WINNER OF THE MAGNUS MAGNUSSON ESSAY PRIZE (2020)

Why Are There Very Few Scandinavian Place-names in Ireland?¹

Peter J Church

AN ADDITION of knowledge on Holy Ireland was the motto adopted by P W Joyce for his seminal nineteenth-century work, which is regarded as the first comprehensive survey of the origins and history of Irish place-names.² When he examined the Scandinavian influence on these place-names, Joyce concluded, 'we have also Danish names, but they are so extremely few that I do not think it necessary to devote a separate chapter to them'.³ In this paper, I propose to investigate both the validity of this statement and a range of potential reasons for the alleged scarcity of Scandinavian place-names in Ireland.

Place-names are invaluable as 'short but tightly composed narratives', unveiling information about the past which can challenge, reinforce or supplement archaeological investigations and the scholarly interpretation of primary literary sources.⁴ Hence, an assessment of how the Scandinavian *onomasticon* influenced the extant place-names of Ireland can provide compelling evidence pertaining to the chronology of the Scandinavian settlement, the nature of the colonisation, and its sphere and duration of influence.⁵

Laurence Flanagan describes the process of uncovering the etymology behind many Irish place-names as similar to that of an archaeologist since 'a blanket of anglicisation covers them'.⁶ This necessity for academic rigour is reiterated by Magnus Oftedal, who notes the complexity caused

¹ This paper is dedicated to Professor Stefan Brink, who was the inspiration in encouraging me to explore this subject, which he described as extremely challenging, but could constitute a valuable addition to scholarly research.

² Joyce 1883

³ Joyce 1883, 167

⁴ MacNiven 2015, 11

⁵ Brink 2016

⁶ Flanagan and Flanagan 1994, 2

by the adaptation of a Scandinavian element, such as a personal name, into Irish then later into English.⁷ In contrast, Gillian Fellows-Jensen regards the anglicisation by the Anglo-Normans, from their twelfth and thirteenthcentury settlement in Ireland, as helpful in making the identification of place-names with Scandinavian derivatives relatively straightforward.⁸

Before exploring the prevalence of Scandinavian place-names in Ireland, it is important to clarify some of the terminology which will be used in this paper. The words 'Scandinavian', 'Norse', and 'Viking' are not necessarily interchangeable. Since the Irish chronicles generate semantic confusion around the ethnic identities of the raiders, it is useful to have recourse to a generic term such as 'Viking'.⁹ However, as *vikingr* is defined as 'pirate' or 'sea-rover', this word is accurate in describing the Scandinavian raiders, but does not encompass the settlers, merchants, and womenfolk. 'Norse' has connotations of northern, and hence Norwegian. Consequently, I propose to deploy the word 'Scandinavian' as a universal term for the raiders, merchants, and settlers. By Scandinavian place-names, I mean Old Norse ('ON'), which the speakers of that language called *donsk tunga*.¹⁰ According to Oftedal, the majority of these Scandinavian place-names in Ireland are Norwegian in origin, as evidenced by the distinct vocabulary and phonetic development; supporting the conviction of Howard Clarke and Ruth Johnson that the majority of Scandinavian raiders, merchants, and settlers 'are likely to have been of Norwegian stock'.¹¹

The paper will be divided into two sections; with the first section focusing on identifying the extant place-names of Scandinavian origin, which I believe can be categorised into coastal, urban, and a small number with heathen connotations. I will investigate the view that these place-names are generally clustered around those coastal Viking *longphuirt* ('ship-fortresses') established before 900, which became major Scandinavian towns, namely Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, and Wexford.¹² These coastal towns, established as commercial hubs, are celebrated by scholars, such as Clare Downham, as Scandinavia's most enduring legacy to Ireland.¹³ In the second section, I will explore a range of potential reasons why there are so few Scandinavian place-names in Ireland, when contrasted with the proliferation of these place-names in the Scottish archipelagos and

⁷ Oftedal 1976, 127

⁸ Fellows-Jensen 2015, 268

⁹ Downham 2007, *xv*

¹⁰ Greene 1976, 75

¹¹ Oftedal 1976, 126; Clarke and Johnson 2015, 16

¹² Fellows-Jensen 2015, 274-82

¹³ Downham, unpublished PhD thesis, unnumbered pages

northern mainland, the north west of Britain around Cumbria and the Isle of Man, and the region of eastern England known during the Viking Age as Danelaw.

