-name as their family name, but rather than the name of the poor cottar's farm they

¹⁶ Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, p. 94.

¹⁷ See, for example, Ola Stemschaug, *Namn i Noreg: Ei innføring i norsk stadnamngransking*, 2nd edn (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1976), p. 91.

had left behind, many of them chose the name of the main farm on which their cottar's farm was situated or simply the biggest farm in the area they had left. As a result, there are a disproportionate number of family names such as Lee (from Li) and Dahl (from Dal) among Norwegian-Americans today.

The increased frequency of compound topographical names used during the Viking period could be explained by the need for specifics to single out *designata* in more densely populated areas than were previously known. Also, the development of the ship and the resulting migration had vastly increased the geographical radius in which individuals needed names as address tags. In order to distinguish between the farms situated in the many valleys of Iceland, they were mostly given compound names. Even Ingólfr, the first Norse settler in Iceland, established himself at *Reykjavík* ('The Smoky Bay'), and when Erik the Red (Eiríkr hinn Rauði) founded his farm in Greenland, the simplex **Hlið* ('Slope') was not found to be precise enough and a specific was added, giving *Brattahlið* ('Steep Slope').

Between the first establishment of farms in Scandinavia and the Viking exodus, society organized around the extended family unit disintegrated. There was a gradual move towards a social organization where the individual played a more important role. We can observe this in the names of the many farms established during the Viking Age, when the person who cleared the land or took up residence on the farm starts to be remembered in the name of the farm. We see it in habitative names all over *Terra Scandinavica*, for example, *Grimshader* and *Swanibost*; and we can probably see the same process taking place in the many farms that carry a personal name compounded with a topographical generic, for example, *Torrisdale* and *Skorridale*.

By the Viking Age, there were certainly some very fashionable generics used for new settlements, for example, *staðir*, *setr*, and *bólstaðr*. However, we can observe that new settlements established during this period — in Scandinavia as well as in its colonies — were certainly also given topographical names. In Finnur Jónsson's register of over 7100 Icelandic farm names, around half are topographical names.¹⁸ Furthermore, and perhaps of more relevance to the initial settlement, the nine most used generics indicating topography are found in approximately 35% of all the farm names of *Landnámabók*, while the eleven most used habitative generics make up approximately 33%.¹⁹

On the Faroe Islands we see a similar frequent usage of topographical names for settlements. Of the *bygdir* 'small villages' and *býlingar* 'farms' which are recorded by the end of the sixteenth century, 68% of the *bygd*-names and 53% of the *býlingur*-

¹⁸ Finn[ur] Jónsson, 'Bæjanöfn á Íslandi', and Jóhann Kristjánsson, 'Skrá við Bæjanöfn á Íslandi', in *Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenzkra bókmenta að fornu og nýju*, vol. IV (Copenhagen: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1907), pp. 412–584 and 917–37 respectively.

¹⁹ Oskar Bandle, 'Die Ortsnamen der *Landnámabók*', in *Sjöttú ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977*, ed. by Einar G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússon, 1977), pp. 47–68.

names have topographical generics, while the figures for habitative generics in *bygd*-names and for *bylingur*-names are 15% and 26% respectively.²⁰

In the name material from the Faroes there is a striking absence of the habitative elements *staðir* and *setr/sætr*, which distinguishes the nomenclature of these islands from that of Shetland and Iceland. Lindsay MacGregor has made a convincing analysis of the similarities and differences between the Faroes and Shetland.²¹ She points to the many primary farms on Shetland with topographical names and the relative secondary nature of the farms with habitative generics, and she attributes the lack of habitative generics on the Faroes to the settlement pattern on the islands. The habitative naming elements are not present because the type of settlement that they indicate is not found:

In Shetland, *staðir*-names were applied to secondary but favourable sites, separate from primary farms; *bólstaðr*-names were given to large farms established on existing cultivated fields or to divisions of existing farms; and *sætr*-names were given to marginal settlements on hill-grazing land. All these types of settlements are absent from Faroe, precluded by the constraints of the landscape.²²

Parts of what MacGregor says about the Faroes are applicable to the west coast of mainland Scotland, although the explanation for the lack of habitative elements is likely to be different. What is relevant is the strong argument for the primary character of farms carrying topographical names and the importance of considering the particular topography and settlement type in connection with place-name chronology.

MacGregor claims that when you take into consideration topographical and land assessment evidence, primary farms are easily distinguished from secondary farms, and that this is also reflected in the generics of secondary inland farms with topographical names.²³ The primary sites are named after the most prominent, mostly coastal, topographical features in the locality, such as *eið* 'isthmus', *strönd* 'strand'/'shore', *vágr* 'bay'/'creek', and *dalr* 'valley'. In both Shetland and the Faroes, the majority of sites with topographical names of a more secondary character relate to inland features, such as *á* 'river', *haugr* 'mound', *hamarr* 'crag'/'precipice', *brekka* 'slope', and *fjall* 'mountain'.

The Norse topographical generics used on the Scottish west coast are much more one-dimensional than those found in Shetland and the Faroes. They are basically *dalr* 'valley' and *vik* 'inlet'/'small bay', while the topographical generics of a more secondary character are, to a great extent, absent. This, along with the absence of

²⁰ Arne Thorsteinsson, 'Færøske bebyggelsesnavne med -bø', in *Den ellefte nordiske navneforskerkongressen, Sundvollen 19.-23. juni 1994*, ed. by Kristoffer Kruken, NORNA-Rapporter, 60 (Uppsala: Swedish Science Press, 1996), pp. 183-96.

²¹ Lindsay J. MacGregor, 'Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe: A Comparative Study', *Northern Studies*, 23 (1986), 84-101.

²² MacGregor, 'Norse Naming Elements', p. 99.

²³ MacGregor, 'Norse Naming Elements', p. 87.

habitative place-names, surely points to a scenario whereby a Norse population established itself along the coast. They used prominent topographical features to name their primary settlement sites, and when the time came for further expansion and division of farms, this did not happen within the medium of the Norse language.

There seems to be a growing agreement among scholars that nature-names have been used in the Scandinavian colonies to designate settlements and, more particularly, very early settlements. This is more or less explicitly expressed in works by scholars such as Ian Fraser and, not least, Barbara E. Crawford who has expressed strong reservations towards the elimination of topographical names from any settlement chronology.²⁴ Still, Nicolaisen's main idea has not been directly contradicted, neither by himself nor by others, and his interpretation of the distribution of the Norse settlement is still often referred to.

Hugh Marwick, the first scholar to establish a chronology of Norse settlement names in Orkney, did indeed recognize the importance of settlements with topographical names, which, he says, 'have undoubtedly to be classed among the very earliest settlements'.²⁵ Marwick, and later Nicolaisen, still chose to leave out such names from their chronologies, as the age of topographical names is difficult to establish. Not much has been done to correct this obvious error in the chronological schemes. It would, for example, be possible to examine the correlation between name-types and primary farms, using archaeological, geographical, and fiscal methods, as shown by MacGregor and Fraser.²⁶ Also, a closer study of the fringes of Norse settlement in Scotland may reveal information about chronology, and it is in this context that the west coast of the mainland is interesting.

This essay is written with the conviction that the discrepancy between habitative names and topographical names, which Nicolaisen observed, is significant, and that it might even say something important about the sequence of events during the Norse period. The usual explanation of the discrepancy, however, is not acceptable, mainly because it would assume that the Norse on the west coast of Scotland established naming patterns that were significantly different to those they used elsewhere.

What the disparity may rather indicate is an intense but short-lived Norse period on the mainland. In such a scenario the newcomers established a Norse-speaking continuum of settlements where they made use of the most prestigious naming

²⁴ Fraser, 'Norse Settlement'; Barbara E. Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*, Scotland in the Early Middle Ages, 2 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987), p. 111; Barbara E. Crawford, 'Introduction: The Study of Place-Names', in *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain*, ed. by Crawford, pp. 1–16 (pp. 10–13).

²⁵ Hugh Marwick, *Orkney Farm-Names* (Kirkwall: Mackintosh, 1952), p. 248.

²⁶ MacGregor, 'Norse Naming Elements'; Ian A. Fraser, 'What Is a *vik*? An Investigation into an Old Norse Coastal Typonym', in *Peoples and Settlement in North-West Ross*, ed. by J. R. Baldwin (Edinburgh: The Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 1994), pp. 69–78. This method has more recently, and more thoroughly, been used by Peder Gammeltoft in *The Place-Name Element bólstadr in the North Atlantic Area* (Copenhagen: Reitzels, 2001).

elements that they knew from home in order to name farms in a rugged landscape that invited and reinforced the use of topographical naming elements. The lifespan of this Norse-speaking community seems to have been short, as there is hardly any use of topographical generics of a secondary character nor of traditional habitative elements to indicate the division of farms or the clearing of new land. By the time this was necessary, it seems that Gaelic naming elements were being used.²⁷ As this only points to a language shift, not an ethnic shift, this Gaelic-speaking community continued to use the Norse names that were by then well established.

²⁷ See more on this in Andrew Jennings's article in this volume.

