What's in a Name? The Historical Significance of Norse Naming Strategies in the Isle of Islay

Alan Macniven

Communities of Old Norse-speakers arriving in the Inner Hebrides during the Viking Age would have had two main choices when it came to naming their new environment. They could either adopt the names already in use by the native Celtic populations, or create new ones using their own language and naming traditions. Where examples of adopted and new material can be identified, comparative analysis offers a welcome opportunity to add narrative detail to an otherwise document-starved period of Hebridean history. This chapter will explore the specific evidence for Norse naming strategies in the Isle of Islay, and what this might reveal about Norse-native relations during the settlement era.

Introduction

On Friday the 2nd of July 1266, the Norwegian nobles Askatinus and Andreas appeared on behalf of Magnús IV (later re-styled VI) in the church of the brothers at Perth before Alexander III, King of Scots. Their task was to cement the fledgling peace between Norway and Scotland, which had taken root since the death of Magnús' father, Hákon, in Kirkwall on his return from the Battle of Largs some three years earlier. The deal was simple; if the Scots left Orkney and Shetland alone, and agreed to pay a lump sum and annuity in refined silver, the Norwegians would, in return, amicably and socially, concede, resign, and quitclaim for Magnús and his heirs, either as suitors or possessors forever the '[Isle of] Mann, with the other islands of the Sodors and all the other islands of the south and west part of the great Haffue'.[1] Interestingly, the treaty entered into on that day also entailed that any offences perpetrated between Magnus and Alexander, as well as their ancestors and their people, were to be wholly remitted.[2] Just how far back this particular clause was intended to stretch is, of course, debatable. But it serves as an important reminder that unpleasantries

---

1 *Agreement between Magnus IV. of Norway and Alexander III. of Scotland. A.D. 1266*, 211.
2 Ibid., 215.

had been a defining characteristic of Norse-native relations in this part of the world for centuries, from the havoc wreaked by Hákon and his placemen in the 1260s and 1230s, to the 'Devastation of all the islands of Britain by heathens' listed in the *Annals of Ulster* under AD 794.[3]

In the absence of more comprehensive historical records, there has been a tendency to assume that Hákon's later medieval enmity followed patterns of interaction established during the Viking Age. Victorian notions of the Vikings as restless adventurers, unfettered by the conventions of Christian morality, but hopelessly addicted to hit-and-run raids on defenceless coastal monasteries, may no longer play such a large part in that assumption. But with the heritage language of the Western Isles being Scottish Gaelic and not Scandinavian, there is still a lingering reluctance to accept that the area was ever seen as anything more than a waystation by opportunistic Viking warlords *en route* to richer pickings in and around the Irish Sea. The trope of 'seasonal exploitation' has been especially resilient, stressing that the majority of Scandinavian visitors to the Hebrides during the Viking Age were fundamentally transient, and concerned only with the fleeting extraction of resources as opposed to permanent settlement.[4] However, where the analysis of this period has been widened to include other sources of evidence, such as material culture and genetics, it soon becomes clear that the Norse impact on local culture was both deep-reaching and long-lasting. Recent additions to the archaeological, linguistic, and place-name evidence for Scandinavian activity in the formerly Pictish Outer Isles, for example, have revealed a level of cultural disjuncture in the ninth century that cannot be satisfactorily explained without the invasion and permanent settlement of large numbers of ethnic Scandinavians.[5]

Further south, on the other hand, where the lack of new archaeological material, or indeed of any substantial programmes of excavation, has been palpable, the historical narrative remains surprisingly underdeveloped. In the islands between Argyll and Ireland, the apparent survival of

---

3   *Early Sources of Scottish History*, 471-78; *Annals of Ulster*, 794.7: 'Uastatio omnium insolarum Britannię a gentilibus'. The contemporary nature of this account is confirmed by its inclusion in *The Chronicle of Ireland* (see Charles-Edwards 2006, 257).

4   Nicolaisen 2001, 122-24; 1969, 16-17, but cf. 1977–80, 112. See also Sveas Andersen 1991; Barrett 2008, 413.

5   Smith 2001; Kruse 2005; Jennings and Kruse 2005; 2009a; 2009b; Macniven 2013.

the native Gaelic language from the early Historic Era to the later Middle Ages continues to underpin a 'North vs South' divide in Scottish Viking Studies, predicated on the assumption that 'extirpation' in the North gave way to 'integration' in the South. As with previously held views on the Outer Isles, a narrow evidential focus and agenda-driven presumption of cultural continuity has seen the discussion stagnate. To help redress the epistemological imbalance here, this chapter will review what might have happened when Viking settlers came to the Inner Hebridean island of Islay, in the far south-west of the archipelago, through the lens of local place-names.
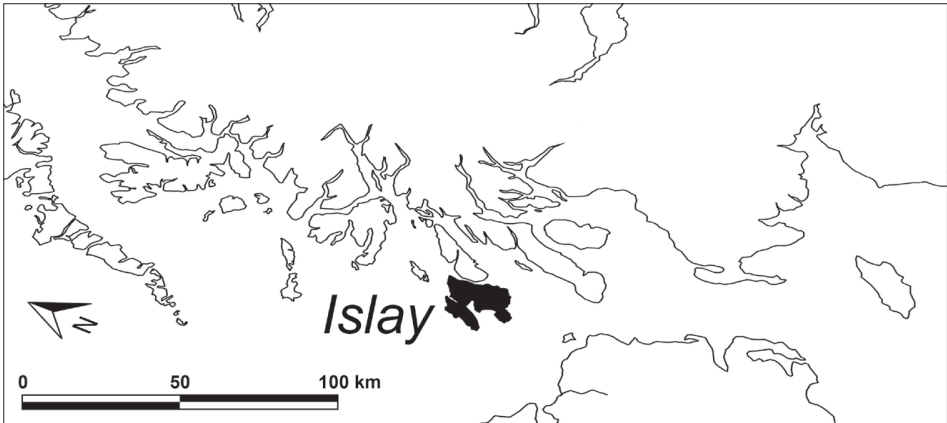
Figure 1: The Isle of Islay.

THE VIKINGS IN ISLAY

But what do we know about Islay and its Viking experience? Was it peaceful, predatory, piecemeal, or overpowering? Can we even be sure that the Vikings ever actually went there? If we were to rely on the documentary evidence alone, none of those questions could be answered with certainty. Between AD 740 and 1095, there are no contemporary references to the island itself, let alone the people or events which might

otherwise have helped to define its cultural political identity.[6] There are several folk-tales suggesting early connections with Scandinavia. Peggy Earl notes one example deriving the island-name Islay from a mythical 'Danish' princess named Jula, and another recounting the slaying by Manx king Godred Crovan of a dragon on a hill at Imerchonart.[7] A third, well-known story remembers a battle between the 'Fenians' and the 'Danes' on a hillside called Sliabh a'Chatha (Gaelic for 'Battle Brae') near Gartmain on Loch Indaal.[8] But as all three tales can be read as simple literary tropes, it would perhaps be unwise to stress their value in historical research.

An alternative – if less reliable – way to cultivate the historical record is to begin with accounts of a later period and extrapolate backwards. Scandinavians are known to have been visiting Islay for a long time. These days, it seems, mainly to enjoy the opportunities for golf and malt whisky. In times gone by, however, the standard itinerary appears to have demanded a certain amount of bloodshed. By the time the Treaty of Perth was agreed in the late-thirteenth century, *Íl* or Islay is known to have been a named part of Christian Norway's cognitive geography for the best part of 200 years. Some forty years earlier, for example, the young King Hákon Hákonarson had been eager to assert himself in the Suðreys (Man and the Hebrides). The 1220s were a turbulent time in the Kingdom of the Isles, and the inability of Manx King Óláfr Guðrøðarson (Olaf 'the Black') to control its various warring factions provided Hákon with an irresistible window of opportunity.[9] The story is told in Sturla Þórðarson's near-contemporary biography, *Hákonar saga Hákonarson*.[10] Hákon's ploy was to install Hebridean warlord Óspakr Ögmundarson as king of the Hebrides, and provide

---

6   *The Annals of Ulster* record an earthquake in Islay under 740.3 – 'Terrimotus in Ili .ii. Id Aprilis'. The appearance of this episode in *The Chronicle of Ireland* confirms that it is roughly contemporary (see Charles-Edwards 2006, 212). The *Chronica Regum Manniae et Insularum* ('Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles') tell us that Godred Crovan became king of Man and the Isles in 1079, and 'Regnauit aut<u>em</u> sedecim annis & mortuus <u>est in</u> insula que uocatur yle' [ruled for sixteen years before dying in the island which is called Islay] (*Chronica Regum Manniae et Insularum*: f.32v, f.33r-v). Other sources, including the *Annals of Inisfallen* under 1095.13, confirm that Godred was one of a great many victims of a plague that devastated Ireland and the surrounding area in that year.