Scandinavian place-names in Ireland

The place-name archivist, Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig, calculates that there are less than forty extant place-names in Ireland of Scandinavian origin, many of which are adaptations of Irish toponyms.¹⁴ Similarly, Flanagan identifies around fifty, which he considers surprisingly few in the context of two centuries of close contact through raiding, pillaging, and trading.¹⁵ As illustrated in Figure 1 below, which consolidates the combined research of Mac Giolla Easpaig, Flanagan, and Fellows-Jensen, where these are prevalent it is indicative of a substantial Scandinavian settlement through which place-names became deeply embedded, rather than the ephemeral presence of a limited warrior or trading elite. By way of illustration, there is a cluster of these place-names around the Dublin hinterland, known in the Icelandic sagas as *Dyflinnar skiði* ('Dublinshire'), which was the first Scandinavian settlement to develop an urban character, becoming a town from the mid-tenth century.¹⁶

As evident from Figure 1, the extant Scandinavian place-names are almost exclusively located in coastal locations, primarily in the eastern and southern regions of Leinster and Munster, with a significant proportion of insular origin.¹⁷ These include Ireland's Eye, which is an English place-name for a small island in Dublin Bay, where, according to the *Annals of Ulster*, the Scandinavians took refuge in 902 when they were driven from the mainland.¹⁸ The place-name has evolved through folk-etymology derived from ON *ey* ('island'). Dalkey was another island base for Scandinavian raiders, where, it is recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, they also held captives.¹⁹ Its Old Irish ('OI') place-name *Deilginis Cualann* ('thorn island of Cuala'), first mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster* of 733, was borrowed into ON through the first element *dalk* ('dagger') with a second element *ey*.²⁰ Further examples of Scandinavian place-names of insular origin include Fastnet from ON *Hvasstonn-ey* ('sharp-tooth island'), Haulbowline

¹⁴ Mac Giolla Easpaig 2009, 81

¹⁵ Flanagan 1994, 125-26

¹⁶ Eddison 1930, 6

¹⁷ Fellows-Jensen 2015, 274-77

¹⁸ Annals of Ulster, 902.2; Fellows-Jensen 2015, 275

¹⁹ Annals of the Four Masters, 938.5

²⁰ Annals of Ulster, 733.11

from ON Ál-boling ('eel dwelling'), and Howth derived from ON *Hofði* ('headland linked to the mainland by a narrow neck of land').²¹

The urban place-names of Scandinavian descent are important as they signify the development of primary areas of settlement during the Viking Age in Ireland.²² Several of these place-names contain the ON element *fjord* ('fjord' or 'inlet'), such as Waterford, which is derived from ON *Veðrafjorðr* ('windy fjord or inlet'). Waterford was an important Scandinavian settlement in the ninth and tenth centuries as it controlled access to three rivers leading to the heartlands of Munster and Leinster.²³ Carlingford is the anglicised version of *Kerlingafjorðr* ('witches' fjord'), with the ON first element *kerling* ('old woman' or 'hag') used figuratively to reflect the three mountain tops facing the lough known locally as 'The Three Nuns'.²⁴



Figure 1: Scandinavian place-names in Ireland²⁵

- 23 Downham 2005, 77
- 24 Oftedal 1976, 133
- 25 Hadcock 1964; Flanagan and Flanagan 1994; Mac Giolla Easpaig 2002; Fellows-Jensen 2015