**Cultural Contacts in the
North Atlantic Region:
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Explorers, Raiders and Settlers. The Norse Impact upon Hebridean Place-Names

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This article is a discussion about how the Norse during the Viking period related to the native peoples in the west of Scotland and how this relationship impinged on the Norse naming of their new land. It will assert that the earliest Norse contact phase resulted in the creation of certain island names through actual communication with the local population. However, it is likely that this contact situation did not last very long, and it was rapidly followed by blanket Norse naming, which paid no regard to the previous naming tradition. The discussion will then develop the proposition that the Norse met two different ethnic groups in the islands and that this pre-Norse ethnic divide might help to explain some place-name patterns on the west coast of Scotland.

1. Some island names

There is a general consensus concerning the intensity of the Norseness of the place-names of Shetland and Orkney. It is agreed that the Norse almost totally re-named the islands. The only name which reflects a pre-Norse onomasticon for certain is Orkney, recorded as *Orchades* by Diodorus Siculus in the first century BC, and echoed by Pliny, who calls the islands *Orcades*. The name is reflected in Old Irish as *Insi Orc*. It is also more or less agreed that the three northernmost islands on Shetland, Unst, Yell and Fetlar, may be based upon pre-Norse names. For the large northern Hebridean island Skye, we have both the Latin *Sketis nesos*, Ptolemy, 2nd century AD, and the Old Irish *Sci* and *Sceth*, and it is obvious that the Old Norse *Skíð* is a phonological adaptation of this (and actually, thanks to a shared Indo-European origin, both the Old Irish and the Old Norse name carry the semantic content 'split', originally most likely to refer to the long inlets in the western part of the island).

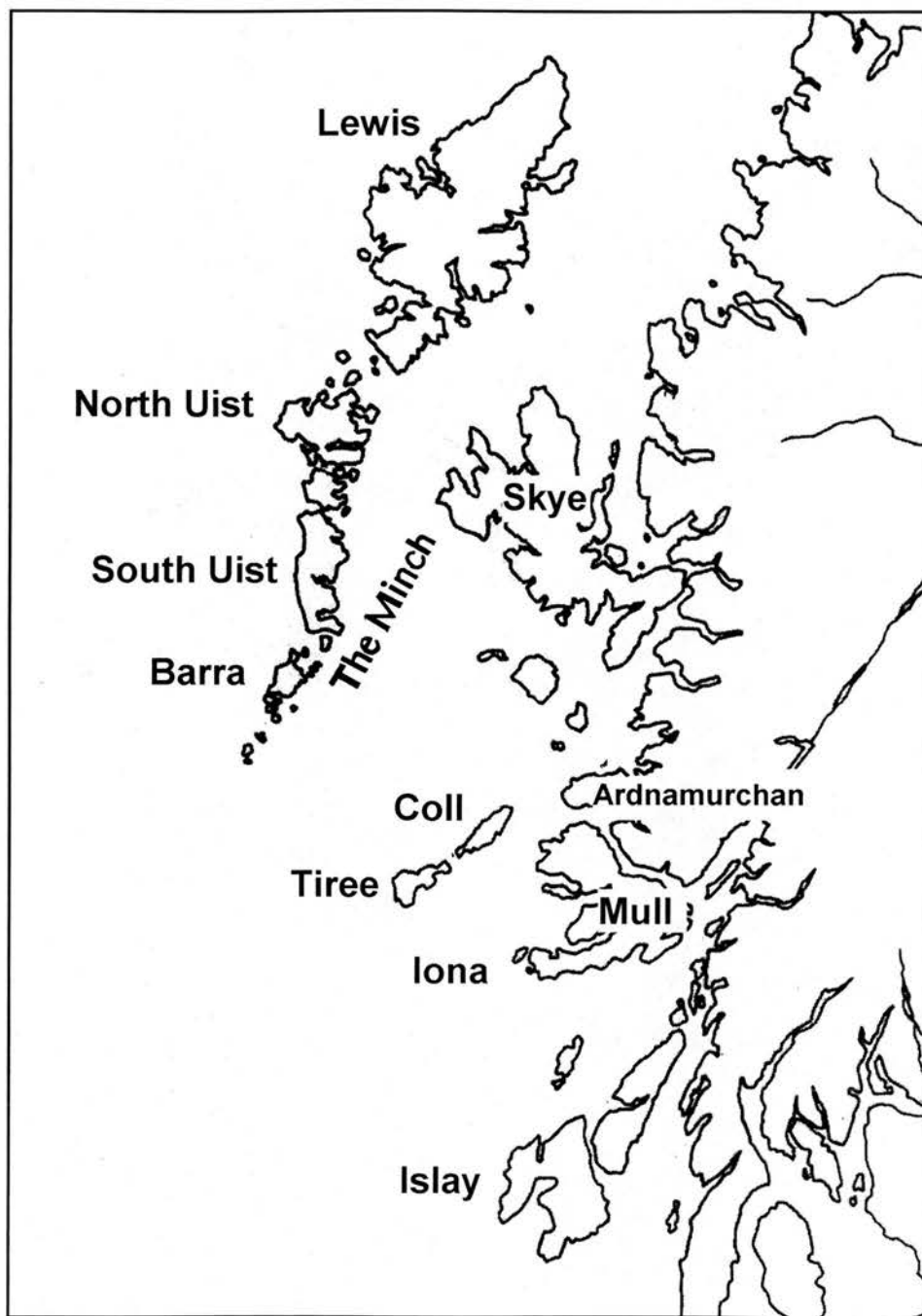


Figure 1. A map of the west coast of Scotland, with locations mentioned in the text.

Although there are no recorded pre-Norse names of the largest islands in the Outer Hebrides, Lewis and Uist, their Old Norse names *Ljóðhús* and *Ívist* are also likely candidates for having been transformed into Norse from a pre-Norse language. For island names their semantic content is highly suspicious, respectively meaning ‘house of people’ and ‘in-dwelling’. Together with Unst, Yell and Fetlar, these islands stand out from the rest, not only for their northern location within their respective groups of islands, but also because their names are typologically different from other Norse island names. They are unusual because they are all among the very few island names in the Norse colonies without the generic *-ey*, and semantically they are atypical because they do not have a content which instantly relates the island to a location, shape or ownership in the form of a personal name. In fact, their meanings are obscure – which is somewhat unusual, as island names in the Norse colonies are largely fairly transparent. The island names in question strongly hint at native originals which have been squeezed into Norse phonology and ‘meanings’ that may be easy to memorise although they do not really refer to anything characteristic about the location. The names stand out as the likely products of an initial meeting of peoples, probably coined at a very early contact phase by explorers or maybe early raiders from the north, eager to determine the northernmost and therefore the first important points of reference they arrived at by establishing the names of the largest islands from the local population.

From other parts of the world there are many examples of other types of expeditions registering names in a similar way. We can think of Spanish explorers in Latin America and French and British trappers and map-makers in North America, all of them registered the Native American names of tribal areas and important natural features. This is how names like Andes, Iowa and Mississippi have made it onto modern maps. Old Norse names from elsewhere have a similar origin. During expeditionary raids the Vikings for example picked up the French river-names Seine and Loire and adapted them to Scandinavian pronunciation in the forms *Signa* and *Leira*. Likewise, the Mediterranean island-names Sicily and Cyprus were referred to as *Sikiley* and *Kípr*. (This is at least how the names turn up in Snorri Sturluson’s 13th century *Heimskringla*.)

Although there is no certain historical, linguistic or archaeological evidence for pre-Viking trade between Scotland and Norway, it does not eliminate the possibility that it happened, and naming important features from native originals would naturally have taken place within such a setting. The other possibility is organised expeditions at an early stage in the Viking

period, and, without entering this discussion, it is evident that scholars are increasingly abandoning the idea of small, spontaneous raiding bands of Vikings in favour of the idea that the Viking advance was a set of highly organised ventures (Stylegar 2004: 5-30).

2. Settlement names and nature names on the Western Isles

Contrary to the names of the large islands, the other Norse names in the islands are typologically and semantically remarkably ordinary, and although it is impossible to be entirely certain that there do not exist other names coined in the early Norse period as translations or phonological adaptations from a previous language – it is clear that they are well within the frame of what one would expect to find in a Norse colony. There is in principle no difference between nature names and settlement names in the Western Isles and similar names on the Faroe Islands or Iceland, where there was no population prior to the arrival of the Norse.

As stated, there is no dispute about the completeness of the Norse onomasticon in Shetland and Orkney (apart from, of course, the later Scots names). The situation in the Hebrides is not quite so straightforward, but when it comes to the Western Isles most scholars do accept that there was more or less a clean break with the arrival of the Norse – again with the exception of the names of some of the islands. George Henderson (1910: 185) was the first important scholar to postulate that there must have been a clear-cut linguistic break. Nearly all place-name scholars after Henderson have confirmed this amazing discontinuity with what must have existed in the Western Isles before the arrival of the Norse. (I refer to scholarly work by A. MacBain (1922: 70), W.J. Watson (1926: 38-39), I. Fraser (1974: 18-19; 1984: 40), and A.-B. Stahl (1999: 365). G. Fellows-Jensen (1984: 151) seems to be in two minds but suggests that a Gaelic-speaking presence is likely to have survived since it was finally able to absorb the Norse element in the population.