7   *Tales of Islay*, 1, 18.

8   Canmore, NR36SW 10, accessed 30 May 2016.

9   See, for example, Costain-Russell 2015; Cowan 2015.

10 See, for example, *Hákonar Saga ins gamla*.

him with a fleet of eighty ships to oust Olaf. Given that Óspakr was also known as Uspak Hákon and Gille Escoib mac Dubgaill, and thought to be a grandson of Somerled MacGillebride,[11] it is clear that this was no random appointment, but a play on entrenched political divisions with underlying layers of dynastic entitlement and resentment. According to Sturla, 'Uspak' gathered his fleet in the Sound of Islay in 1230, in preparation for an attack on Bute. While in the Sound, he was joined by his brothers, Doggall and Dungadr (Dugald and Duncan), and their relative Sumarlidi (Somerled), whose generous display of hospitality towards the Norwegians included the provision of what is described in the saga as *vín sterkt*.[12] Although this phrase is invariably translated as 'strong wine', it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that what the Islesmen were, in fact, imbibing was an early form of *uisge beatha*, the Gaelic source-form for whisky, or the 'water of life'.[13] Whatever the case, the Norwegian contingent in Uspak's fleet are said to have been apprehensive of the drink on offer, not necessarily because of an innate sense of moderation, but to avoid being rendered insensible and duped. This turned out to be a wise move. Retaining both their sobriety and wits, the Norwegians quickly turned the situation to their advantage, dispatching the local troublemakers, including most of Uspak's relatives, without losing a man, and helping to precipitate a split in the Kingdom of the Isles in the process.

Uspak's expeditionary force is one of several Scandinavian fleets known to have visited Islay during the Christian Middle Ages. The list also includes Hákon's personal expedition through the Isles in 1263, in which he is said to have received the support of Angus of Islay, the chief of Clan Donald and progenitor of the later Lords of the Isles.[14] Prior to this, the island had also featured as a stop on Magnús *berfœttr* ('Bareleg') Óláfsson's psychotic trail of destruction in 1098, in which he sailed from Norway to Dublin to secure his overlordship of the area in the face of Scots expansion. According to Björn *krepphendi*'s ('Cripple Hand's') skaldic poem *Magnússdrápa*, around which Snorri Sturluson structured his early-thirteenth century *Magnúss saga berfœtts*, Magnús

---

11   Sellar 2000, 194, 202.
12   *Hákonar Saga ins gamla*, 102.
13   *Early Sources of Scottish History*, 475.
14   Ibid., 102-18.

is said to have caused smoke to be raised over Islay and devastated several others in a successful bid to assert himself:

§178 Vitt bar snjallr á slétta [Warlike Magnús widely
      Sandey konungr randir.   Waste laid Sanday's grasslands.
      Rauk um Íl, þás jóku   Smoke rose up on Islay
      allvalds menn á brennur.   Isle as homesteads burned there.
      Sanntíri laut sunnar   South on [Kintyre] bloody
      Segga kind und eggjar.   Swords felled many Scotsmen.
      Sigrgœðir réð síðan   Manxmen many then by
      Snjallr Manvera falli.[15] Magnús host were laid low.][16]

Given the known economic and political importance of Islay in the later Iron Age and Early Historic Era, it would be surprising if Hákon or Magnús were the only Scandinavian sea-kings to have coveted its gifts. The strategic value of Islay's location as a safe haven between the whirlpool of the Corryvreckann and the dangerous tidal currents of the North Channel should not be underestimated in this respect. While there are no surviving accounts of any earlier, pagan interaction, it is beyond doubt that Norwegian Vikings sailed very close to the island on their way to documented raids on the monasteries of Iona and Rathlin, or their ventures further south into Ireland and the Irish Sea.[17] Although not explicitly stated in the saga material or elsewhere, it is reasonable to assume that the island served as a pitstop for semi-fictional saga characters such as Ketill *flatnefr* ('Flatnose') Björnson and Harald *hárfagri* ('Fairhair') Halfdanarson on their voyages of the ninth century, establishing the prestigious itinerary later followed by the likes of Magnús and Uspak Hákon.

Whilst the military occupations of Islay in the late-eleventh and early-to-mid-thirteenth century were short-lived affairs, it is important to remember that they were the actions of centralised Norwegian kings. As eager as Magnús or Hákon may have been to be seen at the forefront of high profile naval campaigns, they were also keen to move on afterwards, delegating the process of consolidation to local underlings – a *modus operandi* unlikely to have been shared by the more hands-

---

15   *Magnúss saga Berfœtts*, 221.
16   Based on *Heimskringla*, 675-76.
17   Ó Corráin 1998a; 1998b; Downham 2007.

on warlords of the Viking Age. For pagan Scandinavian chieftains, the key to secular authority appears to have been the personal support of landed neighbours rather than divine anointment. In the better-understood Norse expansion into other parts of the North Atlantic, such as Iceland, it seems that establishing a strong local presence through extensive land-taking and the subsequent large-scale plantation of supporters was an important part of the colonisation process.[18] In those parts of Scotland's northern and western seaboard for which evidence is relatively abundant, invasion, colonisation, and cultural obliteration appear to have been the order of the day.[19]

Without closer consideration of the wider context, these kinds of development are difficult to reconcile with the apparent survival of the Gaelic language in Islay from the early Christian era to the present day. But with the island itself having completely disappeared from the documentary record for the duration of the Viking Age, it cannot simply be assumed that business continued as usual. Although Early Historic Islay is closely associated with the powerful *cenél nOengusso*, one of the leading families of Gaelic-speaking Dál Riata, the island's Viking Age hiatus saw all traces of this influence and even existence disappear. When Islay emerges once more into the light of history in the twelfth century, it is as the seat of the Argyll-derived MacSorley Kings of the Isles. Things had clearly changed in between. And where better to look to for the agents of that change than an influx of pagan Scandinavian settlers?

This is what seems to be suggested by the archaeological material. Although confirmed remains from Islay's Viking Age are limited to a selection of portable objects (Figure 2), it is worth noting that all of them are not only diagnostically Scandinavian, but of the high-status variety that point to the existence of a settled pagan elite.[20] With all of the artefacts having been found on or close to areas of fertile and easily worked arable land, it can also be assumed that the same Scandinavians controlled the local subsistence economy. In the absence of contemporary accounts, it is perhaps not immediately obvious what this tells us about the nature of the settlement process. With so much weight given to the idea of Celtic continuity in traditional histories of

---

18   Vésteinsson 1998.
19   Smith 2001; Jennings and Kruse 2005; 2009a; 2009b; Macniven 2013.
20   Macniven 2015, 61-63, 109-10.

the area, it might be tempting to imagine a small-scale elite takeover. However, the comparatively limited linguistic and genetic evidence points to something a bit more wide-ranging.[21] And considering the tens of thousands of Scandinavian pioneers, who together with their families, friends, servants, and slaves are known to have emigrated to the effective 'new world' of Iceland in the late-ninth and early-tenth centuries,[22] the most straightforward explanation is military subjugation followed by the settlement by large numbers of ethnic Scandinavians. Without the corroboration of more openly descriptive sources, or more comprehensive archaeological discoveries, the only realistic way of testing this theory lies in the closer scrutiny of the local names of places.