²¹ Fellows-Jensen 2015, 274-77

²² Fellows-Jensen 2015, 277-81

Figure 1: Scandinavian place-names in Ireland ²⁶		
Coastal and urban place-names ²⁷		ON and OI hybrids ²⁸
24. 25. 26. 27. 28.	Dalkey Island Wicklow Arklow Cahore Point Wexford Selsker Greenore Point Tuskar Rock Carnsore Point Saltee Islands Waterford Terrysstang Helvick Foaty Island Dunkettle Haulbowline Kinsale Harbour Fastnet Rock Whiddy Island Dursey Island The Skerries Great Blasket Island Smerwick Harbour	A Ballytrustan OI baile + ON name Porstein B Baldoyle OI baile + OI word Dubgaill ('dark foreigners') C Ballyfermot OI baile + ON name Pormóð D Balally OI baile + ON name Porkil F Ballygunner OI baile + ON name Gannar G Ballynagaill OI baile + OI word Gaill ('foreigners') H Ballyhetterick OI baile + ON name Sitric

Leixlip is one of very few surviving Scandinavian place-names located inland, and is indicative of the extent of the Dublin hinterland stretching twenty kilometres to the east. The origin of the place-name is the ON *Lax-hleypa* ('salmon's course'), illustrating the significance for the community of fishing in the River Liffey.

An intriguing collection of place-names, detailed separately in Figure 1, are hybrids with the OI generic element *baile* ('settlement' or 'homestead')

27 Flanagan and Flanagan 1994; Mac Giolla Easpaig 2002; Fellows-Jensen 2015

²⁶ Hadcock 1964; Flanagan and Flanagan 1994; Mac Giolla Easpaig 2002; Fellows-Jensen 2015

²⁸ Fellows-Jensen 2015, 282; Griffiths 2010, 50

compounded with an ON personal name.²⁹ Fellows-Jensen argues that these place-names must imply that the settlements were controlled by Scandinavians.³⁰ However, according to Liam Price, these place-names are entirely Irish in structure, representing speakers of Irish who adopted Scandinavian personal names, based on his conviction that no *baile* name could have existed before 1150.³¹ Consequently, there is very limited place-name evidence that the Scandinavian hinterlands were divided up between the king's retinue to reward loyalty and support in a similar manner to Danelaw.

Place-names identified in the contemporary Irish chronicles reflecting the practice of Scandinavian heathenism in Ireland are no longer extant.³² One example is *Caill Tomair*, derived from the OI *caill* ('forest') and the OI spelling of Þórr, meaning 'Thor's forest'. The *Annals of Inisfallen* reports in 1000 that the Munstermen 'invaded Áth Cliath, set fire to it, and burned it ... and they burned Caill Tomair as firewood'.³³ *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* also refers to this place during the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, when a soldier describes the sound of warfare as 'not louder in my ears would be the echoes of blows from Tomar's Wood'; and later he informs King Brian Bóraime the battlefield appears to him 'as if Tomar's Wood was on fire'.³⁴

In summary, my onomastic research has reinforced the conviction that there are comparatively few place-names in Ireland of Scandinavian origin, compared with the abundance of place-names in other areas of settlement during the Viking Age. The crucial question, therefore, is why this influence on Irish nomenclature was so limited when measured against the wider impact that the Scandinavian raiders and settlers had on Irish society, culture, and politics.³⁵

Reasons for the low number

I propose to explore several over-arching themes in considering the relative absence of Scandinavian place-names in Ireland: the idea that Scandinavian interaction with Ireland was based on 'elite transfer' rather than 'predatory migration'; the divided and warring nature of the hostile Irish tribes; the chronology of Scandinavian raiding, trading, and settling in

²⁹ Griffiths 2010, 50

³⁰ Fellows-Jensen 2015, 282

³¹ Price 1963

³² Sheldon 2009

³³ Annals of Inisfallen, 1000

³⁴ Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh, cxiii

³⁵ Lucas 1966

Ireland; the fragmented characteristic of the feuding Scandinavian raiders; and the fascination of the medieval Irish people with the etymology of their indigenous place-names.

The first proposed reason for the lack of place-names, considered in order though not necessarily in precedence, relates to what I would categorise as the 'three spheres of contact' in the North Atlantic and Irish Sea regions, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. This argument is anchored on the theory that Ireland does not align with the predatory migration model prevalent across much of Eastern England, Scotland, and the Northern Isles, since the distance from Scandinavia, and the corresponding economic factors pertaining to the cost of sea-bound travel to Ireland when weighed against the prospective rewards, encouraged elite transfer.

