

# A TOPONYMICAL STUDY OF THE NORWEGIAN AND DANISH VIKINGS IN LANCASHIRE

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**Abstract:** While we are aware that both Norwegians and Danes entered the British Isles during the Viking Age, we have little discussion on toponymical evidence for their distribution within Lancashire. The current paper fills this gap. The main focus of this paper is to establish the extent to which it is possible to determine the Scandinavian kingdom of origin of a place-name. It is found that, with the help of some lasting phonological difference, some lexical distinctions, some kingdom-specific anthroponyms, and the remains of Goidelic influence on the Scandinavian invaders, it is in fact possible to determine the origin of many toponyms. Furthermore, the extent to which the subsequently found distribution of Norwegian and Danish influence supports previous historical research is explored. Due to previous research on the routes of the Vikings, it is hypothesised that Lancashire will predominantly show Norwegian settlement, with some Danish influence along the inland borders. The toponymical evidence found within this study is analysed in light of previous research, and it is found that such patterns do indeed appear, thus correlating with previous studies.

**Keywords:** toponymy, Scandinavian, Lancashire, distribution, place-names, settlement, lexis, phonology, anthroponym, Goidelic

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## Abbreviations

SCE = Ekwall, E. 1918. *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England*. Lund: C.W.K. Gleeful

PLE = Ekwall, E. 1922. *The place-names of Lancashire*. Manchester: University Press.

SSN = Fellows-Jensen, G. 1985b. *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*. Copenhagen: C.A Reitzels Forlag.

PLM = Mills, D. 1976. *The Place Names of Lancashire*. London: BT Batsford Limited.

## Terminology

This paper focuses specifically on *Old Norwegian* and *Old Danish*. However, a distinction between the two is made by other scholars, using different terminology. Many refer to *Old West* and *Old East Norse*, or (*Old*) *West* and *East Scandinavian*. The east-west distinction incorporates Old Icelandic and Old Swedish, with Norwegian and Icelandic in the west, and Danish and Swedish forming the east. In this paper, references to eastern and western distinctions will only be made in the context of others' research. Additionally, although some scholars make a distinction between *Old Norse* and *Old Scandinavian*, in this paper the two are used interchangeably as an umbrella term for Old Norwegian and Old Danish.

## 1. Introduction

Toponymy, the study of place-names, has long been recognised as a useful 'tool' within many fields including anthropology, archaeology, and geography. Mills (2011: xi) spoke of place-names as a kind of 'linguistic fossil', thereby referring to their ability to preserve certain features of speech from several hundreds of years ago. Yet the question remains, how much can place-names really tell us about settlers from over a millennium ago? According to many scholars, the answer is *a great deal!* This study focuses on the place-names of the North-West of England. Leech (2006) provides a helpful overview of the heretofore completed research into place-names in the North-West. With studies such as *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (Ekwall 1922), *The Place-Names of Cumberland* (Armstrong et al. 1950-52), and *The Place-Names of Westmorland* (Smith 1964-5), this seems to be a well-studied area, both in the academic and geographic sense. However, Leech (2006: 5) also states that the field is clouded by much 'mystery and uncertainty about many names in the North-West'. Given that settlers came from both Norway and Denmark, one specific area into which there seems to be a notable lack of dedicated research is how much place-names can tell us about the exact place of origin of the Scandinavian settlers in the North-West. Therefore, this paper explores first, to what extent it is possible to determine whether Old Norse place-names in Lancashire have Old Norwegian or Old Danish (henceforth ONorw and

ODan) influence; and second, if the former is possible to a significant degree, to what extent the subsequently found distribution of Norwegian and Danish toponyms reinforces previous historical research on the distribution of the Viking settlement.