Islay Place-Names

At around 62,000 ha, Islay is the fifth-largest of Scotland's islands, around 25% smaller than Mull, in fourth place, but 15% larger than Mainland, Orkney, in sixth.[23] The population may have declined to 3,228 in the most recent census in 2011, from 3,457 in 2001, and a historic high of 15,772 in 1841.[24] But its richly varied landscape of machair, mountains, farmland, and freshwater bogs continues to support around 6,000 settlements, natural features, and other locations considered distinct enough to be recognised with an officially recorded name.[25] Whilst the percentage of names from Scots and standard English language backgrounds, which includes house numbers and public utilities, has now grown to around 40% of the total, the remaining 60% can be considered formally Gaelic in the sense that they have for centuries been used, preserved, and developed by the Gaelic-speaking community in accordance with the norms of local pronunciation and the demands of the Gaelic grammar system. However, there are many names for which this formal description does not sit well. For a number of writers, including Domhnall MacEacharna in his 1976 volume *The Lands of the Lordship: The Romance of Islay's Names*, their exotic character gives them an air of romance fully commensurate with the

---

21   For a comparative discussion of suggested models for Norse settlement in England and the Hebrides, see Macniven 2013.
22   Karlsson 2000, 11, 44-51.
23   Haswell-Smith 1996, 35, 74, 292.
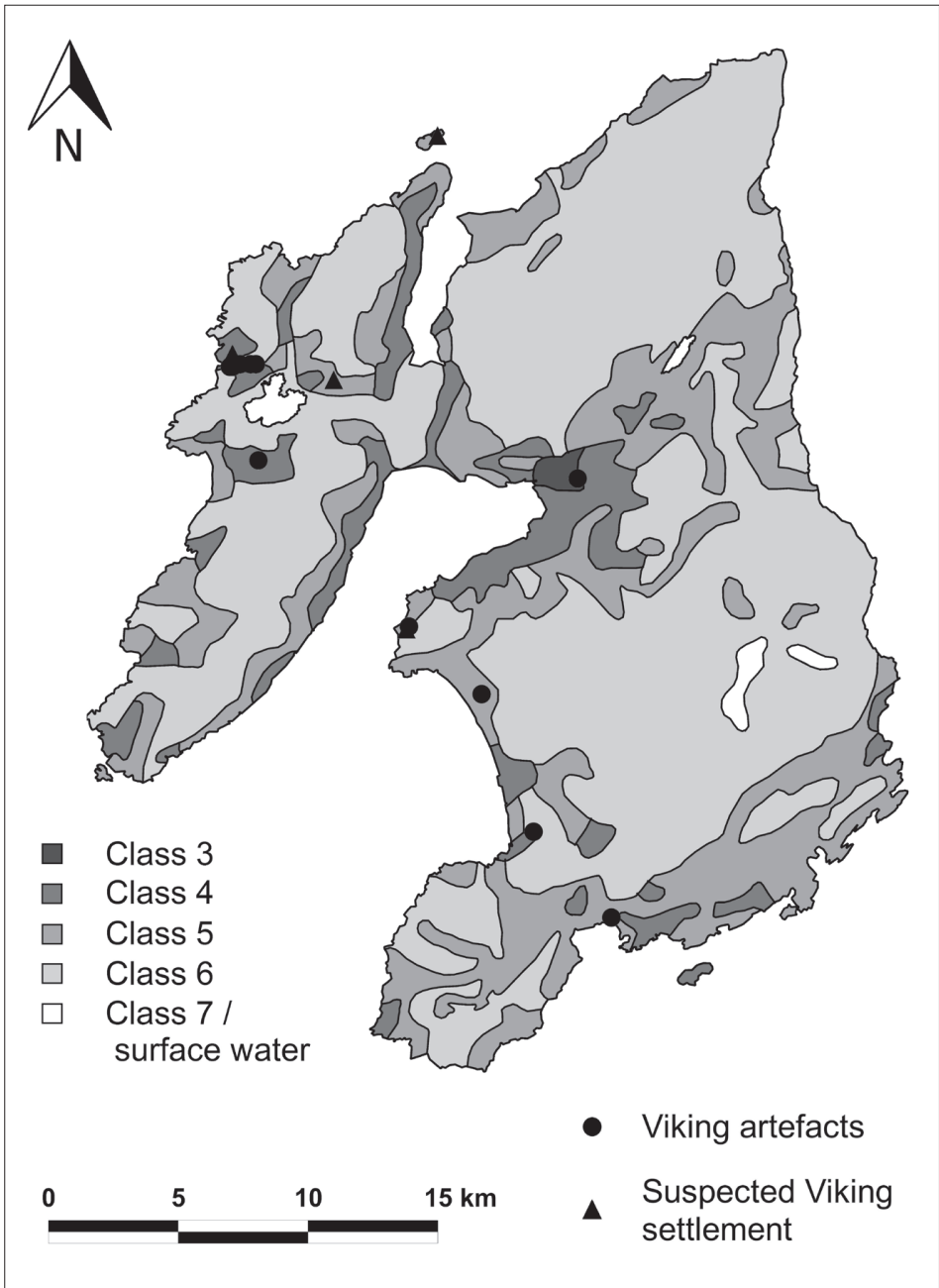24   Darling 1955, 83.
25   McWee 2001.

Figure 2: Viking Remains in Islay (adapted from Macniven 2015, 46, 62; Brown et al. 1982).

island's dramatic history.[26] Some of these names may sound Gaelic when spoken by the natives, and may even look Gaelic in their written forms, but make little sense when read as Gaelic word material. The hill known as Cnoc Crun na Maoil (NR 415 487, 162 m) and cultivated slope of Cnoc na Corra Mhaoil (NR 301 426), for example, in what is now the parish of Kildalton and Oa, could be understood as the 'Hill of the Crown of the Bare Rounded Hill' and the 'Knoll of the Great Top', respectively.[27] The hills of Beinn Tart a'Mhill (NR 210 569, 232 m) and Cnoc Garbh a'Mhill (NR 204 556, 120 m) in the Rinns peninsula would suggest the even more contrived 'Hill of the Thirsty Hill' and 'Hill of the Rough Hill'.[28]

Many other Islay place-names contain elements which might be understood in terms of their descriptive connotations, and in some cases are still productive in naming practices, but which *cannot* have been drawn from Goidelic word-stock. This list includes numerous naming elements such as *geodha* (m.)*, gil* (f.), and *sgeir* (f.). The reason for all of this is quite simply that the material is not, ultimately, Gaelic in origin, but Old Norse – the language of the Vikings. Consequently, when viewed from a Scandinavian perspective, many Islay names take on new layers of meaning. The elements **Crun na Maoil* and **Corra Mhaoil* find easier derivation from ON **Grœnafjall*, 'Greenfell', or **Krúnafjall*, 'Crownfell', relating to the colour or shape of the hill, and **Kornavöllr*, 'Corn Field', pointing to agricultural activity. Similarly, the element **Tart a'Mhill* finds more convincing origins in Old Norse **Hjartafjall*, or 'Stag Mountain', with *hjarta* being the genitive plural form of *hjörtr* (m.), 'stag', and the transformation of initial /h/ into /t/ being a common feature of Gaelic adaptations of Old Norse place-names. The **Garbh a'Mhill* part of Cnoc Garbh a'Mhill makes more sense if it is seen as Old Norse **Skarfafjall*, from *skarfr* (m.), meaning 'cormorant', or possibly **Skarðafjall*, meaning 'Cleft Mountain', both indicative of the landscape and its qualities. Individual elements like *geodha*, *gil*, and *sgeir* can be explained as the Norse loan-words *gjá* (f.), 'chasm, rift in crags'*, gil* (n.), 'deep narrow valley with river at the bottom', and *sker* (n.), 'skerry, rock', in Gaelic clothing.[29]

---

26   Maceacharna 1976.
27   Macniven 2015, 125, 137.
28   Ibid., 291-92, 341.
29   See, for example, Stewart 2004, 408-16; Gammeltoft 2004.