There is an important counter-claim to the dominant view. A detailed study of the names of central western Lewis was carried out by Richard Cox (1987) and his conclusion is that a substantial amount of the place-names of Lewis appear to be of a pre-Norse date (Cox 1991). As a result, he strongly supports the idea that the Gaelic language spoken on the island before the arrival of the Norse survived throughout the Norse period. This work is important because it is one of the very few in-depth studies of place-names in the Western Isles and also because his conclusions contradict all other studies on the onomastics in the area. It is appropriate therefore to scrutinise his work in some detail.

Before Cox, Magne Oftedal (1962: 48-49) showed that place-names can contain the evidence to pinpoint where the settlers came from in Norway. He points to the names [tãũNəraj], containing ON *hafn*, and [tamànəvaɣ] containing ON *hamn* (both 'harbour') on opposite sides of Lewis. The difference reflects a dialectal difference in Norway, where the consonant group *fn* was assimilated to *mn* in the northern part of Western Norway but not in the southern part. Although the assimilated *mn* is younger than *fn*, Oftedal does not claim this to be as evidence for any early or late 'freezing' of the names into Gaelic. Oftedal also discussed how Norse names could be shown to have been borrowed into Gaelic at different times, illustrated by two names on opposite sides of Benbecula, the name [sdãiN'əvaL] which Oftedal (1962: 48) says is 'evidently from early O.N. *Staina-fjall* "mountain of the stones"', and [elaN'fd'eifaj] 'from O.N. *Steins-øy* "island of the stone"'. He continues:

The first name must have been adopted in its older form, as witness the initial cluster of 'broad' consonants. The second name must have entered Gaelic after the raising of the diphthong from *ai* to *æi* or *ei*, which took place in the Viking ages (at different times in the various dialects), because the initial consonant cluster is 'slender'. If I stress the importance of the consonants here it is because they are much more reliable evidence than the vowels, which are much more exposed to changes. In cases like this it is possible to establish a relative chronology.

Surely, Oftedal is right about the relative chronology concerning these two names based on the surviving consonants in the names. However, he makes an unnecessary shortcut when he states that the first name is 'evidently from early O.N.' because of the diphthong *ai*. He states that the raising to *æi* or *ei* happened during the Viking age at different times in the various dialects but fails to mention that this raising never happened and remains *ai* in many west Norwegian dialects, such as in Hardanger, Voss and Sogn (Beito 1973: 278-306).

Both the assimilation of *fn* and the raising of *ai* reflect dialectal differences actually still evident in Norway and her former colonies. As such, the variations could have been transferred at any time from Norway or they could represent dialectal differences in the Norse spoken locally in the Hebrides.

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Richard Cox (1991: 485) repeats Oftedal's point about diphthongs: There are several forms which clearly belong to the earliest strata of loan-words, and which can be ascribed to the 8th century, e.g. *aidh* 'ford, isthmus' ON **aið* later *eið*; *Rostainn* with ON **stainn* later *steinn* 'rock, stone'; the personal-names *Uisdean* ON **Aystein*, acc. later *Øysteinn*, and *Amhlaigh* ON **Áleif* acc. later *Ólaf*.

Cox obviously believes these are examples of early Scandinavian diphthongs which have been 'frozen' and preserved in Gaelic phonology before they developed into the 'classic' ON diphthongs *ei/æi* and *ey/øy*. His discovery of these forms is interesting, however, rather than being evidence for the survival of Gaelic through the Norse period, they may indicate where in Norway the settlers came from, or possibly variations in Hebridean Norn.

Cox (op.cit.) further uses a group of names of the type *Steinn Langa*, with noun+qualifier structure, normally associated with Gaelic word-order, as evidence for the survival of Proto-Scandinavian in the Gaelic nomenclature of Lewis. Such an assumption is problematic because this morphosyntactic structure is typically found in so-called noa-names (to avoid naming-taboo, especially used by fishermen) in Scandinavia as well as all over the Norse expansion area, including Iceland which was settled after the transition from Proto-Scandinavian to Common Scandinavian is normally considered to have happened. The structure is also found in other types of names in the Norse colonies, e.g. in Orkney. According to Berit Sandnes (2003: 294-307), the survival of noun+qualifier names in Orkney indicates the conservative nature of Orkney Norn, as the structure seems to have been productive much longer there than in Norway, where this particular word order in names is hardly seen after 1400. We know next to nothing about Hebridean Norn, but it would not be surprising if the Hebridean variation of Norn could be shown to be linguistically conservative in a similar way. The point to be made here is that the survival of this structure in other parts of the Norse colonies makes it difficult to use noun+qualifier word order as evidence for 'frozen' Proto-Scandinavian in Lewis.

Cox's advocacy of a pre-Norse Gaelic presence in Lewis may suffer from a major flaw; he has not been able to provide evidence for any Gaelic place-names incorporated in Norse names. There does not seem to be any names such as **Benmor+vatn* or **Tarbert+vík*. This is what one might expect to find when colonisers settle amongst people they communicate with; that the Norse would have adopted parts of the native nomenclature, at least

for the most important natural features and settlements, and integrated them into their own onomasticon. This does not seem to have happened on Lewis, nor on Barra, where a similarly detailed study has been carried out (Stahl 1999).

This situation is significant, as it links the nomenclature of the Western Isles to that of the Northern Isles. In both places we know there were settlements when the Norse arrived but there is no evidence in the onomasticon that the inhabitants of these settlements ever existed. No names, apart from the few aforesaid major island names, provide evidence of anything pre-Norse. Although perhaps not the only possible scenario behind an onomastic change of this magnitude, the most obvious one is ethnic discontinuity; it happens when one population is replaced by another.

In contrast to this situation, the many hybrid Norse-Gaelic names in the west of Scotland – where Norse place-names have been adorned with Gaelic tautological additions, of the type Loch Langavat and Ben Tangaval – were obviously created at a later stage when Gaelic had replaced Norse to such a degree that the Norse names were no longer meaningful. This process, along with the survival of the thousands of other Norse names transferred into the medium of Gaelic, constitute clear evidence that when Gaelic eventually replaced Norse in the west of Scotland it was a replacement of language, not of people.

When it comes to the local place-names in the Inner Hebrides and the west coast littoral – the names of settlements, headlands, skerries, glens, hills and burns – we are still waiting for equally thorough investigations as those done on Lewis (Cox 1987, 2002) and Barra (Stahl 1999), and nothing definite can be said about this topic before such in-depth studies are carried out. However, research done on the settlement patterns of Wester Ross (Fraser 1995) and of Coll and Tiree (Johnston 1995) strongly suggests a similar blanket Norse settlement familiar from the Western Isles, while Jennings (2004) puts forward a more clustered Gaelic/Norse settlement distribution in Kintyre, further south.

Although the west coast littoral and the Inner Isles today show a percentage of Norse settlement and nature names that is lower than that found in the Outer Isles, it does not necessarily indicate the degree of intensity of the initial Norse settlement. It could equally well be an indication of how early Gaelic replaced Norse as the dominant language in the various regions in the west. Again, in-depth studies might in the future reveal secrets about the intricacies of the relationship between place-names and language shift on the local level (an example of such a study from Orkney is Sandnes 2003).

3. Picts and Gaels on the west coast of Scotland

It is of course reflected in today's place-names that Norse was succeeded by Gaelic in the Western Isles, and at an earlier stage than Scots took over on the Northern Isles. Otherwise, the Norse nomenclature of the Western Isles is very similar to that of Orkney and Shetland, both typologically and in terms of completeness. One tempting explanation for this similarity is that the Norse might have met the same people in these groups of islands and that the Norse therefore interacted (or not) with the natives in the same way in all these islands. The following will be a discussion on this subject and on how a possible Pictish/Gaelic divide along the Minch' could explain a few cultural divides and linguistic isoglosses that are still evident today.

Leslie Alcock (1971) coined the term 'Peripheral Picts' to describe the pre-Norse inhabitants of the Western Isles, to indicate both the distinctiveness in their use of pottery and lack of imported wares, as well as a link with the Pictish Mainland. The distribution of pottery production is particularly distinctive, showing the Western Isles and Skye as long-standing producers of pottery, in sharp contrast to the surrounding areas (Lane 1983). There is support for the Western Isles and Skye being culturally different from the rest of the Hebrides in a knife inscribed with Pictish ogham discovered on Vallay, North Uist, and five Pictish Class I symbol stones from Skye as well as two from the Western Isles. (See further discussion in Fisher 2001: 11-12.)

The distribution pattern of the brochs is similar to that of the Pictish stones. Apart from one broch registered on Islay and two on the northernmost tip of Mull, all brochs are found north of the southern Minch, telling us that there might have been a cultural divide here well in advance of the historical Picts. Many broch sites were inhabited through the Pictish period up to 800 AD – at the time of the arrival of the Vikings – when there is a sudden abandonment (Armit 1996: 202; Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999: 48; Gilmour and Harding 2000).