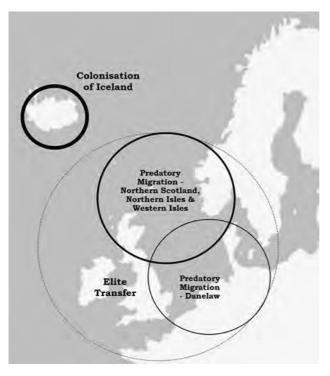


Figure 2: Map of the three spheres of contact - predatory migration, colonisation, and elite transfer

The low number of Scandinavian place-names in Ireland is best understood when it is contrasted with the proliferation of place-names in the spheres of contact labelled in Figure 2 as predatory migration. Firstly, there is virtually a complete absence of Pictish place-names in Orkney, and this monopoly of Scandinavian place-names is mirrored in Shetland.³⁶ This has led many historians to advocate a genocide theory, through which the indigenous populations of Orkney and Shetland were obliterated around 800 \pm 20 by colonists from Norway through the clearest example of ethnic cleansing in the history of the British Isles.³⁷ There remains ongoing debate between the war and peace camps, but it is clear that by the 870s the Northern Isles were under the control of the jarls of Møre who established sea bases for raiding and re-created privileges they had lost in Norway during the reign of Haraldr *hárfagri.*³⁸

Territorial control was extended to northern Scotland, according to the legendary account in *Orkneyinga Saga*, when Sigurðr *inn ríki* conquered 'the whole of Caithness and a large part of Argyll, Moray and Ross'.³⁹ The incremental growth of Scandinavian influence in the north is reflected in the proliferation of place-names with ON elements such as *staðir* ('dwelling place' or 'farm'), *setr* ('dwelling'), and *bólstaðr*, representing the sub-division of *staðir* farms into smaller units.⁴⁰

A similar picture of predatory migration is found in the Outer Hebrides where 'the Norse linguistic broom was particularly effective'.⁴¹ Scandinavian place-names are the oldest extant names with no continuity from the pre-Scandinavian settlement period. This discontinuity in place-names links the nomenclature with the Northern Isles and suggests the Outer Hebrides also witnessed expulsion, murder or enslavement of the indigenous peoples.

Scandinavian settlement in the eastern England region, also indicated in Figure 2 as predatory migration, resulted from the widespread immigration of Danish people following the aftermath of the invasion by the Great Heathen Army in 865.⁴² King Alfred negotiated a treaty with the Danish King, Guðrum, which ceded territory in the east of England called Danelaw. The subsequent re-conquest did not end Danish occupation or eradicate cultural influences including place-names. Three main categories of place-names dominate this region, derived from the ON elements *by* and *thorp*, plus names in which an ON personal name serves as a prefix for the Old English *tūn*.

However, south of the Inner Hebrides we begin to see a dilution of Scandinavian influence in place-naming, with the existence of topographical

³⁶ Scott and Ritchie 2009, vii

³⁷ Smith 2001

³⁸ Crawford 2013, 80-144

³⁹ Orkneyinga Saga, 5

⁴⁰ Nicolaisen 1976, 113-21

⁴¹ Kruse and Jennings 2009, 17-40

⁴² Gelling 1978, 215-40

elements relating to primary settlement, but hardly any habitative elements indicating the division of farms, which suggests by the secondary settlement there was already integration with the natives and adoption of their language.⁴³ This reflects the overlap, illustrated in Figure 2, between predatory migration and elite transfer through which the distance from Norway and Denmark, with associated logistical and economic factors, influenced a different type of settlement.

Therefore, I believe it is the elite transfer model which is more representative of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland, with the distance and high cost of sea-travel influencing more transient and limited immigration. There was a pre-existing structure of slaves, wives, and livestock that the high-ranking Scandinavian leaders could adopt, rather than incurring the prohibitive cost of importing a large entourage. Hence, the Scandinavian elite may rapidly have become socially, culturally, and linguistically integrated rather than eradicating the indigenous population. This aligns with Oftedal's argument that the Scandinavian settlers in the Scottish archipelagos were farmers and fishermen, but those in Ireland were merchants, mercenaries, and sailors who established trading towns and never ventured far from the coast.⁴⁴ Consequently, elite transfer would have had a nominal impact on place-naming, particularly inland, explaining why the majority of the extant Scandinavian place-names are coastal.