It should be stressed that these observations are hardly new. As far back as 1772, the Welsh traveller Thomas Pennant spent several days in Islay as a guest of the local gentry. What he learned there led him to observe that, 'There are more Danish or Norwegian names of places in this island than any other; almost all the present farms derive their titles from them, such as Persibus, Torridale, Torribolse and the like'.[30] This, however, is something of an exaggeration. At a generous estimate only around a fifth of Islay's modern place-name inventory contains any obviously Norse elements, either as survivors from the Viking Age or loan-words which have remained active in local naming practices in the years since. But it does beg the important question of how we know whether a name is Old Norse or Gaelic, and what, if anything, this might tell us about social interaction between the incoming Norsemen and the native Gaels

PHILOLOGY

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, there was a strong belief among language historians that all systematic changes in language could be reduced to a standardised series of discrete transformations. In Scotland, linguists including George Henderson, Alexander MacBain, and others went to great pains to map out the systematic changes by which modern Gaelic place-names might have evolved from Old Norse originals.[31] Their approach was straightforward; if a West Highland place-name was clearly not (Scots) English and could not reasonably be interpreted as Gaelic in its topographical context, they would then consider an Old Norse etymology. Then, as now, the identification of source languages was problematic. Despite the linguistic distance between the Goidelic and Germanic languages, the distinction between originally Gaelic or Old Norse material is not always clear. Take, for example, the three Islay examples of Corrary (NR 312 571, NR 324 455, NR 271 689**)**, any or all of which could derive from either Old Norse *Káraærgi* ('Kári's Shieling') or Gaelic *Corr Àirigh* ('Shieling on the Round Hill').[32] Things get even more complicated with names like the now-lost Calumsary in the Rinns, which appears to contain both Old Norse and Gaelic elements – the originally Gaelic personal name Calum,

---

30   *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides 1772*, 220-21.
31   Henderson 1910; MacBain 1922.
32   Macniven 2015, 201-2.

and either the Gaelic generic *àirigh* (f.) or its Old Norse counterpart *ærgi* (n.) – albeit in an Old Norse grammatical matrix demonstrated by the medial, genitive /s/.[33] Fortunately, the intervening century of place-name research has revealed a number of guiding principles that can help to establish the language background of individual names.

If the name in question comprises more than one element, the order of the elements can be diagnostic. In Gaelic, compound names tend to begin with a 'generic' element, describing the broad category of name, such as *baile* (m.), meaning 'township or farm', or *tigh* (m.), meaning 'house'. This is usually followed by the so-called 'specific' element, which adds distinguishing detail. In farm names, this might be the main crop grown, e.g. Ballygrant (NR 395 662) from Gaelic **Baile a'Ghràin*, 'Townland of the (Kiln-Dried) Corn',[34] a comment on its terrain or topography, e.g. Bailetarsin (NR 355 611) from **Baile Tarsuinn*, 'Township on the Slope', or Tigh nan Cnoc (NR 354 647), meaning 'House on the Hill',[35] or the name of the owner or tenant, e.g. Balole (NR 355 661) from **Baile Ola*, 'Ola's Township', or Tighcargaman (NR 363 495) from **Tigh Cargaman*, 'House of Cargaman'.[36] Compound Old Norse names, on the other hand, tend to consist of a specific element followed by a generic. Typical examples might include Cornabus (NR 334 464) from **Kornabólstaðr*, 'Corn Farm',[37] Sannaigmore (NR 237 707) from **Sandvík*, 'Sandy Bay', with the later addition of the Gaelic contrastive modifier *mòr* – meaning 'big' or 'greater' – presumably when the farm-district was sub-divided,[38] and Olistadh (NR 218 583) from **Óláfsstaðir*, 'Óláf's Steading'.[39] It will be noted that the written forms of the assumed Old Norse material are rather different from the standardised spelling of the same concepts. This can be explained in part as linguistic drift during centuries spent as oral artefacts in the alien language environment of the later medieval *Gàidhealtachd* before being crystallised in writing.

To get as close as possible to the original Scandinavian forms, the effects of the Gaelic grammar system have to be taken into account.

---

33   Ibid., 39, 309.
34   Ibid., 251-52.
35   Ibid., 195-96, 236-37.
36   Ibid., 252-53, 183.
37   Ibid., 163.
38   Ibid., 348-49.
39   Ibid., 344-45.

The impact of linguistic phenomena such as lenition, projection, back-formation, and prosthesis, which are common in Gaelic, can radically alter the appearance of a word and have to be reversed in the reconstruction of earlier forms. In Islay, the 'lenition' of a word-initial consonant appears to have transformed Old Norse *Torfnes* (NR 209 676: Turf Ness) into Gaelic Aird T̲hòrr-innis ('Headland of *Thòrrinnis*').[40] 'Projection' of the final consonant in a Gaelic definite article, such as a̲n, would explain the development of Old Norse *Eyrabólstaðr* ('(Gravel) Bank Farm') into later N̲erabus (NR 226 551) through a notional intermediate *AnEyrabólsaðr*.[41] 'Back-formation' of an assumed lenited initial consonant may have taken ON *H̲ánessker* to Eilean an T̲annais-sgeir (NR 188 639),[42] whilst 'prosthesis' of a name with an extraneous /s/ or /k/ might see *Karlsstaðir* ('Karl's Farm') or *Haraldsstaðir* ('Harald's Farm') transformed into *Skerrols* (NR 351 638).[43] Additionally, because the fixed first-syllable-stress of Norse word material is unusual in Gaelic, where stress is more commonly delayed to a later syllable, it can also lead to unstressed elements in the middle and end of the name simply disappearing, further complicating attempted etymology, e.g. Thomas' derivation of Skerrols from an unnecessarily complex Old Norse *Skúrhólarstaðir*, 'Trench Hill Farm'.

Having taken numerous such transformations into account, Henderson was able to devise a complex series of charts showing how vowels and consonant clusters might have been adapted from Norse into Gaelic in initial, medial, and terminal positions.[44] There is no doubt that this linguistic 'ready-reckoner' is diagnostically helpful in many individual cases. But it would be wrong to imagine that it can be applied uniformly and successfully in all circumstances to the erstwhile Gaelic forms of West Highland place-names to reveal the 'factory-fresh' versions of originally Old Norse material. Steady progress in the theory and practice of place-name research in Scandinavia over the intervening century has helped to systematise the process, with the refinement of the 'historical-philological' approach to place-name etymology, in

---

40   Borgstrøm 1940, §80, 84; Oftedal 1956, 164-69; Thurneysen 1975, 74-89, 140-46; Cox 2002, 51-53; Stewart 2004, 405; Macniven 2015, 351-52.
41   Macniven 2015, 339-40.
42   Maceacharna 1976, 117 FN 17; Cox 2002, 64; Macniven 2015, 307.
43   *A Comparative and Etymological Table of the Names of Farms*; Macniven 2015, 232-33.
44   Henderson 1910, 342-57.

particular, stressing the value of interdisciplinary corroboration and the importance of real-world comparators.[45] One especially important observation is that the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of a given Old Norse place-name will not always be perfectly aligned to those reconstructed from the standard language. Even where the component words are known to have been in use during the period when the names were coined, research has confirmed that the range of practical combinations is limited, that compounds can be formed with or without the use of standard Old Norse genitive markers, such as /-s/, /-ar/, /-u/, /-a/, or /-na/, and that it is quite possible to encounter plural forms where the singular might be expected, e.g. *staðir* instead of *staðr*.[46]

From a philological perspective, it is also important to stress that the earlier Scottish approach to this material does not deal with the effect of language contact. It simply takes the modern Gaelic spelling for a name – which might have drifted considerably over the years – and tries to approximate it, not to the dialect of Old Norse used locally when the names were created, but to the normalised forms of Old Norse devised by modern editors of the Icelandic sagas.[47] As a result, it leaves little room for the impact of dialectal variation or other linguistic anomalies on the eventual written forms of local place-names.