Archaeology appears to point strongly to a Pictish-linked material culture north of the Minch and in this context it is slightly worrying that there are onomasticians who seem to take pre-Norse Gaelic for granted and not even consider the possibility that the language in the Western Isles and Skye around the arrival of the Vikings could have been anything other than Gaelic.

Admittedly, the linguistic situation in the west of Scotland in the late 8th century is hard to make out. One can be sure that Gaelic was spoken in the kingdom of Dál Riata, by then stretching from the Mull of Kintyre to Ardnamurchan, including Tiree and Coll. The language spoken north of this

area, in Skye and the Outer Hebrides, is not certain but it is as likely to have been a variation of the old P-Celtic spoken by all other pre-Gaelic Celtic tribes of Scotland as Gaelic. It could well be that Gaelic was starting to gain ground in the Outer Hebrides and Skye as a prestigious language or maybe a language attached to trade or to Christian activity directed from Iona. In Adamnan's *Life of Columba* (Book I, chapter 33) we hear that Columba, while on Skye, baptized *primarius Geonae cohortis* 'leader of the *Geona* band'. It is not clear what people this tribe is meant to belong to but what is interesting, however, is that Columba at this occasion needed an interpreter.

Even if the Gaelic language had started to make advances northwards, it is difficult to believe that by the time of the arrival of the Vikings P-Celtic was wiped out on Skye and the Western Isles, down to the level of a complete change in the onomasticon. For such a dramatic shift to have happened one must envisage an ethnic change; in practice it implies that Gaels from Dál Riata would have replaced the native Picts. Such a development is problematic because the Outer Isles and Skye are never mentioned as part of the Scots' sphere of interest. Iona is the provider of information on matters concerning Dál Riata and it is striking how the sources from Iona are completely silent about the stretch of islands on the horizon to the west. During the 7th and 8th centuries the kingdom of Dál Riata was oriented south and westwards in such a way that there seems to have been a significant cultural divide in the southern part of the Minch.

There is a series of entries in the *Annals of Ulster* which reinforce the impression that Skye was in the Pictish political sphere:

U668.3 nauigatio filiorum Gartnaidh ad Hiberniam cum plebe
Sceth

[The voyage of the sons of Gartnait to Ireland with the
people of Skye.]

U670.4 Uenit genus Gartnaith de Hibernia

[The sept of Gartnait came back from Ireland.]

U688.2 Occisio Canonn filii Gartnaidh

[The slaying of Cano son of Gartnait.]

Garnait is a name with definite Pictish associations (Binchy 1963: xviii). It occurs several times in the Pictish King Lists. Indeed this Garnait may have been a king of the Picts. The Pictish king Bruide son of Maelchon, who died in 586, was succeeded by Gartnait son of Domelach (Bannerman 1974: 92-94), who, it has been suggested, was the son of Aedán mac Gabráin, king of

Dál Ríata, Domelach being his Pictish mother (op.cit.: 93-94). However, there are chronological difficulties. The historical content of these annals is obscure; were the sons of Garnait driven from Skye, and if so, by whom? Why did they return? Who slew Cano, the eponymous hero of the 9th century Irish tale *Scéla Cano Meic Gartnáin* (Binchy 1963)? This saga describes conflict between Aedán mac Gabráin and Cano, which although chronologically impossible might reflect conflict between Dál Ríata and Skye in the second half of the 7th century.²

Although they are far from contemporary to this period and therefore must be used with care, the Norse written sources appear to support a divide along the Minch. In Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edward's English translation of the *Orkneyinga saga* (ch. 41, p. 86) the name *Skottlandsfjörðr* is rendered 'the Minch'. From the context in the saga this makes sense, and this name is likely to imply that, seen from the Western Isles, the Norse located the Gaelic-speaking *Scots* to the south-east of the Minch, just as, from Orkney, the name *Péttlandsfjörðr* (*Orkneyinga saga*, chs 25-29) refers to the *Picts* across the firth on the northern Mainland of Scotland. *Skottlandsfirðir*, in plural, is used in *Magnus saga berrfætt* (chs 8, 11) to describe where Magnus' men rowed in order to claim the islands of the Hebrides to the Norwegian crown. The generic here probably refers both to 'sealochs' and to 'sounds', the latter as in *Skottlandsfjörðr* and *Péttlandsfjörðr* – a meaning of *fjörðr* also found in Norwegian names. The specific in this case refers to the location of these sealochs and sounds, which is 'the land of the *Scots*'. *Skottlandsfirðir* is more an appellative than a place-name, and similar appellatives are still used in Norwegian in e.g. *vestlandsfjordane* or *finmarksfjordane*, respectively 'the firths of Vestlandet' and 'the firths of Finnmark'. However, the usage in the sagas of both the name *Skottlandsfjörðr* and the appellative *skottlandsfirðir* indicate that 'the land of the Scots' is to the south-east of the Western Isles.

A group of names with an intriguing distribution pattern is that with the element *pap*, found in Iceland, the Faroes, and the Northern and Western Isles and Skye. It is more or less agreed that this group of names dates back to the earliest period of Viking activity and that the Old Norse term *papi* m., is a likely borrowing from Old Irish (cf. a review article by Peder Gammeltoft (2004: 31-49)). However, seen purely from the distribution pattern, which, I have argued, is not likely to include any Gaelic-speaking area, there is reason to believe that the term could just as well be a Norse borrowing from Pictish.

There is no need here to speculate any further about the distribution pattern of the *Pap*-names. The importance in this context is that it implies that

the southern Minch constitutes a southern limit of some sort of Norse interaction or experience with people they related to.

It is remarkable that in the Northern and Western Isles more than 30 place-names refer to what must surely have been only a relatively small number of *Papar*, while the Norse do not refer to *Picts* in more than one early name, *Péttland*, found in secondary names as Pentland Skerries and Pentland Firth, indirectly referring to 'the land of the *Picts*' as the northern and eastern parts of the Mainland of Scotland at the time of the Norse colonisation (op.cit.). Considering names in England like Walsingham, Normanby and Denby – denoting farms of Welsh, Norwegian and Danish settlers within predominantly English, Danish and Norwegian settlements respectively – one would have expected the Norse settlers in the Northern and Western Isles to refer to their Pictish neighbours in settlement names. The fact that **Petbær*, **Petaskaill* or **Petabus* are non-existent names tells us either that Pictish settlements were so frequent in the Norse colonies that naming them would not have constituted specific enough denotations to function well as place-names, or that Picts for some reason or other did not establish themselves on independent settlement units within the Norse-dominated community. One further explanation, which is going to be explored in the following, would simply be that there were no longer any Picts there.

4. What happened to the natives?

If the Western Isles were ethnically/linguistically Pictish at the beginning of the Viking Age, we would expect to find a Pictish or P-Celtic stratum in the Norse names, but such a stratum has not been identified. There appears to be a total absence of names containing P-Celtic elements like *aber*, *pren* or *pert*. This absence means there is no obvious linguistic link between the Iron Age and the modern populations of the Western Isles. This is significant and difficult to explain if a native population, in some form or other, survived the Norse impact.

The newest archaeological discoveries from the Western Isles relating to the native/Norse interface have not come up with convincing evidence for the survival of a pre-Norse culture. On the contrary, the new work done on buildings, pottery, graves and environmental studies appears to indicate that there must have been a fundamental change around 800AD, so fundamental that the most satisfying explanation is an ethnic replacement (cf. Jennings and Kruse 2005, forthcoming).

Brian Smith (2001) suggests that the native Pictish population in the Northern Isles was killed by the Norse. If we also allow for the possibility

that they were taken away as slaves or that they fled to the Mainland as a result of repeated attacks and raids by the Norse, it is possible that the scenario Smith suggests in the Northern Isles could be extended to the Western Isles. We should not forget that these are all islands with no hinterland to escape to. The population is exposed and would have been vulnerable to raids by pirates after goods, food supplies and slaves. It is easy to envisage the intense insecurity suffered by the locals in such a situation, especially if it stretched over several years, and it is likely that the raiding period did involve years of disruption for the local population before the Norse became involved in a phase of settlement (Crawford 1987: 40).

One could argue that it does not make economical sense to deprive an area of future slaves in such a way, but it could be that several years of raids would have left the islands so empty that when the Norse started to settle, they would have had to import slaves from elsewhere. In other words, the Norse settlers to the Northern and Western Isles may have been accompanied by Gaels, presumably as slaves and wives, imported from Ireland and maybe the Inner Hebrides. This is what we see in the other Norse colonies, and the presence of imported slaves could have been just as high in the Norse areas of Scotland as say, in Iceland, where, today, the mitochondrial DNA shows that more than half of the Icelandic female ancestresses must have been of Celtic origin (Helgason *et al.* 2001).