It is unlikely that transient Scandinavians would have been able to establish their nomenclature in a hostile and unreceptive environment.⁴⁵ The Ireland that greeted the Scandinavian raiders was divided and warring.⁴⁶ The country was fragmented into a network of *túatha* ('kingdoms'), over-kingdoms, and provincial kingdoms as illustrated in Figure 3 below.⁴⁷ As such, there was no concept of a collective national defence against the foreign invaders. The Irish dynasties continued to fight amongst themselves throughout the Viking Age. The Scandinavians were in essence another threat to be crushed, or harnessed as mercenaries, by Irish over-kings and provincial kings in the defence of their realms. The political environment was volatile and inherently unstable, with shifting allegiances and constant battles for succession. For the Scandinavian raiders, there was no central administrative power to seize or usurp.⁴⁸ However, there is clearly a tension, identified by Donnchadh Ó Corráin,

⁴³ Kruse and Jennings 2009, 17-40

⁴⁴ Oftedal 1976, 125

⁴⁵ MacNiven 2015, 14

⁴⁶ Griffiths 2010, 19

⁴⁷ Mac Niocaill 1972, 28-30

⁴⁸ Ó Corráin 2015, 497

between the 'Hydra-headed nature of tribal Irish society', and the rationale that states weakened by a lack of central governance are prime opportunities for conquest.⁴⁹



Figure 3: Irish provinces and dynasties in the Viking Age⁵⁰

Furthermore, the Scandinavian attacks potentially inspired a sense of nationalistic pride, unity, and fervour which had not previously existed in the regional loyalties to over-kings.⁵¹ The Irish were frequently victorious in battles against the Scandinavians. For example, in the tenth century there were at least twenty-five battles between the Irish tribes and the Dublin Scandinavians, of

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Downham 2007, xxi; Hadcock 1964

⁵¹ Binchy 1962, 131

which the Irish are reported in the chronicles to have won fifteen including the crushing victory at the Battle of Tara in 980.⁵² Even allowing for the bias of the Irish chroniclers, this suggests it was a tough challenge for the Scandinavians to establish any territorial foothold outside of the coastal strongholds, which must, in part, explain the virtual absence of inland Scandinavian place-names. This is particularly evident in the northern territories, where both the military force and the shrewd diplomacy of the Northern Uí Néill were particularly effective in resisting Scandinavian infiltration.

The chronology of Scandinavian interaction with Ireland is a further important factor in understanding the scarcity of Scandinavian place-names. The first recorded raid on Ireland occurred in 795 with 'the burning of Rechru by the Heathens'.⁵³ The early raids, targeting insular and coastal monastic settlements, continued on a 'hit and run' basis for the next quarter of a century.54 These Scandinavian raiders would probably have comprised small, independent crews who attacked and retreated at pace, to the refuge of temporary island bases.⁵⁵ After the first wave of attacks, Scandinavians penetrated inland along major waterways establishing semi-permanent bases for over-wintering and raiding.⁵⁶ However, within fifty years of the first raids, the Scandinavians had become deeply embroiled in Irish secular politics as both mercenaries and stakeholders. Ó Corráin acknowledges that, from the second half of the ninth century, the main contribution of the Scandinavians in Ireland was acting 'as allies of the greater Irish kings'.⁵⁷ From the 850s, groups of mixed Gaelic and Scandinavian descent are evident in the chronicles, known as the Gall-goidil.58 Dublin was drawn into Leinster politics; and the Scandinavians of Waterford became embroiled with the over-kings of Munster.⁵⁹ Hence the Scandinavian kings generated their wealth from joint campaigns with Irish tribes, plundering the major church settlements for secular goods and captives, rather than establishing new settlements; and they became embedded in the Irish political and cultural landscape, rather than creating new place-names.⁶⁰