Marginalising the scope for localised developments in this way can complicate strict philological analyses. In Islay, this is demonstrated by recent treatment of to the so-called 'busses',[48] comprising the two dozen or so place-names still in use or preserved in old rentals and charters, which end in *-bus*, *-bolls*, *-pols* and *-pus*, or simplex *Bolsa* or *Bolsay*. Typical examples include Risa<u>bus</u> (NR 314 437) and Lura<u>bus</u> (NR 337 435) in the Oa, from Old Norse **Hrísabólstaðr*, 'Brushwood Farm', and **Leirabólstaðr*, 'Clay Soil Farm', and Persa<u>bus</u> (NR 417 690) in the north-east of the island, from **Prestabólstaðr*. 'Priest(s) Farm'.[49] Variant forms can be found in Gro<u>bolls</u> (NR338 598) from **Grábólstaðr* or **Gróubólstaðr*, referring to the perceived colour of the landscape (grey), or the female personal name *Gróa*,[50] Kep<u>pols</u>more (NR 383 661),

---

45   Rygh 1898, 4-8; Christensen and Kousgard Sørensen 1972, 119-60; Sandnes 2003, 109-11.
46   Macniven 2015, 39-41.
47   Pálsson 1996.
48   Macniven 2015, 71-74.
49   Ibid., 141-42, 172, 276-77.
50   Ibid., 212.

from **Kappa-, *Kjappa-, or *Keipabólstaðr*, after the male personal name or by-name Kappi, or pebbles, or goats, or rowlocks in reference to the profile of the local landscape.[51] Dùn Chollapus (NR 357 678), now a hill-name, appears to preserve a now-lost *Collapus, most likely from an earlier *Kollabólstaðr, 'Kolli's Farm'. Finally, we have the relatively transparent Bolsa (NR 386 775) and Bolsay (NR 227 571), both from simplex *Bólstaðr, 'Farm'.[52] Although all of these endings are widely believed to have evolved from Old Norse *bólstaðr* (m.), meaning 'farm',[53] it has also been argued that they derive from a philologically convincing but otherwise unattested Old Norse *bólshagi*.[54] Accepting the possibility of local quirks, however, allows for an alternative explanation – that the attested endings have evolved from a misunderstanding of the morphemic boundaries in originally Old Norse *bólstaðr*, most probably towards the end of the island's Norse period, when active knowledge of the language among the settled population was rapidly disappearing in the face of encroaching Gaelic. Scrutiny of the written forms, along with local pronunciation, suggests that the element came to be tacitly understood as a combination of two lexically empty morphemes, *bóls + *taðr, with the terminal /s/ of *bóls being mistaken for a common genitive marker. Following the later operation of the Gaelic grammar system, in a nominally bilingual environment, this would allow for the lenition of the intial /t/ in *taðr to *aðr, the loss of the terminal consonantal cluster due to syncope, and subsequent addition of the common Gaelic locative particle *aig*. Thus *bólstaðr* becomes terminal -*bussaig* or simply -*bus*, as can be seen from the local pronunciation of Robolls [ˈrɔːˌb̥ʊsiɟʲ] and Persabus [ˈþɛ̊rsəˌb̥ʌs].[55]

Although the exact mechanisms of this particular transformation are open to debate, it is important to note how unusually complex they appear to have been. Why the changes undergone by the other surviving Old Norse material seem to have been comparatively simple also requires an explanation. This can be found in the linguistic

---

51   Ibid., 267-68.
52   Ibid., 254-55
53   Gammeltoft 2001.
54   Cox 1994.
55   Macniven 2015, 71-72, 278, 276.

properties of names, and has important implications for how onomastic material can contribute to the historical narrative.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It is well-known that place-names most often originate in the standard word material available at the time of their creation. Technically speaking, this means that they are imbued with the same range of literal and abstract meaning implied by those words – allowing them to serve as shorthand for the series of interconnected observations and phenomena covering places, people, activities, and events. In practice, however, their successful operation requires only that they are distinct enough to function as unique address labels. As they need only be understood as a series of sounds to do so, they can remain effectively separate from standard word material, surviving the changes in grammar and fashion that might affect it over time, or even the replacement of the local language itself. Because of this, they also provide a convenient and resilient vehicle for the preservation through the ages of the actual words from which they were originally coined. It is for this reason that Old Norse name material has been able to survive in the Gaelic-speaking environment of Islay's recent past. And it follows that, by looking more closely at the context and format of that material, it should, in theory, be possible to comment on the relative status of Old Norse and Gaelic speakers on Islay, at the time or times when that the place-names were created.

Following a period of societal destabilisation in the Hebrides in the opening decades of the Viking Age, leading to a Norse takeover by the 840s, it seems that large numbers of ethnic Scandinavians made their way to the West Highlands and Islands.[56] Communities of Old Norse speakers arriving in Islay would have had two main choices when it came to naming their new environment – they could either adopt existing names or create new ones. These two over-arching strategies could be implemented in a number of different ways.[57] When it came to borrowing existing names, for example, a process technically known as onomastic transfer, adoption could have taken several forms. If settlers found themselves in a socially subordinate position to the native population, they are most likely to have learned and used the

---

56   See, for example, Macniven 2013.
57   Gammeltoft 2006.

established names of places – perhaps with minor adjustment for Old Norse pronunciation, known as 'phonological adaptation'. In these circumstances, any such adaptations would quickly have disappeared back into the dominant tradition, meaning they are unlikely to have left much trace. In Islay, the only definite example is preserved in the later medieval Icelandic sagas. The Latin *Ilea Insula* and Old Irish *Íl* used to name the island in pre-Norse texts including Adomnàn of Iona's *Life of St Columba*, the *Annals of Ulster*, and the *Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*,[58] can be found adopted in the thirteenth-century *Magnúss Saga Berfœtts* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarson* in the place-names *Íl* (Islay) and *Ílarsund* (Sound of Islay).[59] Contrary to what might be assumed, neither are likely to point to a low social status for the Norse settlers. Both can be satisfactorily explained as 'exploratory' names, adopted for basic utility without any clear need for deeper communication.[60]

Where the context of borrowing lacks meaningful communication, and names are not properly understood, phonological adaption can also be accompanied by lexical substitution – where the people doing the borrowing latch onto bits of the words that sound familiar, and tweak them to mirror those patterns, thereby making them easier to remember. To a monoglot speaker of modern English, for example, the Scottish Gaelic district name *Na h-Eileanan an Iar* ('The Western Isles') might be rationalised aurally as 'a nail in a jar'. Whilst the Islay namescape boasts several highly conspicuous examples of lexical substitution from Old Norse names being transferred into Gaelic, including Cnoc Crun na Mhaoil and the like, it is clearly significant that there are – as yet – no convincing examples of Gaelic names being adapted into Old Norse in this way.

New Names

The alternative to borrowing existing place-names would have been to create new ones. Clearly, a glut of genuinely new Norse names would suggest that the social standing of the incomers was elevated to the extent that they could simply ignore local tradition and establish their own. There appear to be many dozens of examples of this type of name

---

58   Broderick 2013, 11-12.
59   Gammeltoft 2007.
60   Kruse 2005.

in Islay, including settlements with habitative generics, such as Conisby (NR 62 619, from Old Norse **Konungsbýr*, 'King's Farm')[61] and Cragabus (NR 326 451, from **Krakabólstaðr*, 'Kraki's Farm'),[62] settlements with topographic generics, such as Proaig (NR 457 576, from **Breiðvik*, 'Broad Bay')[63] and Stremnish(more) (NR 311 408, from **Straumnes*, 'Headland of the Current'),[64] and the names of both major and minor natural features, such as Beinn Tart a'Mhill (as above) and Eas Forsa (NR 428677, from **Forsá*, 'Waterfall River') (Figure 3).[65] The distribution of this material across all parts of the island and all of its landforms suggests that the Old Norse speaking population and place-name 'user group' was not limited to marginal land or defensive enclaves.[66] Nor does it seem likely that they were confined to newly broken land. At only 62,000 ha, including extensive tracts of rugged upland and peat-bog, Islay was no continent of untapped agricultural potential. Besides which, it is clear that from the earliest available charters and rentals that many of the traditional farm-districts generally, and much of the best land within them specifically, were described by Old Norse place-names (See Figures 2 and 3).