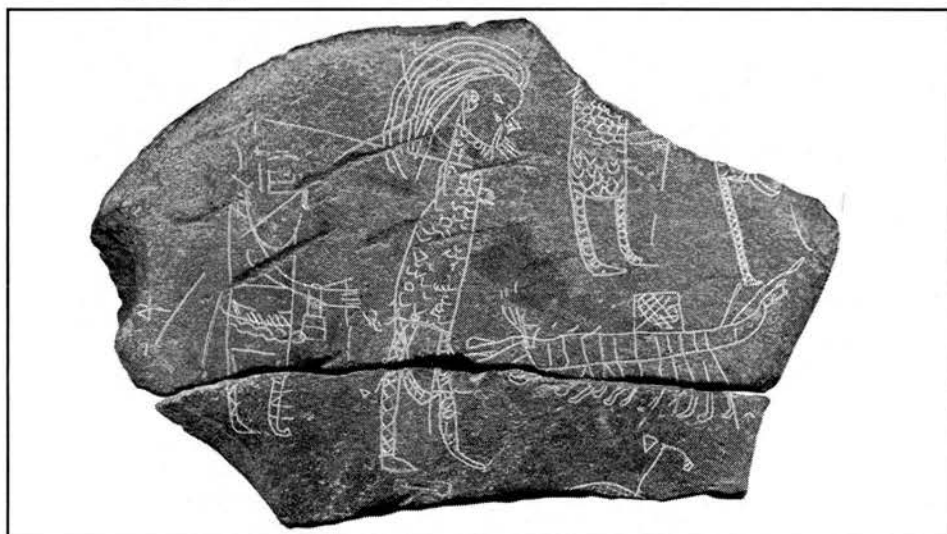


Figure 2. Slave-taking on the west coast of Scotland? 9th or possibly early 10th century illustration on a stone from a chapel site at Inchmarnock, Bute. Copyright Headland Archaeology, Edinburgh.

The presence of Gaels at an early date in the Western Isles may be corroborated by the onomastic record. In his most recent publication, Richard Cox (2002) who until recently has advocated pre-Norse linguistic survival, appears to have revised his position. He now concludes that there are no certain pre-Norse names in the area of the Carloway Registry of Lewis, but that there are Gaelic names dateable to the period prior to the Scottish annexation of the Hebrides in 1266, and indeed, there is evidence of 'a continuous Gaelic-speaking presence during the Norse period' (op.cit.: 118). Though it is regrettable that he doesn't discuss the matter any further, this statement is intrinsically reasonable, because it confirms what the archaeological data strongly suggest, namely that there was a clean break with the past, and that there may have been a Gaelic presence from quite early on in the Norse period. For example, when analysing the pottery from the Western Isles Alan Lane (1983: 379) finds the changes in both style and technique around 800 AD to be so sudden and fundamental that he pronounces the new pottery must have been made by new potters. He further suggests that the new potters are likely to have come from Co. Antrim in Ireland where there are close parallels in time and style to the pottery found from c.800 in the Western Isles (see further discussion in Jennings and Kruse 2005, forthcoming).

5. The other Hebridean island names

As with the island groups further north, most names of islands in the Inner Hebrides are Norse coinages: Jura, Gigha, Colonsay, Staffa, etc. Similarly, island names are found which are known to be of pre-Norse origin. Mull has developed from *Malaïos*, recorded by Ptolemy in the 2nd century AD, and Islay was recorded as *Ili* in 568 AD. However, the island names in the Inner Hebrides are in one way different in that many of the modern names seem to have developed from a pre-Norse Gaelic tradition and not via Norse. The Norse name for Mull, *Mýl*, doesn't seem to be what the modern Gaelic name *Muile* is based on. Iona, in Norse *Eyin helga*, carried parallel names in Gaelic and Norse, but only the former has survived. Tiree has the modern Gaelic forms *Tireadh* and *Tir-idhe* that does not seem to have developed from Norse *Tyrvist* (although the Norse name is reflected in the expression *Tiristeach* 'Tiree man') (Watson 1926: ch.III).

This difference in the genealogy of the island names on the west coast may be another reflection of the Pictish/Gaelic division. The user-group for macronyms like island names will typically include administrative institutions like the church, and it will include neighbours on the other islands

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and the adjacent mainland, who will need to refer to the islands. The reason why the island names north of the Minch are passed down through a Norse tradition can be explained by the collapse of the Pictish neighbourhood to the islands. Although there is a lot of uncertainty around the amalgamation of the Scottish and the Pictish kingdoms in the 9th century, the event eventually resulted in the demise of the Pictish language as well as the Pictish church and other institutions. Such institutions are the likely prerequisites for keeping alive a macronym tradition, and if they did disappear it could have seriously undermined, for example, a pre-Norse name tradition supported by the organisation of the Pictish church in the north-west of Scotland. In addition, the Norse impact in the form of settlement on the adjacent mainland to the Western Isles and Skye is likely to have been so comprehensive that it eliminated a pre-Norse neighbourhood user-group for the island names. There is good reason to believe that the thin coastal strip of land available for settlement on the west mainland of Scotland, which leans on the 'Spine of Britain', the long and broad mountain chain that separates west from east, was at one time essentially Norse (Kruse 2004).

Further south, Norse may also for a time have been overwhelmingly dominant. However, Gaelic would have continued to be spoken in an unbroken tradition perhaps on the Inner Hebrides but certainly in Ireland and on the Scottish Mainland. This continuity would have kept alive the pre-Norse names of some of the main islands of the Inner Hebrides. When Norse eventually died out in the Western Isles and Skye, what took over was not the old pre-Norse native language of the area, but rather a new language, Gaelic, first spoken in this area by people who had been there only as long as the Norse had and who owed their presence there to the Norse.

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Notes

¹In want of a more precise name, the name Minch here is meant to refer to what really is the southern part of the Minch, namely the wide stretch of water between Ardnamurchan, Coll and Tiree in the south-east and Barra and Uist in the north-west. Unconventionally, Skye will in this article be north of the Minch, as the name is used here. The point is to cluster the Western Isles and Skye into a geographical unit separated from the rest of the Hebrides by a large stretch of exposed sea. Because too little is known about the nomenclatures of Canna, Rum, Eigg and Muck, these islands are in this study unfortunately left in a limbo (although a cross from Eigg has 'strong Pictish connections' (Fisher 2001: 94)).

²I am grateful to Andrew Jennings who has pointed to these passages in the Irish sources.

Language contact across the North Atlantic

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Scandinavian-American place-names as viewed from the Old World

Arne Kruse

Introduction

Between 2.5 and 3 million Scandinavians (the term 'Scandinavian' here includes the five Nordic countries) emigrated to North America between 1830 and 1930: 1,100,000 Swedes, 800,000 Norwegians, 370,000 Danes, 300,000 Finns, 12,000 Icelanders. The Swedish trading post and colony, which existed in Delaware from 1638 to 1655, left some place-names which are still in use, and the Swedish language continued to be used into the early 19th century. But the real thrust of Scandinavian settlement in America came with the opening of the West. From the 1830s onwards Norwegians spread from Illinois north into Wisconsin, northern Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. The main Swedish immigration came in the late 1840s and 1850s with the settlement of Minnesota. Swedes also settled in Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas. Mainly after 1860, Danes moved into Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. The Finns and Icelanders arrived last, mostly in the 1870s. The Finns either settled on marginal lands in northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, or went to the industrial centres as laborers. The first Icelandic settlement occurred in 1875 in Manitoba and in Winnipeg, from where they spread into North Dakota.

It is this first wave of settlement which is the most interesting from an onomastic point of view. During this period, when they settled on the free land, the Scandinavians established communities where they were influential enough to mark their presence sometimes with a Scandinavian-American place-name.

From the 1890s, most of the immigrants settled in towns, in New York, Chicago and Minneapolis, and finally, as the West opened up, in San Francisco and Seattle. In these urban surroundings, the immigrants only rarely left toponyms of a Scandinavian character.

1. Typology of place-names

The main concern in this article is the typology of place-names, but I will also comment on other aspects of the Scandinavian-American name material, drawing comparisons with names in Scandinavia.

The examples of names are taken from the place-name dictionary by Stewart (1970), the chapter on names in Haugen (1953), the book on Swedish-American names by Landelius (1985), articles by Berger (1938) and Hedblom (1966), my study of a local community in Coon Valley, Wisconsin (Kruse 1991), and also from my own sampling of names from American maps and along high-ways.

I will now present a typological classification of the Scandinavian-American names.

1.1 Transplanted names

Bringing ready-made names from the homeland to the colonies seems to be as old as emigration itself. Thus the Angles, the Saxons, the Danes, the Norse and the Normans all transplanted names from their homelands when they settled in the British Isles. This type of nostalgic or commemorative naming seems to increase as we come closer to our own time, probably due to an increase in the importance attached to national or ethnic identity. By the time of the great Scandinavian exodus in the late 19th century we can see how the influence of the national romantic movement and schools added new potential names of this type, both for transplanted and transferred names.

Examples of transplanted Scandinavian-American names are: *Stockholm* (e.g. Maine, S. Dak.), *Oslo* (Min.), *Smolan* (Kans.), *Erdahl* (Min.) *Malmö* (Min. and Nebr.), named after the Swedish city Malmö (*Malmö* in Alta, Canada is a secondary borrowing from *Malmö* in Nebraska).