In 980, the Battle of Tara symbolised the end of Scandinavian Dublin

⁵² Clarke and Johnson 2015, 24

⁵³ Annals of Ulster, 795.3

⁵⁴ Ó Corráin 1972, 81-2

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Griffiths 2010, 27-33

⁵⁷ Ó Corráin 1972, 94

⁵⁸ Downham 2007

⁵⁹ Downham 2005

⁶⁰ Church 2020, 58-75

and 'the Babylonian captivity of Ireland'.⁶¹ Máel Sechnaill had inflicted a 'red slaughter' on the Scandinavians, who were forced to accede to all his demands, including the return of Irish hostages, the payment of treasure, and the release of Uí Néill lands from tribute. By the eleventh century, all the major Scandinavian settlements of Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, and Wexford fell directly or indirectly under Irish rule.⁶² Hence Scandinavian influence on Ireland, and perhaps correspondingly on Irish place-names, subsided at a stage prior to the introduction and crystallisation of written standards and formal records.⁶³

Another aspect which may have contributed towards the lack of placenames is the fact that the Scandinavian raiders and settlers were not a homogeneous force. The Irish chronicles variously deploy OI words such as *Finngaill* ('fair foreigners') and *Dubgaill* ('dark foreigners') to distinguish between the rival groups. In the lengthy introduction to his translation of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, James Henthorn Todd documents the traditional scholarly view the *Finngaill* were fair-haired foreigners who descended from Norway and Sweden, in contrast to the dark-haired *Dubgaill* from Denmark.⁶⁴ However, modern historians such as Downham and Griffiths differentiate based on chronology, with the dark-haired Scandinavians arriving as a second wave of attackers, taking control of Dublin from 852 under the leadership of Ívarr, and supported by his kinsmen Óláfr, Ásl, and Hálfdan.⁶⁵

It is evident from the chronicles that the Scandinavians in Ireland were fragmented and often in bloody conflict. There was prolonged warfare between the rival groups of Dublin and Limerick for control of the waterways to enhance their political and economic interests.⁶⁶ Waterford became embroiled in this rivalry and was probably controlled by the Dublin Scandinavians until they were expelled by the Irish in 902, returning to Ireland in 914 under Rognvaldr.⁶⁷ In 937, the Dublin Scandinavians decisively defeated the army of Limerick, capturing its king, Óláfr, and breaking up his fleet.⁶⁸ Then in 953, Óláfr *Cuarán*, King of Dublin, attacked Waterford in alliance with Túathal, Irish over-king of Leinster.⁶⁹ If these hostile rivalries were insufficient distraction, there were regular overseas campaigns in Scotland, York, and Northumbria

⁶¹ Chronicum Scotorum, 980

⁶² Ó Corráin 2008, 432

⁶³ MacNiven 2015, 22

⁶⁴ Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh, xxxi

⁶⁵ Annals of Ulster, 852.3; Downham 2007, xvii-xx

⁶⁶ Annals of Ulster, 851.3

⁶⁷ Downham 2005, 85-7; Griffiths 2010, 36-7

⁶⁸ Annals of the Four Masters, 935.16

⁶⁹ Annals of the Four Masters, 951.22

which diverted attention, manpower, and resources from establishing settlements and corresponding place-names in Ireland.⁷⁰ Furthermore, during the 'forty years rest' in Ireland from 874 until 914, when there was a material reduction in Scandinavian raiding, it is likely many of the Scandinavians were distracted by the colonisation of Iceland as reflected in Figure 2.⁷¹

Finally, it is illuminating to note that topographical and ecclesiastical names were well-embedded in Irish nomenclature by the arrival of the Scandinavians.⁷² The medieval Irish had an abiding interest in the etymology of the names in their landscape and even created an eleventh-century literary work devoted to these names, *Dindshenchas* ('the lore of notable places').⁷³ Joyce highlights the vivid perceptiveness of the Irish nation, which he claims was sensitive to the inherent beauty of the countryside, when suggesting the Irish people were 'full of imagination to a degree perhaps beyond those of most other countries'.⁷⁴ Joyce believed this appreciation of landscape influenced place-names at a comparatively early stage compared with other nations across Europe. This was reflected in descriptive place-name elements such as OI *caein* ('pleasant' or 'delightful') found in OI *Coill-chaein*, anglicised Killykeen, ('delightful wood'); and, OI *alainn* ('bright' or 'lovely') found in OI *Doire-álainn*, anglicised Derraulin, ('pretty oak wood').