The structure of this study is as follows. Section 2 reviews previous literature on place-names in the North-West of England, highlighting specific gaps in this research, some of which will be addressed. Subsequently, Section 3 provides an historical account of the Danes and Norwegians in the British Isles during the Viking Age. Additionally, some key linguistic differences between ONorw and ODan, which are necessary to understand when analysing ON place-names, are laid out. Given the Celtic presence in the British Isles at the time, this section is followed by a description of the extent to which the Scandinavians encountered and were influenced by Goidelic Celts. In Section 4, three methods of identifying ONorw and ODan place-names are discussed. The first of these is by analysing lexical and phonological differences between the two languages, the second is through the analysis of anthroponyms found within place-names, and the third is by identifying Goidelic influence on ONorw nomenclature. The reliability of each of these methods is later explored. The study presented here is largely based on the *Key to English Place-Names* database although material beyond that provided there has been used. Subsequently, Section 5 discusses the findings of the present study. First, an analysis of each element which is lexically or phonologically recognisable as ONorw or ODan, is provided. This is followed by some elements, such as *kunung* vs *konungr* and *hulm* vs *holmr*, which are also distinct but not as reliable as the former. Second, place-names with anthroponyms whose origin can be traced to either of the two Scandinavian kingdoms are discussed. Next, evidence of Goidelic influence on the Norwegian settlers is explored, discussing both lexis and syntax. Finally, the total names which, as a result of these analyses, have been identified as originating from one of the two Scandinavian kingdoms, are displayed. The distribution of Norwegian and Danish settlements found here will be discussed in light of previous historical accounts of Viking settlement patterns. It is found that the distribution overwhelmingly supports previous research. Thus, it is concluded that not only is it possible to determine the Scandinavian kingdom of origin of many toponyms, but their distribution also contributes to, and supports the overall study of the Viking Age in the British Isles.

## 2. Literature Review

Returning all the way to the early 1900s, Eilert Ekwall was pioneering in the study of place-names in the North-West of England. Ekwall's (1922) PhD thesis *The place-names of Lancashire* provides an extensive overview of toponyms found in each of the original six *Hundreds* of Lancashire: Salford, Blackburn, West Derby, Leyland, Amounderness, and Lonsdale (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Delving into the names of rivers, parishes, townships, and more, Ekwall carried out this toponymical analysis in great detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Hundreds were subdivisions of counties (shires) in Anglo-Saxon times, largely for judicial purposes (Wormald 1986: 272).

However, his focus was not solely on the etymology of these place-names. Having arranged the material geographically rather than alphabetically, Ekwall provided an in-depth overview of their distribution, in relation to the topography to which they refer, as well as their language of origin. Thus, his research has been an excellent reference point for the present study. Ekwall (1922: 243) claims that Old Norse (henceforth ON) elements in Lancashire are generally assumed to be Norwegian due to the history of the Norwegians arriving from the west. Therefore, I hypothesise that ONorw toponyms will be found throughout Lancashire, with ODan influence more localised along the inland county border. Additionally, Ekwall provides an explanation of certain key lexemes which can be used to differentiate between ONorw and ODan toponyms, due to either distinct lexis or phonology. This includes elements such as *búð* ‘booth’, *gil* ‘gill’, *skáli* ‘hut’, *slakki* ‘valley’, and *ærgi* ‘shielding’, as ONorw elements; and *bōð* ‘booth’, *þorp* ‘secondary settlement’, and *hulm* ‘marshland’, as ODan elements. However, often very little reasoning for such categorisations is given. As a result, these claims are explored in greater detail in the present study, and the proposed origin of some elements are questioned.



Figure 1: The Hundreds and Towns of Lancashire in 1642  
Blackwood (1978: 9)

Another of Ekwall’s contributions is his 1918 book *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-west of England*. Here he outlines the Celtic influence on the Scandinavian settlers, focusing on evidence from inversion compounds, Goidelic elements and Goidelic personal names.<sup>2</sup> One particular aspect of this

<sup>2</sup> See Section 3.3 for more information on inversion compounds.

work has been revolutionary in the study of Norwegian and Danish settlers in the North-West. This is his explanation that the occurrence of Goidelic – in this case Irish – elements or mannerisms within a Brythonic community shows outside influence which, when mixed with ON elements, almost exclusively indicates Norwegian influence. His work has helped to prove the existence of Norwegians in England who had been largely ignored by previous scholars, as well as the extent to which they had been influenced by the Celts. However, Ekwall does not delve into the settlement patterns of the Norwegians and the Danes, nor does he look specifically at Lancashire in this book. These are two aspects in which I intend to further his research.