The transplanted name will typically be the name of the region, town or village from whence the immigrants originated e.g. *Sogn* (Min.); or it will have iconographic implications of historical or national importance to the respective country of origin: *Eidsvold* (Min.), *Upsala* (Flor., Min. and Ont.), *Vasa* (Min.).

Most transplanted names for smaller Scandinavian-American settlements will have been coined by the immigrants themselves in order to establish links to their old roots. Berger (1938) reminds us that this is not always the case. *Mora* (Min.) got its name when an American mail distributor wanted to honour the workers from Mora in Sweden, who worked on the new railroad. He saw to it that a town on the line was named after their home town.

When the Finnish name for Finland, *Suomi*, and a Swedish poetic name for Sweden, *Svea*, are used, we can be sure that these are settlements which were named by the immigrants themselves. However, common names like *Denmark*, *Norseville*, *Swede Creek*, *Scandinavia*, and sometimes names like *Stockholm* and *Gothenburg*, will very often have been given by American administrators and cartographers in order to identify Scandinavian settlements. *Swenoda Lake* (Min.) was created by taking Swe+no+da from Swedish, Norwegian and Danish, since the area was settled by people from all three nations and the administration needed a characterising name. Such names are no more Scandinavian than *Finnmark* and *Lappland*, in northern Scandinavia, are Sami names.

New Sweden (Maine) and *New Denmark* (New Brunswick) were both results of the US and the Canadian governments' policy of actively recruiting Scandinavian settlers in the early 1870s. In honour of their Canadian agent, Captain Heller, the Danish colonists initially called their new home *Hellerup*, which in Denmark is a town just north of Copenhagen. Not long after their arrival, their enthusiasm for Captain Heller chilled, because they felt he had misled them with his promises and the official name became *New Denmark* (Bojesen 1992).

Two names from the Norwegian-American community of Coon Valley, Wisconsin may illustrate the fact that although many of the administrative names and names of villages may seem very Scandinavian, their history often reveals a degree of influence from the American or Canadian administrations. See Map 1.

The first two townships in the very Norwegian-American community of Coon Valley were given the names *Bergen* and *Christiana*. When the authorities demanded that the administration of the first township in Coon Valley be organised, the locals had to elect someone to be in charge and to see to it that the settlement got a name. The overwhelming majority of Norwegians really had no other choice but to elect one of the few local Yankees, who was able to read and write English. The successful candidate was the one who promised the Norwegians that the township would get a Norwegian name. The talented politician kept his promise and chose the name *Bergen*, which was Norwegian and easy to pronounce, in spite of the fact that none of the local Norwegians actually came from anywhere close to Bergen. The idea was that the next township would be named after the Norwegian capital, then *Christiania*, but the Yankee clerk missed out the last *i* in the name, so it became *Christiana* – probably in analogy with several other places in the Midwest and on the East Coast (Del., Penn.) called *Christiana*. For a map showing the exact geographical position of Coon Valley in Wisconsin, see Map 2 in Hjelde (in this volume).

1.2 Transferred names

Transferred place-names are names of persons, ideas or mythical places which are adopted as place-names. Such names may have strong national or ethnic implications for the settlers or may be 'respectful' names taken from the Bible or classical mythology. This became a productive American naming pattern with names like *Eden*, *Galilee*, *Homer* or *Bismarck* now spread all over the continent. Personal names from American history were also widely used: *Washington*, *Jackson*, *De Soto*.

The many Scandinavian-American transferred names for places like *Gimli* (Man.), *Viking* (Alb.), *St. Olaf* (Iowa) are original American creations declaring a romantic link to the ethnic past in the Old World. When *Thor* and *St. Olaf* are used as place-names in America they are products of education and the national romantic influence.

A parallel re-use of the names of figures and beings from Norse mythology and national tradition was popular in Scandinavia towards the end of the 19th century – on villas (e.g. *Breidablikk*, *Gimle*) and young people's society houses, 'ungdomshus' (e.g. *Valhall*, *Lidsjalv*, *Mjølner*). So we may regard the Scandinavian-American naming pattern as a continuation of a contemporary Scandinavian fashion. There has recently been a renaissance for this naming pattern in the unlikely area of the oil industry. In the names of oil-fields in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea we find transferred names from Norwegian fairy-tales e.g. *Troll*, *Smørbukk* and *Veslefrikk* and also from Norse mythology e.g. *Sleipner*, *Heidrun*, *Odin* and *Valhall* – the latter two were also used as settlement names in the Midwest.

Jenny Lind (Ark.), named after the immensely popular Swedish singer, is unusual because both her names are used in the place-name.

As Scandinavians sometimes adopted family names which originally denoted a farm or croft or region, we cannot take it for granted that all American place-names which carry Scandinavian toponyms are transplanted names. Some will have been transferred, because they are

named after a person whose family name was originally a toponym. *Westby* (Wis.) is an example of this type, and so is *Hallandale* (Flor.), named after the Rev. B. N. Halland, who took his family name from the region in Sweden where he was born.

Onomastically the transplanted and transferred names offer good examples of the fact that place-names need not have an origin in semantically transparent appellatives. Scandinavian names, like *Valdres* or *Mora*, may be semantically opaque on the lexical level by the time they are re-used to name new settlements or natural features. We may also observe how the onomastic function of lexically meaningful words like *Lund* 'grove' or *Eidsvoll* 'isthmus' + 'meadow', makes their semantic content superfluous or irrelevant. In America these names will be found far from any forest or waterway. The Swedish settlers who decided to recycle the name *Stockholm* were not concerned by the fact that the new settlement was not located on an island.

1.3 Neologisms and hybrids

The Scandinavian origin of many American place-names may be hidden as a result of a brutal transition through American English. Sometimes the current official name is the result of shortening, like *Akra* (N.Dak.), from the Icelandic town Akranes, or it is the result of distortion – or assimilation, seen from the point of view of American English. Just from reading the map it is not obvious that *Galva* (Ill.) has its origin in Swedish Gävle (*Galva* (Iowa) is a secondary borrowing from *Galva* in Illinois) (Landelius 1985). The special Scandinavian characters *ä*, *æ*, *ö*, *ø*, *å* will always have been replaced.

Sometimes folk-etymology or other kinds of creativity may have also "improved" the original name. Settlers from *Folldalen* in Norway ended up in what is now *Fall Coulee* (Wis.). The reasons were that the English-American pronunciation of *Foll-* (from the river-name *Folda*, 'wide') was close to American *fall* 'autumn' and the meaning of *-dal* 'dale, valley' was carried on in the Midwestern (originally French) *coulee* 'valley with steep sides'.

There are examples of creative naming done by the settlers themselves: *Gotaholm* (Min.), originally *Götaholm*, coined from the Göta area in Sweden, where most of the settlers came from, and the Swedish missionary Holm who worked among the Indians in the 17th century. *Hellerup*, discussed above, is of the same type.

Oklee (Min.) is named after Ole K. Lee, on whose farm the village was founded. The pronunciation and the spelling of the name both show English-American influence.

Hybrids with a Scandinavian element are common. Usually the first element is a place-name or a personal name, and the second element is an English-American generic: *Jockmock Lake* (Min.), *Lundquist Lake* (Min.), *Palmville* (Min.), *Olsonville* (S. Dak.), *Swea City* (Iowa).

2. Low density of Scandinavian place-names

The density of place-names in North America is low by European standards. George R. Stewart (1970: [IX]) estimates that there are approximately 3,500,000 named places in the USA. This works out at about one name to the square mile. There are probably another million obsolete names, i.e. names that are recorded, but are no longer in use. In Norway alone, there may be 5,000,000 names in use (Olsen 1934) – which is approximately 20 names to the square mile.

Furthermore, compared to the Scandinavian contribution to the population of North America, there is a striking under-representation of Scandinavian-American names among the American place-names. Even in areas where the Scandinavian settlers used to be in a majority, we find relatively few Scandinavian-American place-names. Of more than 1,500 names that Cassidy (1947) investigated in Dane county, Wis., only eleven are of Norwegian origin, and this is an area where Norwegian settlement was exceptionally dense.

The conclusions of the research that has been done on Scandinavian place-names in North America (Berger 1938, Haugen 1953, Hedblom 1966, Landelius 1985, Kruse 1991) seem unanimous in this respect: there are relatively few Scandinavian-American place-names, and certain types or groups of names which are very frequent in Scandinavia are under-represented or seem to be totally non-existent.

I think there are two main reasons for the lack of place-names indicative of Scandinavian settlements in America. The first is found in the social structure of the settlements: in many cases the settlers were excluded or excluded themselves from taking part in the official administration. Wherever Scandinavians settled the settlers did not immediately take part in official affairs, and this must be a principal reason for the lack of Scandinavian place-names on American maps. The names on the maps are official, administrative names that often existed prior to the arrival of the Scandinavians, or they are settlement names created by the English speaking American administration in order to register new settlements.

In their first period in the new country, the Scandinavians were naturally excluded from official life because of language difficulties, but they must also have felt that the American administrative system was alien to them. The settlers felt that it had very little to do with them, as they had their own social network organised around their religious traditions and community customs from Scandinavia.