From the days of St. Patrick, the Irish Church was dominant in its influence over religious life and secular politics.⁷⁵ Consequently, OI words denoting differing ranks of ecclesiastics also influenced Irish place-naming: such as the OI element *clérech* ('clergyman') found in Farrancleary near Cork; OI *epscop* ('bishop') found in Monaspick in Wicklow; and, OI *manach* ('monk') found in Knocknamanagh ('hill of the monks of Cork').

Concluding observations

Scandinavian fleets arrived in Ireland on a similar scale to those which attacked Scotland, England, and continental Europe during the Viking Age; and yet the Scandinavians failed to impose themselves to the same extent on the Irish onomasticon, as evidenced by the absence of place-names with an extant total in the region of fifty.⁷⁶ In this paper, I have examined some of the reasons which may have contributed towards this comparatively low number

⁷⁰ Downham 2007, 11-62

⁷¹ Ó Corráin 2008

⁷² Joyce 1883, 62-74

⁷³ Mac Giolla Easpaig 2009, 80

⁷⁴ Joyce 1883, 62

⁷⁵ Joyce 1883, 90-7

⁷⁶ Ó Corráin 2015, 498

of Scandinavian place-names in Ireland. The economic factors associated with the high cost of immigration by sea could have been manifested in an elite transfer of Scandinavian leaders into Irish society with a strong emphasis on trading from coastal strongholds. The Irish proved fierce adversaries and the Scandinavians appear to have lacked the resources or the inclination for prolonged warfare to conquer a fragmented country. Consequently, the Scandinavians in Ireland focused on operating as merchants and mercenaries when they were not distracted by the in-fighting between hostile factions or raiding overseas in Scotland and England. Finally, as the Scandinavian elite became deeply entrenched in Irish politics, they discovered a strong affinity among their new allies with the values of their ancient OI place-names associated with important religious and secular symbolism.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Annala Rioghachta Eireann, Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616. 2nd edn., 7 vols., O'Donovan J (trans), 1856, Dublin, available at https://celt.ucc.ie//, accessed 31 October 2019
- Chronicum Scotorum: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs, from the Earliest Times to AD 1135, with a Supplement containing the Events from AD 1114 to AD 1150, Hennessy W (trans), 1866, London: Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores 46, available at https://celt.ucc.ie//, accessed 27 October 2019
- Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill; Or, The Invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsemen, 1867, Henthorn Todd J (trans), 2012 ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- *Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney*, Pálsson H and Edwards P (trans), 1981, London: Penguin Classics
- The Annals of Clonmacnoise, Being Annals of Ireland from the Earliest Period to AD 1408, Murphy D (trans), 1896, Dublin: The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Franklin Classics facsimile reprint
- *The Annals of Inisfallen (MS. Rawlinson B 503),* Mac Airt S (ed), 1977, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
- *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131),* Mac Airt S and Mac Niocaill G (ed), 1983, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

Secondary Sources

- Binchy, D 1962, 'The passing of the old order', Proceedings of the International Congress of Celtic Studies, 119-32
- Brink, S 2016, 'Transferred Names and Analogy in Name-formation', in C Hough, *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, 2018 ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 158-68