It is, of course, possible that some of this ostensibly Old Norse material has in fact been adapted from pre-existing Gaelic names, or alternatively created long after the Viking Age by a linguistically Gaelic community using a selection of heritage loan-words from Old Norse. Take, for example, Crois Sgeir (NR199 614),[67] which could have originated in a later medieval Gaelic name, meaning 'The Skerry of/with the Cross', or an earlier Old Norse **Krossker*, meaning 'Cross Skerry', with or without any intended reference to any Christian ecclesiastical monuments. Ironically, it is precisely this difficult area in which we find the final, but perhaps most fruitful category of names in terms of commenting on Norse native relations: new names formed from existing name material with the addition of a new part, known as an epexegetic onomastic unit.[68] In Islay, there are numerous examples of

---

61   Macniven 2015, 301-2.
62   Ibid., 149-50.
63   Ibid., 174-75.
64   Ibid., 178-79.
65   Ibid., 257.
66   See Magnus Olsen's User Group Theory, e.g. Olsen 1934. Cf. Nieke 1984, 313.
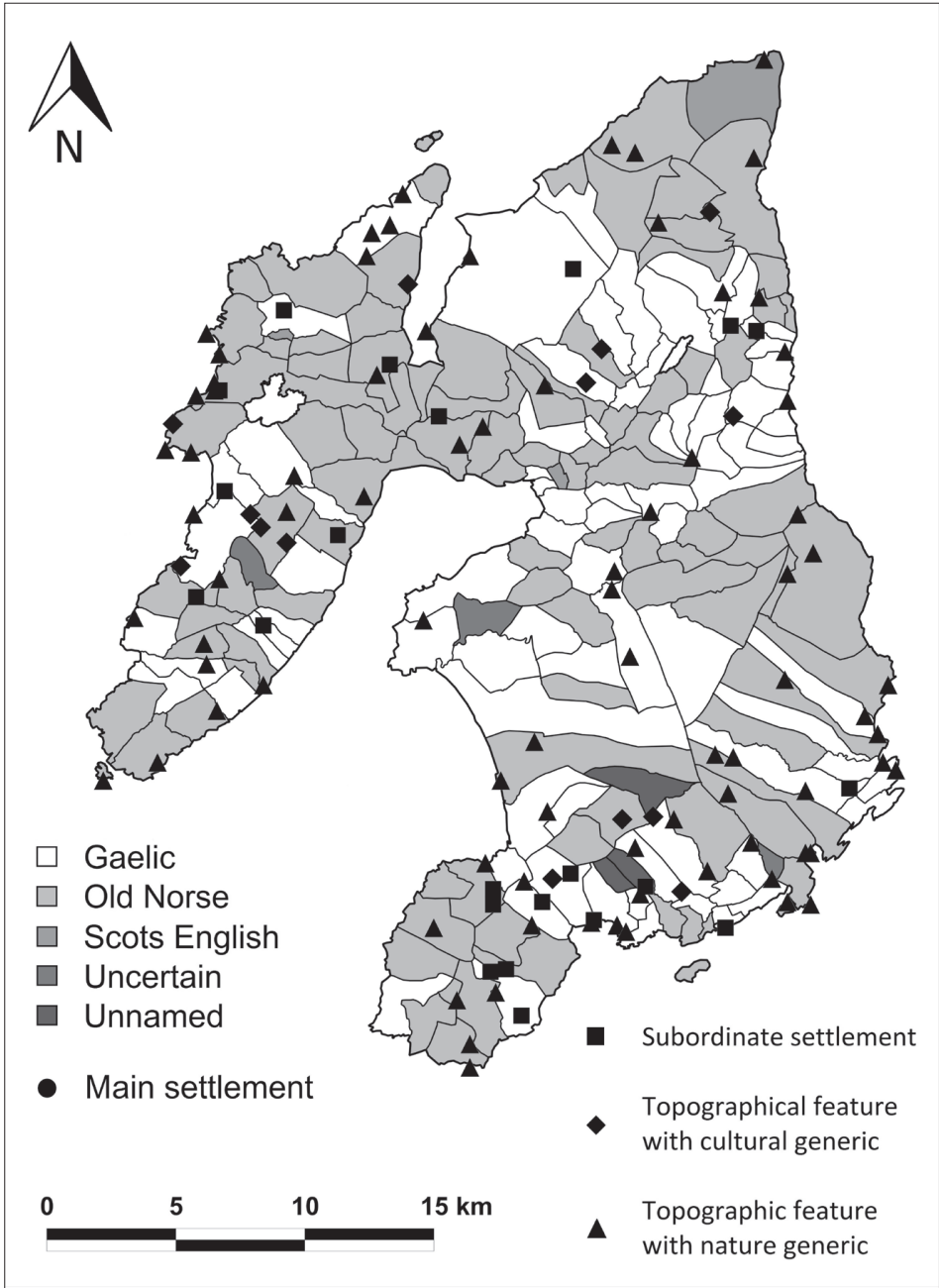67   Macniven 2015, 331.
68   Cox 1988-9.

Figure 3: Distribution of likely Old Norse place-names in Islay (Adapted from Macniven 2015, 54).

this category, including Aird Thòrr-innis (NR 209 676, from Old Norse *Torfnes*, 'Turf Ness' or 'Peary Ness'),[69] Ben Cladville (NR 182 545, from *Glaðafjall*, 'Sunny Hill'),[70] Glean Egedale (NR 333 517, from *Eikadalr*, 'Oak Tree Valley'),[71] Loch Gruinart (NR 285 689, from *Grunnfjörðr*, 'Shallow Firth'),[72] Port Bhoraraic (NR 429 658, from *Borga(r)vík*, 'Fort Bay'),[73] and Eas Forsa (see above), to list but a few.

Until recently, names of this type were routinely described in settlement-historical studies as Gaelic-Norse 'Hybrids'.[74] Although the term is still occasionally used in historical overviews, it is important to stress that it is neither linguistically accurate, nor particularly helpful. Rather than reflecting some strange Norse-Gaelic creole or pidgin language, such as the heavily-accented Irish described as *gib gab* or *gic gac*, said to have been spoken by Norse merchants in tenth-century Ireland, these names are, in fact, formally Gaelic – albeit Gaelic names which have been created from pre-existing Norse material.[75] What their existence confirms is that the latter-day use of Gaelic in Islay supersedes a period when an important part of the settled population spoke Old Norse. With this in mind, it is important to ask just how many pre-Viking Age Gaelic names have survived in Islay. Apart from the name of the island itself, and possibly – although be no means certainly – a few others recorded in documents like the *Senchus fer nAlban*, with its assumed list of districts in Islay, the answer, surprisingly, is none that we can be sure about.[76]

DATING THE GAELIC MATERIAL

It was once argued that the relatively high concentration of the Gaelic generics *baile* (m., 'township, farm'), *cill* (f., 'chapel, church, graveyard'), and *sliabh* (m., 'hillside, slope, mountain') in the Inner Hebrides pointed to their productivity in Dalriadan times, before Gaelic had spread to the Scottish mainland, and long before the arrival of the

---

69   Macniven 2015, 351-52.
70   Ibid., 300-1.
71   Ibid., 154-55.
72   Ibid., 323-24.
73   Ibid., 273.
74   Maceacharna 1976, 82-3; Olson 1983, 134-76.
75   Schulze-Thulin 1996, 111; Downham 2015, 375.
76   Macniven 2015, 81-84.

Vikings.[77] The implication that a significant part of the local namescape had remained unchanged throughout the Middle Ages played a formative role in assumptions of cultural and population continuity, which remain stubbornly engrained. There are, however, good reasons to believe that distribution alone is not a particularly reliable guide to the antiquity of this material. In his investigation of the generic *baile* in nearby Ireland, Liam Price established that the word was used as a simple noun in Irish texts during the pre-Norse period. But it was also clear that its occurrence in place-names was uncommon until the later Middle Ages, when it is likely to have been developed to meet the needs of the ecclesiastical and secular authorities to describe a particular type of settlement, possibly with specific tax or rental status.[78] A similar study of *sliabh* names in the Rhinns of Galloway by Simon Taylor concluded that the concentration of the generic in south-west Scotland could also point to a later antecedence.[79] On Islay, it seems that the widespread distributions of both *baile* and *cill*-names are the results of administrative reforms by Oláfr Guðrøðarson of Man, Somerled MacGillebride, or his son Ranald, such as the introduction of written standards in bookkeeping, or the introduction of the parish system.[80] As can be seen in Figure 4, there is a central clustering of *baile* names around the Lordship centre on Eileann Mòr in Loch Finlaggan. It could be argued, for example, that this points to the apportionment or reclassification of a larger block of landholdings in fairly short order. Whilst the distribution of farm-districts with names based on Gaelic *cill* might appear to be more random, closer analysis of the hinterland of the *cill* farms in terms of their valuation in 'Old Extent' reveals it to be remarkably uniform, with each commanding an area worth approximately 6 quarters, 200 shillings, or 15 merks. [81] It can also be noted in this respect that, although only around 12% of Scotland's traditional parish names build on the element *cill*, it covers all of the Islay examples, including the early attested Kildalton, Killarow, Kilmeny, Kilchoman, and Kilnaughton.[82]

Figure 4: Distribution of Gaelic *baile* (LHS) and *cill* (RHS) in the farm-names

---

77   Nicolaisen 2001, 156-91.
78   Price 1963. See also Flannagan 1978.
79   Taylor 2002.
80   Macniven 2015, 64-69.
81   Ibid., 94-98.
82   Ibid., 69.

shown on Stephen MacDougall's 1749-51 *Map of the Island of Islay* (Adapted from Macniven 2015, 66, 68).