A sort of dualism must have emerged early amongst the Scandinavian communities in the rural areas. While the official administration looked outwards and represented the communities in the English language, the Scandinavian languages survived *underneath* the official English-American façade. It is here, in the local rural communities, that we find Scandinavian-American place-names – both for smaller places and for natural features – still in use today. (See Kruse 1991.)

A second principal reason for the scarcity of names is the perhaps obvious fact that names only exist if there is a need for them to exist. When there are fewer toponyms in North America than there are in the Old World, this mirrors the fact that these are two different societies

with different needs for names. We will focus on this relationship between society and names in the following sections.

3. Lack of variation in place-names

In general, there seems to be relatively less variation in the nomenclature in colonised areas than in the motherlands. This is documented by W.F.H. Nicolaisen (1989, 1991) on the Orkney islands of Sanday and North Ronaldsay where, for example, he finds that in the Norse name material there are very few terms for man-made aspects of a farmstead and so fine nuances of meaning cannot be expressed. Likewise, the generic terms used for natural features, both inland and on the coast, are relatively few and rather predictable. He concludes (1989: 80):

apart from some variation in the choice of terms for small hills, this is an unexciting landscape described in unexcited terms [...] What is discerned and toponymically structured here, one has seen at home before; it therefore asks for imitation, not innovation

H. Kuhn (1966) gives another example from the Old World: In the western regions of Norway there were at least three appellatives meaning 'small stream' (*lækkr*, *gróf*, *bekkr*) that the settlers who went to Iceland could have taken with them and used for naming in the new land. In *Landámabók* there are 35 examples of names including *lækkr*, while there is only one name with *bekkr* (*Kvíabekkr*) and no names with *gróf*. (See also Bandle 1977.)

Nicolaisen stresses the close resemblance of the landscapes of Western Norway and The Western and Northern Isles of Scotland as a reason for the predictable use of generic terms and the lack of innovation in this colony. It is certainly an important point to consider whether the landscape the settlers arrived in was suitable for applying the precise meaning of the appellatives they would have known from their homeland. As many of the Scandinavian immigrants to America settled in the Midwest which is mostly prairie or at least relatively flat, we will not of course find a varied use of toponyms denoting hills and valleys. Most farms are shaped as squares or rectangles, with the houses placed in the middle of vast fields of monoculture. In a landscape like this, where there is a lack of characteristic features, there is hardly any need to stick detailed geographical labels on the topography (Haugen 1953: 219). However, it is somewhat surprising to discover the remarkable lack of variation amongst the generic terms in the rather rugged landscape of Coon Valley with a topography that can be compared to the central east Norwegian regions where the settlers of Coon Valley came from (Kruse 1991). However, a landscape is never exactly the same from one region or area to the other, and this fact may at least partially explain why immigrants did not make use of the whole range of specialised appellatives they could in theory have brought from their home country, and also why they sometimes borrowed new appellatives or give old appellatives from home new and specialised meanings. For example, the settlers in Iceland gave *hraun* 'stone' the new meaning 'fields of lava' – a natural feature new to them; and the Norse in Caithness and the Northern

and Western Isles of Scotland used the Old Norse *gjá*, now *geo*, to name the many distinct narrow inlets in a type of coastal landscape which was new to the Norse settlers.

Though the landscape of Coon Valley is varied, with valleys and steep hillsides, it is still not the type of geomorphology one finds in the ice-carved Norwegian valleys. Coon Valley is part of the so-called driftless region, which is characterised by a plateau with valleys and ravines with steep sandstone hillsides carved by water, and not by glaciers as in Norway.

The settlers of Coon Valley clearly found that they could not make use of the numerous specialised terms for heights that they brought with them from Norway. We do not find any *ffell*, *hø*, *ås*, *kolle* and so on in Coon Valley. Only two terms are frequently used as generic denoting heights; *rygg*, which is supported by its semantic and phonological closeness to the very common English-American *ridge*, in e.g. *Tyskeryggen*, *Rongstadryggen*, *Sørryggen*; and *blåff*, borrowed from American English *bluff* 'steep sandstone hill', in e.g. *Tilliblåffa*, *Knipstillblåffa*.

We find one example of *haug*, a generic term which is very common in Norway, in *Indiahaugen*, the name given to one of the few distinct smaller hills of Coon Valley, which would have corresponded to the meaning of *haug* in Norway.¹

Only two other generic terms are used in the toponyms of Coon Valley: the Norwegian *dal*, m, which is possibly supported by its similarity to the English *dale* in e.g. *Springdalen*, *Bergedalen*, and the Norwegian-American *krikk*, m, which was borrowed from American English *creek* 'brook, small river' in e.g. *Rullandskrikken*, *Springdalskrikken*. See Map 1.

In Coon Valley the specifics are likewise few in number and show very little variation. The usual pattern is as follows: A surname or family name, which indicates a centrally located farm, constitutes the specific element of a name for both a valley, e.g. *dal*, and for the neighbouring ridge e.g. *rygg*, *blåff* or *krikk*: *Rullandsdalen*, *Rullandskrikken*, *Tilliblåffa*, *Lindvigryggen*.

Less frequently, specifics may indicate the ethnic groups that live(d) there: *Bohemidalen*, *Tyskeryggen*, *Indiahaugen* or orientation: *Sørryggen*, *Nordryggen*. There are very few other specifics: *Punkiryggen*, *Musdalen*, *Skogdalen*, *Springdalen*.

In conclusion, the relative lack of variation and innovation in the nomenclature of colonised areas may be explained by taking into consideration three distinct factors which affect the naming process:

Philology: Which appellatives are productive or in fashion at the time the emigration takes place?

Topography: What is the character of the new landscape compared to the one the settlers have left behind, and to what extent does the possible range of appellatives in current use fit the new landscape?

Culture: What type of contact is there with other cultures in the settlements? The examples above illustrate three different types: Iceland: virgin land, no other culture; Orkney: an established old culture (the Pictish) which seems to have had very little, if any linguistic influence on the naming process of the Norse settlers; Coon Valley: a dominant culture (the English-

¹ I would like to thank Arnstein Hjelde, University of Trondheim, for telling me about this name.

American) which has influenced the naming process of the Scandinavian immigrants very much through various types of analogy.

4. The instability of names

In the following section I would like to examine the aspect of cultural contact in the naming process. It is important to stress the fact that the evidence of interference which we can observe in the Scandinavian-American system of denotation and naming is not only a product of linguistic interference in a narrow sense. The extra-linguistic interference will often explain why elements in the naming patterns are different. The relatively high degree of instability in the names of farms and farming vocabulary will illustrate the importance of a broader cultural approach to the topic rather than a narrowly linguistic one.

4.1 Field-names

The relative absence of names in the cultural landscape compared to Scandinavia has already been remarked on. The field-names within a Scandinavian-American farm are also remarkably different from their Scandinavian counterparts. Fields within a Scandinavian-American farm are named by analogy with the pattern elsewhere in North America, i.e. they are identified according to what is cultivated on the field at any given season. As long as potatoes are grown in a field of a American-Norwegian farm, the field will be known as *potetfila*; if tobacco is grown there the next season, it will be referred to as *tobakkfila* (*fil*, *f*, is a American-Norwegian borrowing from American-English *field*).

The reason for the lack of permanent names for fields is to be found in the method of farming which in the early period of the settlements used to be very different to the Scandinavian. We should not forget that, with the introduction of new methods of farming to modern Scandinavia, we are now in the process of losing most of our old field-names. In the Midwest, large fields and monoculture have been the reality from the start. In addition, the more consistent practice of crop rotation in the Midwest prevents the establishment of permanent names linked to what is grown in the field.

4.2 Farm-names

In North America farm-names are not permanent in the sense that Scandinavian farm-names are. An American farm is referred to by the family name of the present owner or occupier of the farm – a parallel practice to the ad hoc reference to the fields of the farm. If the family Strand lives on a farm, American-Norwegians will refer to the farm as *Strand*, *Strandfarmen* or

Strandplassen. If it is taken over by the family Olson, it will very soon be called *Olson*, *Olson-farmen* or *Olsonplassen*.