Another hugely influential scholar in the field of toponymy is Fellows-Jensen, writing somewhat more recently, in the late 1900s. Most notable, for this study, is Fellows-Jensen's (1985b) book *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*. Here, she explicitly describes the distribution of names in specific elements, which has been incredibly helpful in providing a foundation for our toponymical understanding of the Scandinavian settlement in the North-West. Nonetheless, with the focus being only on the distribution of specific elements, the current paper builds on this research by showing the overall pattern of Scandinavian settlement within Lancashire. Additionally, at the end of her book, Fellows-Jensen begins to explore the 'nationality of the Scandinavian settlers' (1985b: 307). Here the occurrence of the terms *Norðmen* 'North men' – referring to Norwegians – and *Danir* 'Danes' in place-names is discussed. The conclusion, however, is that these do not occur in the North-West and are therefore irrelevant to the present study. Furthermore, specific Danish elements are discussed, including *-bý* 'settlement, farmstead', *þorp*, and the genitive *-ar*; as well as certain Norwegian elements such as *skáli*, *vrá* 'nook, corner', and *staðir* 'place, site'. Once again, little indication as to the reason behind these categorisations is given. Thus, each element presented by Fellows-Jensen has been further researched, exploring its reliability, and frequency within Lancashire specifically. Furthermore, in her conclusion, Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 412) states that there is evidence to suggest that the Anglo-Saxons of the North-West were 'caught between the Norwegians arriving from the west and the Danes coming from the east'. This statement will be further explored, linking to the second research question of the present study: *to what extent do Norwegian and Danish place-names support previous findings on the distribution of the Scandinavian settlement?*

Moving on to a work by David Mills (1976) (not to be confused with A.D. Mills), *The Place Names of Lancashire* is an effort to make expert research in toponymy available to the interested layman. However, not only does this book provide an alphabetised list of hundreds of place-names in Lancashire with detailed explanations of the origins of their elements, it also briefly discusses some specifically ONorw and ODan elements. His categorisation of *brekka* 'hill', *ærgi*, *gil*, *skáli*, *slakki*, *búð*, and *foss* 'waterfall' as distinctly ONorw, and *hulm*, *bōð*, and *þorp* as ODan, has also been further

explored in this study.<sup>3</sup> As one may be beginning to see, there is a large amount of overlap between each of these scholars and their categorisation of specific elements. Therefore, the validity of these analyses is further explored, with some elements being disregarded as categorizable for various reasons (see further in Section 5.1).

Finally, the source for much of my data was the *Key to English Place-Names* (KEPN) by Nottingham University's Institute for Name-Studies. This database, presented as an interactive map, records the etymology of place-names of cities, towns, and villages across the country. With the ability to choose a particular county – in this case Lancashire – and specific source language – ON – this has been an excellent resource on which to base my research (see further in Section 4). The KEPN database visually highlights the distribution of place-names across England in relation to their source language, be that Celtic, Old English (henceforth OE), ON, Old French, Latin, Middle English, or Modern English. Given the large number of languages covered, it is unsurprising that the specifics of ON are not consistently represented. Some individual names are identified as ODan or ONorw, but with no way of visualising the distribution of these names alone. Additionally, where the source of such categorisation has been given, it is almost exclusively based on one of the three scholars mentioned above. Thus, no additional information is provided by KEPN. However, 110 place-names were originally taken from this database, analysed, and used as a foundation for the data in this study (see Section 4). Although not all of these names were kept, KEPN provided the initial data to launch this study. Furthermore, additional data was found from various other sources. Thus, the present study extends the information provided in the KEPN database, both in terms of providing additional ON place-names in Lancashire, and in terms of further discussing the linguistic origin of each name.