In establishing the age of individual Gaelic place-names in the Hebrides, progress has been made by focusing on aspects of grammar and syntax than distribution patterns. The investigation of syntax has been particularly informative, with names containing forms of the definite article in the medial position, such as Tighandrom (NR 373 461, from Gaelic *Tigh an Droma*, 'House on the Ridge') or Tigh nan Cnoc (NR 354 647, Gaelic for 'House on the Hill'),[83] likely to be later medieval developments. Those with the article in the initial position, such as An Lossit (NR 412 655, from *Losaid*, 'Kneading Trough'), are thought to be even younger.[84] In Islay, names of these types account for about a third of the total Gaelic name-pool, pointing to a significant redevelopment of the inventory in the relatively recent past, and allowing for the large-scale replacement of the island's Viking Age Scandinavian toponymy.

Of the remainder of Islay's Gaelic place-names, it is possible that some are ancient survivals. As with the exploratory names discussed earlier, however, this does not necessarily point to meaningful communication between Norse and native, simply their utility in the exploitation,

83   Macniven 2015, 236-37.
84   Watson 1904, xl-xli; Cox 2002, 111-24; Macniven 2015, 181-82, 273-74.

apportionment, and management of landed resources. A complicating factor in identifying any genuinely ancient material is the succession of onomastically rejuvenating waves of Gaelic-speaking immigration known to have swept over the island since the Viking Age. The most well-known of these are the mid-twelfth century arrival of Somerled MacGillebride from Argyll, the establishment of his sons as rulers of the Hebrides, and the subsequent period of cultural cross-fertilisation with the north of Ireland under the MacDonalds of Dunyvaig and the Glens. But attention should also be drawn to the arrival of the Cawdor Campbells in the seventeenth century, the innovations of the Shawfield Campbells in the eighteenth century, and the associated phases of population expansion, retraction, clearance, and settlement redistribution.[85] It would be surprising indeed if many of the Gaelic place-names recorded in conjunction with these developments are not neologisms, which have replaced by – or been adapted from – Norse precursors. One particularly clear example of this phenomenon is the appearance of the name *Ballemertine* in 1631 (now Ballimartin, NR 370 661, from Gaelic **Baile Mhartain*, 'Martin's Townland'), where it replaces the long-standing local name of *Stainepoll* (from Old Norse **Steinabólstaðr*, 'Stoney Farm' or possibly 'Stein's Farm').[86]

What Does All of This Mean?

Like Jurassic flies trapped in amber, place-names have the capacity to preserve linguistic data, even when their formative language milieu has undergone substantial change, decline, or death. In an area like Islay, where several languages are known to have been used as sequential *linguae francae* over the centuries, the extraction and classification of this data points to a shift from Gaelic to Old Norse and then back to Gaelic again, albeit of a different variety with strong evidence for an Old Norse substrate.[87] Closer analysis of the name material in its topographical, economic, and social contexts hints at the relative social status of the user groups of those languages. The survival of so many Old Norse names *in situ*, covering both settlements and natural features, indicates that long-standing native Gaelic traditions were cast aside by Norse settlers. It also suggests that the new traditions introduced by

---

85 Macniven 2015: 21-26. See also Caldwell 2008; Storrie 2011.
86 Ibid., 249-50.
87 Stewart 2004.

them gained enough acceptance to become implanted in the landscape and preserved locally until their original meanings had been forgotten. It would only have been at some point after this, when the shift from Old Norse to Gaelic was being driven to its inevitable conclusion by relentless waves of prestigious Gaelic-speaking immigrants, that the old names would have required topographical clarification through the addition of appropriately descriptive Gaelic language elements. Although the ratio of Old Norse to Gaelic names in Islay is relatively small in absolute terms, it is nevertheless of key significance that the Norse material is spread across the whole island, and not restricted to discrete parts of it.[88] With historical place-names most often coined by the neighbours of a site, and preserved most effectively by the wider community or 'user groups', it must be assumed that Old Norse became the main language of communication in Islay during the Viking Age. Its occurrence without any clear examples of ancient Gaelic names with Old Norse epexegetic onomastic units points not only to disjuncture in culture and probably also population at the beginning of the Norse period, but a gradual and largely peaceful transition at the other end of the early Middle Ages. From these observations alone, it seems reasonable to conclude that the assumed North-South divide in Scotland's Viking activity is more illusory than real – a reflex of changing circumstances in and around the Irish Sea, the far earlier re-alignment of the Inner Isles to inter-regional ethnic and political norms than their neighbours in the North, and subsequent radical changes in population distribution. And if this degree of change was possible in such a politically and strategically 'central' place as Islay, it is hard to believe that the same was not also true of the smaller islands nearby. Further research with this possibility in mind is likely to yield interesting results.[89]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

A Comparative and Etymological Table of the Names of Farms (or Townlands) in Lewis and Harris and Islay, Thomas F W L, s.a., National Museums Scotland Library, MS 574.

A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides 1772 by Thomas Pennant, Simmons A (ed), 1998, Edinburgh: Birlinn.

---

88   Macniven 2015, 20-22.
89   See, for example, Holliday 2016a; 2016b.

Agreement between Magnus IV. of Norway, King of Mann and the Islands, and the Most Serene King Alexander III. of Scotland. A.D. 1266, in *Monumenta de Insula Manniae or a Collection of National Documents Relating to the Isle of Man, Volume III*, Oliver J R (ed and trans), 1862, Douglas: The Manx Society, 210-17, https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=0R0tAAAAMAAJ, accessed 30 May 2016.

Annals of Ulster, Corpus of Electronic Texts, University College Cork, http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/T100001A/, http://celt.ucc.ie/published/G100001A/, accessed 30 May 2016.

Annals of Inisfallen, Corpus of Electronic Texts, University College Cork, http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100004/, http://celt.ucc.ie/published/G100004/, accessed 30 May 2016.

Chronica Regum Manniae et Insularum, Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles, Broderick G (ed), 2004, Douglas: Manx National Heritage.

Early Sources of Scottish History, A.D. 500 to 1286, Volume Two, Anderson A O (ed and trans), 1922, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, https://archive.org/stream/earlysourcesofsc02ande, accessed 30 May 2016.

Hákonar Saga ins gamla, in *Flateyjarbok: En samling af Norske Konge-Sagaermed Indskudte Mindre Fortællinger om Begivenheder i og Udenfor Norge Samt Annaler, III*, Vigfússon G and Unger C R (eds), 1868 Christiania: P T Mallings Forlasboghandel, 3-236.

Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway, Hollander L M (trans), 1964, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Magnúss saga Berfœtts, in *Heimskringla III*, Aðalbjarnarson B (ed), 1951, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII, Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 210-37.

Tales of Islay: Fact and Folklore, Earl P, s.a., Bowmore: Celtic House.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Barrett, J H 2008, 'The Norse in Scotland', in S Brink and N Price (eds) *The Viking World*. London: Routledge, 411-27.

Borgstrøm, C-H 1940, 'The Dialects of the Outer Hebrides', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* I (sup. vol.), Oslo: Aschehoug.

Broderick G 2013, 'Some Island Names in the Former "Kingdom of the Isles": A Reappraisal', *The Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 7, 1-28.

Brown, C J, B M Shipley, and J J Bibby 1982, *Soil and Land Capability for Agriculture: South-Western Scotland. Handbook to Accompany the 1:250,000 Scale Soil and Land Capability for Agriculture Maps, Sheet 6*, Aberdeen: The Macaulay Institute for Soil Research.

Caldwell, D H 2008, *Islay: The Land of the Lordship*, Edinburgh: Birlinn.

Canmore, https://canmore.org.uk/, accessed 30 May 2016.

Charles-Edwards, T 2006, *The Chronicle of Ireland – Volume I: Introduction, Text*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Christensen, V and J Kousgård-Sørensen 1972, *Stednavneforskning 1*, Copenhagen: Universitetsforlaget i København.