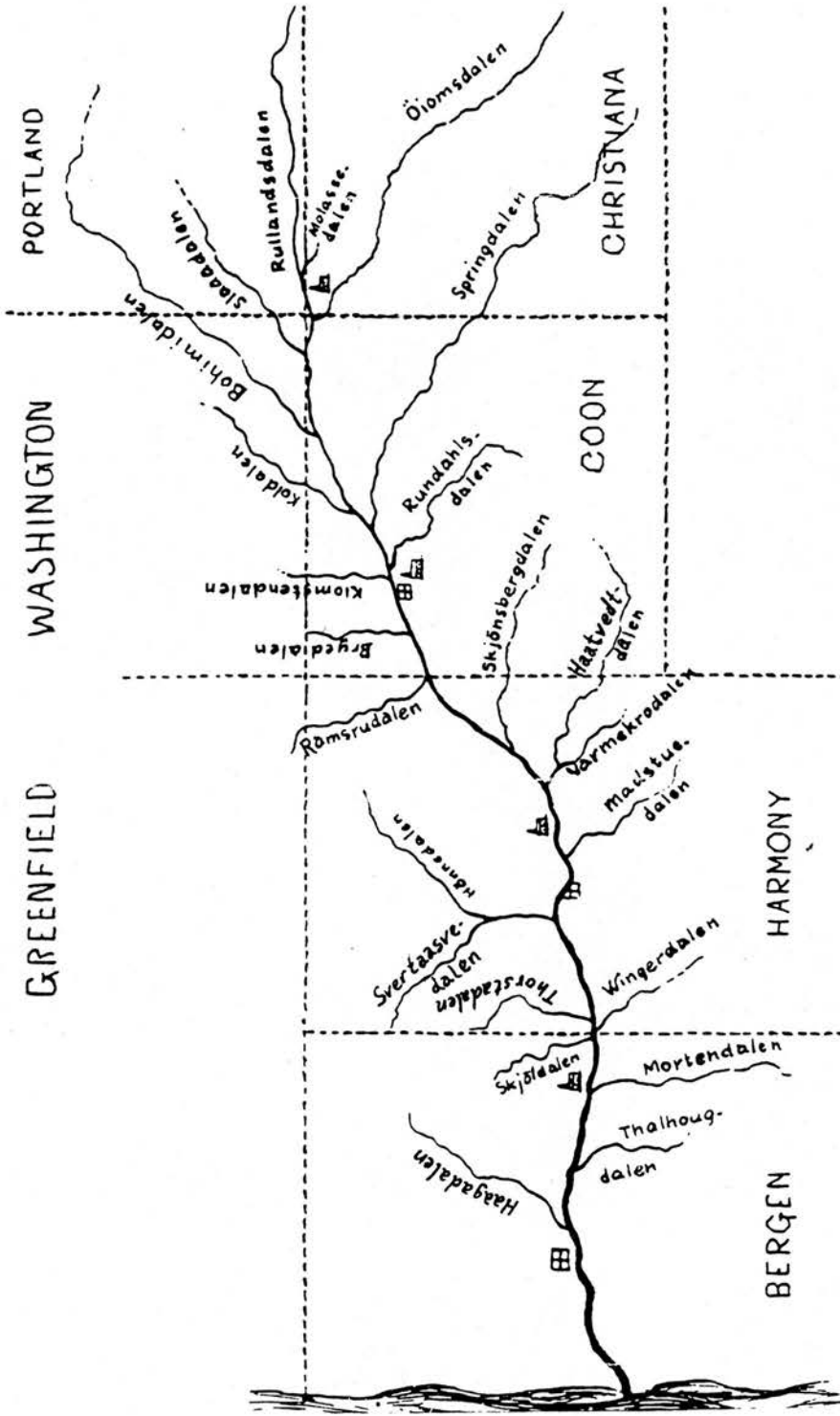
Personal names are frequently found as elements in farm-names in Scandinavia, both Christian names and – less usually – surnames. The main difference from the American system is that while Scandinavian farm-names are what we will call permanent, the American farm-names are references to the current occupier and are subject to change when the occupier moves away.

The Scandinavian settlers must have adopted this naming system fairly early on, and the reason for this is likely to be found in the new way of farming that the settlers adopted in their new homeland. An American farm is economically and culturally different from its Scandinavian counterpart in the sense that it is regarded more as a source of income for the family here and now than as a family seat for generations. To many Scandinavian immigrants it was a shock to experience the business-like, if not cynical attitude to the land in the Midwest, but they were forced to adapt, and it was soon reported that Scandinavian settlers were as hungry for new land as all the others as the Frontier moved west (Gjerde 1985: 137). It became very usual for the immigrants to settle for a year or two in one place and then move on when rumours told them about better land further west.

In North America the farm name is first and foremost an address label that refers to the economic ownership of the land, while in Scandinavia the farm name has a historic aspect in addition to the obvious address function. In a young society with extensive internal migration and a market oriented structure it is inevitable that the historic aspect of names is not as important as in a more stable, traditional, agricultural society such as we have in the Old World.

4.3 Names for natural features

There is in Coon Valley a remarkable lack of local names that are descriptive of the natural features, although there are names like *Skogdalen/Timber Cooley* and *Springdalen/Spring Valley*. As already mentioned, most of the valleys or coulees of Coon Valley are named after the farm at the entrance of the valley, and likewise, most of the ridges are named after the central farm situated on them. If the family living in one of these naming farms moves, and the name of the farm changes, it is very likely that the name of the valley or the ridge will also change. Many of the most central locations of Coon Valley have changed names as a result of this pattern. A map of Coon Valley, which was drawn in the late 1920s (Holand 1928: 13), may serve to illustrate this. Of the 23 American-Norwegian names of central valleys adjoining Coon Valley on this map, as many as 16 names have now disappeared or have been replaced by other names (Map 1).



Map 1: Coon Valley in Wisconsin (cf. Holand 1928).

5. Appellatives or proper names

In connection with the topic of Scandinavian place-names in America it is useful to consider the distinction between appellatives, *propria* and connotative names. In some grammars we find a semantic view which creates a distinction between (*pure*) *propria* and *connotative names* ('*karakteriserende Navne*') (cf. Diderichsen 1957: 34 and Beito 1986: 152–154). Beito says

connotative names are in a position between appellatives and pure *propria*. Like appellatives they more or less characterise the object, but as *propria* they are able to distinguish it from other objects of the same type (translation from Beito 1986: 153).

And furthermore:

Place-names develop from connotative names to pure *propria* when the semantic link with the origin is uncertain or broken (ibid.: 154).

All the transplanted and transferred Scandinavian-American place-names will in this sense have to be regarded as pure *propria* because the appellative quality and capacity to characterise something semantically which they once had where they originated is irrelevant or lost. In their new function these names have become linguistic symbols for denotata which are completely different from those they originally denoted. The function which remains for all user groups of the names is that of identifier or address tag.

However, the term connotation should not be considered as synonymous with 'meaning' only. Many of the American-Scandinavian place-names have different implications for different user-groups, as we saw in the example of the township names *Bergen* and *Christiana* in Coon Vally. To the American officials these were good names as they indicated a predominantly Norwegian settlement, while for the Norwegian settlers themselves they carried what Hal-laråker (1986) calls "nostalgic implications".

To the settlers *Gimli* and *Voss* are suitable names, not because of their lexical meaning, but because they have certain other useful connotations. Although they are a secondary development, it is their nostalgic attributes which make them attractive as names in a new setting. Both transplanted names and transferred names may thus be said to be carriers of a secondary connotation: an emotional historic link to an inherited ethnic tradition and place of origin.

The commonly held view that names are a very stable or permanent linguistic property, more so than is the case with 'words', is challenged by the high degree of instability in many of the denotations found in the American-Scandinavian communities. They make interesting test cases for deciding the degree of permanence required in order that a term may be called a name. Within a Scandinavian-American farm rotating its crop, we find denotations like *Potet-fila* being relocated as the crop is rotated, perhaps annually or every second year. In principle the same applies to the name of the farm itself, as this is almost certain to change with new owners. This certainly does not happen as frequently as with the denotation of the field, and its denotata is not usually relocated within the user group, but there might be a case where the

family *Petterson* will move to another farm within the local community and thereby the denotation *Pettersonfarmen* is relocated within the same user group.

In a young cultural landscape like the American, prepositional phrases like *Attmed skulen* ('By the school'), *Oppi dalen* ('Up in the valley'), *Over krikken* ('Over the creek'), and names like *Krikken* and *Tobakksfila*, will provide many of the address tags needed. The social perspective, i.e. to bear in mind the user group of the term, is crucial when we consider whether these are to be classified as names or not. This type of term could be classified as "near-horizon names" (in Swedish 'närhorisontnamn'), names which are used only within a limited community like the farm or the village. Within such a limited context they will normally be monoreferential and therefore can be classified as names.

Obviously, the place-names in the new colonies do not offer many challenges to the etymologist, because they are mostly clear and transparent. But onomastics ought to be based on more than etymology. Kurt Zilliakus stresses this when he claims that name research is a form of cultural research. He continues:

As cultural researchers it is not our task to analyse the names and the facts behind them as such, based upon a few general scientific points of view, but to regard the names as products of a certain culture; and from the point of view of the group of the population who embody the culture we should try to explain why the name givers have given the names and how they have chosen to do so (translation from Zilliakus 1975: 59).

Stefan Brink supports Zilliakus and says:

All names – not only settlement names, as some people might wrongly believe, and not only very old names, but also the very new ones – carry a unique potential of information, and it is my opinion that the place-name researcher's primary task is to try to clarify this through his name interpretation analysis, and then not only *explain* the name but also to try to *understand* the name in the context in which it was formed (translation from Brink 1992/93: 22).

With the farmland in the Scandinavian-American colonies not much more than a century old, we can observe how a system of naming is still taking shape and how new naming patterns develop from new demands in society. If the social or economic base of the society changes, we can observe how the place-names also change in response to the new demands.

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