- Church, P J 2020, What was the nature of the Viking raids on Irish Church Settlements During the first Viking Age, unpublished MLitt thesis, University of the Highlands and Islands
- Clarke, H and Johnson, R 2015, 'Ireland and the Viking Age', in H Clarke and R Johnson (ed), *The Vikings in Ireland and Beyond: Before and After the Battle of Clontarf*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1-24
- Crawford, B 2013, *The Northern Earldoms: Orkney and Caithness from AD 870 to 1470,* Edinburgh: Birlin
- Crawford, I 1981, 'War or peace: Viking Colonization in the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland Reviewed', in H Bekker-Nielsen, P Foote and O Olsen, *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress*, Odense: Odense University Press, 259-69
- Downham, C undated, *Vikings' Settlements in Ireland before 1014*, unpublished PhD thesis, second chapter, University of Aberdeen
- Downham, C 2005, 'The Historical Importance of Viking-Age Waterford', Journal of Celtic Studies 4, 71–96
- Downham, C 2007, Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to AD 1014, 2012 ed., Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press
- Downham, C 2010, 'Viking Camps in Ninth-century Ireland: Sources, Locations and Interactions', in S Duffy, *Medieval Dublin*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 93-125
- Etchingham, C 1994, 'Evidence of Scandinavian Settlement in Wicklow', in K Hannigan and W Nolan (ed), *Wicklow - History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays in the History of an Irish County*, Dublin, 113-38
- Fellows-Jensen, G 2015, 'Through a Glass Darkly: Some Sidelights on Viking Influence on Personal Names and Place-names in Ireland', in H Clarke and R Johnson (ed), The Vikings in Ireland and beyond: before and after the Battle of Clontarf, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 268-83
- Flanagan, D and Flanagan, L 1994, Irish Place Names, 2002 ed., Dublin: Gill Books
- Gelling, M 1978, Signposts to the Past, 1988 ed., Sussex: Phillimore & Co
- Greene, D 1976, 'The Influence of Scandinavian on Irish', in B Almqvist and D Greene (ed), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress* 1973, Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 75-82
- Griffiths, D 2010, Vikings of the Irish Sea, Stroud: The History Press, 48-71
- Hadcock, N 1964, Map of Monastic Ireland, 2nd edn., Dublin: Ordnance Survey Office
- Hughes, K 1966, The Church in Early Irish Society, New York: Cornell University Press
- Joyce, P 1883, *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*, Dublin: M H Gill & Son, BiblioLife facsimile reprint
- Kruse, A and Jennings, A 2009, '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*, Edinburgh: University of St Andrews, 17-40
- Lucas, A 1966, 'Irish-Norse Relations, Time for a Reappraisal?', Journal of the Cork Archaeological and Historical Society 71, 62-75
- Mac Giolla Easpaig, D 2002, 'L'Influence Scandinave sur la Toponymie Irlandaise',

in É Ridel (ed), *L'Héritage Maritime des Vikings en Europe de L'Ouest*, Caen: PUC, 441-82

- Mac Giolla Easpaig, D 2009, 'Ireland's Heritage of Geographical Names', Wiener Schriften zur Geographie und Kartographie 18, 79-85
- Mac Niocaill, G 1972, Ireland Before the Vikings, Dublin: Gill and MacMillan
- MacNiven, A 2015, The Vikings in Islay: The Place of Names in Hebridean Settlement History, Edinburgh: Birlinn
- Nicolaisen, W 1976, Scottish Place-Names, 2001 ed., Edinburgh: Birlinn
- Ó Corráin, D 1972, Ireland before the Normans, Dublin: Gill and MacMillan
- Ó Corráin, D 2008, 'The Vikings and Ireland', in S Brink and N Price (ed), *The Viking World*, Oxon: Routledge, 428-33
- Ó Corráin, D 2015, 'Vikings in Ireland: The Catastrophe', in H Clarke and R Johnson, *The Vikings in Ireland and beyond: before and after the Battle of Clontarf*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 485-98
- Oftedal, M 1976, 'Scandinavian Place-names in Ireland', in B Almqvist and D Greene (ed), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress 1973*, Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 125-33
- Price, L 1963, 'A Note on the Use of the Word baile in place-names', Celtica 6, Dublin
- Scott, I and Ritchie, A 2009, *Pictish and Viking-age carvings from Shetland*, Shetland: RCAHMS, V–VII
- Sheldon, G 2009, 'Heathen Norse Place Names in Medieval Irish Sources', in The 44th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, available at https://www.academia.edu/7871340/_Heathen_Norse_Place_Names_in_ Medieval_Irish_Sources_at_the_44th_International_Congress_on_Medieval_Studies_ Western_Michigan_University_May_2009, accessed 30 October 2019
- Smith, B 2001, 'The Picts and the Martyrs or Did Vikings Kill the Native Population of Orkney and Shetland?', *Northern Studies* 36, 7-32
- Woolf, A 2007, From Pictland to Alba 789-1070, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press