Costain-Russell, R 2015, 'The Reigns of Guðröðr and Rögnvaldr, 1153-1229', in S Duffy and H Mytum (eds), *A New History of the Isle of Man. Volume III: The Medieval Period 1000-1406*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 79-96.

Cowan, E J 2015, 'The Last Kings of Man, 1229-1265', in S Duffy and H Mytum (eds), *A New History of the Isle of Man. Volume III: The Medieval Period 1000-1406*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 97-117.

Cox, R A V 1988-9, 'Questioning the Value and Validity of the Term 'Hybrid' in Hebridean Place-Name Study', *Nomina* 12, 1-9.

Cox, R A V 1994, 'Descendents of Norse Bólstaðr?: A Re-examination of the Lineage of Bost & Co.', in J R Baldwin (ed), *Peoples and Settlement in North-West Ross*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 43-76.

Cox, R A V 2002, *The Gaelic Place-Names of Carloway, Lewis: Their Structure and Significance*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Darling, F F 1955, *West Highland Survey*, London: Oxford University Press.

Downham, C 2007, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to AD 1014*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press.

Downham, C 2015 'Coastal Communities and Diaspora Identities in Viking Age Ireland', in C Gerrard and G Thomas (eds), *Maritime Societies of the Viking and Medieval World*, Leeds, Maney Publishing, 369-83.

Flanagan, D 1978, '*Baile*', *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-Name Society* 1, 8-13.

Gammeltoft, P 2001, *The Place-Name Element Bólstaðr in the North Atlantic Area*, Copenhagen: Institut for Navneforskning, Det Humanistiske Fakultet, Københavns Universitet.

Gammeltoft, P 2004, 'Scandinavian-Gaelic Contacts: Can Place-Names and Place-Name Elements Be Used as a Source for Contact-Linguistic Research?', *Nowele* 44, 51-90.

Gammeltoft, P 2006, 'Scandinavian Influence on Hebridean Island Names', in P Gammeltoft and B Jørgensen (eds), *Names through the Looking-Glass. Festschrift in Honour of Gillian Fellows-Jensen, July 5th 2006*. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 53–84.

Gammeltoft, P 2007 'Scandinavian Naming-Systems in the Hebrides: A Way of Understanding how Scandinavians were in Contact with Gaels and Picts?', in B Ballin Smith et al. (eds), *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, Leiden: Brill, 479-95.

Haswell-Smith, H 1996, *The Scottish Islands*, Edinburgh: Canongate.

Henderson, G 1910, *The Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland*, Glasgow: J Maclehose and Sons.

Holliday, J 2016a, *Tiree Place-Names*, http://www.tireeplacenames.org/, accessed 30 May 2016.

Holliday, J 2016b, *Longships on the Sand: Scandinavian and Medieval Settlement on the Island of Tiree: A Place-Name Study.* Sarinish: An Iodhlann Press.

Jennings, A and A Kruse 2005, 'An Ethnic Enigma – Norse, Pict and Gael', in A Mortensen and S V Arge (eds), *Viking and Norse in the North Atlantic, Selected Papers from the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress, 19–30 July 2001*, Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, 251-63.

Jennings, A and A Kruse 2009a, 'One Coast – Three Peoples: Names and Ethnicity in the Scottish West during the Early Viking Period', in A Woolf (ed), *Scandinavian Scotland – Twenty Years After: The Proceedings of a Day Conference Held on 19 February 2007*, St Andrews: The Committee for Dark Age Studies, University of St Andrews, 75-102.

Jennings, A and A Kruse 2009b, 'From Dál Riata to the Gall-Ghàidheil', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 5, 123-49.

Karlsson, G 2000, *Iceland's 1100 Years: History of a Marginal Society.* Reykjavík: Mál og Menning.

Kruse, A 2005, 'Explorers, Raiders and Settlers: The Norse Impact upon Hebridean Place-Names', in P Gammeltoft, C Hough, and D Waugh (eds), *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names.* Lerwick: NORNA, SPNS, and SNSBI, 141-56.

MacBain, A 1922, *Place Names, Highlands & Islands of Scotland*, Stirling: Eneas Mackay, https://archive.org/details/cu31924028080533, accessed 30 May 2016.

Maceacherna, D 1976, *The Lands of the Lordship: The Romance of Islay's Names*, Port Charlotte: Argyll Reproductions.

Macniven, A 2013, 'Modelling Viking Migration to the Inner Hebrides', *Journal of North Atlantic Studies*, Special Volume 4, 3-18.

Macniven, A 2015, *The Vikings in Islay: The Place of Names in Hebridean Settlement History*, Edinburgh: John Donald.

McWee, R 2001, *The Islay Cultural Database*, Edinburgh: Private Publication.

Nicolaisen, W F H 1969, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles: Some Place Name Evidence', *Scottish Historical Review* 48, 6-17.

Nicolaisen, W F H 1977-80, 'Early Scandinavian Naming in the Northern and Western Isles', *Northern Scotland* 3, 105-21.

Nicolaisen, W F H 2001, *Scottish Place-Names: Their Study and Significance*, rev. edn, Edinburgh: John Donald.

Nieke, M 1984, 'Settlement Patterns in the Atlantic Province of Scotland in the 1st millennium AD: A Study of Argyll', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow.

Ó Corráin, D 1998a, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the Ninth Century', *Chronicon* 2:3, 1-45.

Ó Corráin, D 1998b, 'Viking Ireland – Afterthoughts', in H B Clarke, M Ní Mhaonaigh et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, Dublin: Four Courts, 421-52.

Oftedal, M 1956, *The Gaelic of Leurbost, Isle of Lewis*, Oslo: Aschehoug.

Olsen, M 1934, *Hvad Våre Stedsnavn Lærer Oss*. Oslo: Stenersen.

Olson, D 1983 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', unpublished Hovedoppgave (Master's) thesis. University of Oslo.

Pálsson, H 1996, 'Towards a Glossary of Norse Place Names in Lewis and Harris', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 17, 314-24.

Price, L 1963, 'A Note on the Use of the Word *Baile* in Place-Names', *Celtica* VI, 119-26.

Rygh, O 1898, *Norske Gaardnavne: Forord og Inledning*, Kristiania: W.C. Fabritius & Sønners.

Sandnes, B 2003, 'Fra Starafjall til Starling Hill: Dannelse og Utwikiling av Norrønne Stedsnavne på Orknøyene', PhD thesis, Norges Teknisk-Naturvetenskapelige Universitet, Trondheim, http://www.spns.org.uk/Starafjall.pdf (translated), accessed 30 May 2016.

Schulze-Thulin, B 1996, 'Old Norse in Ireland', in P S Ureland and I Clarkson (eds), *Language Contact across the North Atlantic: Proceedings of the Working Groups Held at University College, Galway (Ireland), 1992 and the University of Göteborg (Sweden), 1993*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 83-113.

Sellar, W D H 2000 'Hebridean Sea Kings: The Successors of Somerled, 1164–1316', in E J Cowan and R A McDonald (eds), *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Middle Ages*, East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 187-218.

Smith, B 2001, 'The Picts and the Martyrs, or did the Vikings Kill the Native Population of Orkney and Shetland?', *Northern Studies* 36, 7-32.

Stewart, T W 2004, 'Lexical Imposition: Old Norse Vocabulary in Scottish Gaelic', *Diachronica* 21:2, 393-420.

Storrie, M 2011, *Islay: Biography of an Island*, 3rd edn, Isle of Islay: The Oa Press.

Sveas Andersen, P 1991, 'Norse settlement in the Hebrides: What Happened to the Natives and What Happened to the Norse Immigrants?' in I Wood and N Lund (eds), *People and Places in Northern Europe, 500–1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 131-47.

Taylor, S 2002, 'The Element "Sliabh" and the Rhinns of Galloway or Place-names and History: A Case Study', *History Scotland* 2:6, 49-52.

Thurneysen, R, D A Binchy et al. (eds) 1975, *Grammar of Old Irish*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Watson, W J 1904, *Place Names of Ross and Cromarty*, Inverness: Northern Counties Printing and Publishing.

Vésteinsson, O 1998, 'Patterns of Settlement in Iceland: A Study in Pre-History', *Saga Book* 25, 1-29.