### 3. Background

#### 3.1 Historical Accounts of the Norwegians and Danes in the British Isles

The Vikings arrived in the British Isles in AD 793 and the Viking Age is said to have ended with Haraldr Haðraði's famous failed invasion in AD 1066 (Jesch 1991: 1). Logan (2002) explains that although the Vikings were not the first people groups to attack the British Isles, they were the first to eventually acculturate, learning the native language and, in time, even intermarrying. Although, Bugge (1921: 173-4) explains that the Scandinavian raiders must have felt more at home in England than we may imagine, as they found themselves among men whose language they already understood. ON and OE had much more in common than their present-day equivalents, creating an ideal environment for assimilation. Therefore, the initial Viking attacks on the British Isles did not only signify the beginning of great turmoil for the Anglo-Saxons, but it also marked the dawn of the 'Scandinavian period in

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<sup>3</sup> The definitions of all elements which have not been defined here are given in the previous paragraphs of this section.

English History' (Logan 2002: 37). During the following ~250 years the Anglo-Saxons were not just to experience the ruthless nature of the Scandinavian attackers, but also to gain much from their language and their culture (Richards 2008). The way in which this acculturation is thought to be reflected in place-names is further discussed in Section 5.2.

As this study investigates the closeness with which place-names reflect the assumed distribution of Norwegian and Danish settlers, it is necessary to discuss the picture of the Scandinavian settlement that emerges from historical evidence.<sup>4</sup> The typical interpretation that historians provide is reflected in the map presented in Figure 2, which shows separate Danish and Norwegian settlements in the east and west, respectively.

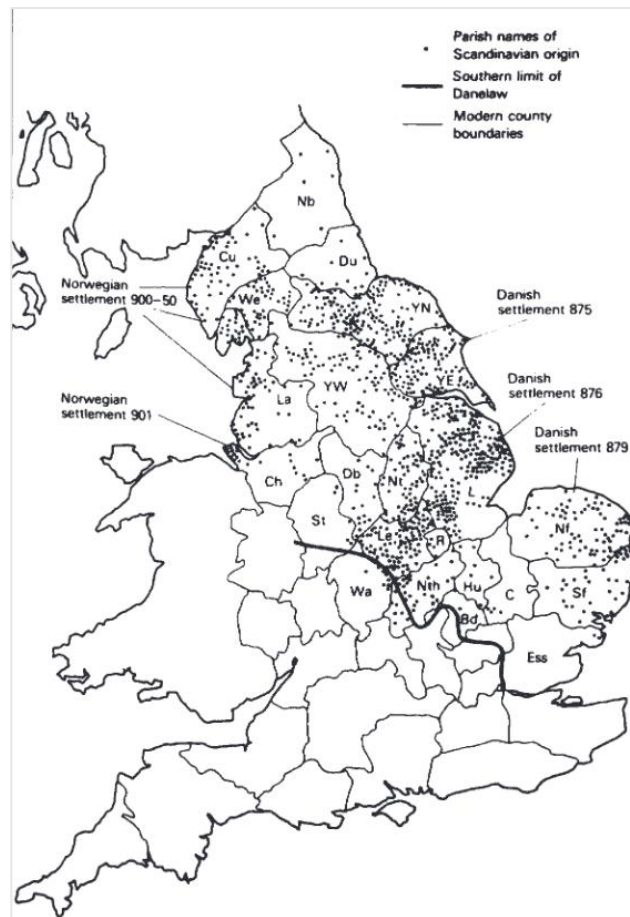


Figure 2: Scandinavian Settlement Pattern  
Logan (2002: 169)

Robinson (1992: 59) explains that the Danes predominantly came from the east, arriving in both the North-East of England, and in East Anglia. The Norwegians, on the other hand, primarily sailed over

<sup>4</sup> Norway and Denmark were not yet politically unified nations at the time of the Viking Age, and terms referring to *Danes* and *Northmen* would have been used interchangeably (Downham 2009: 142). However, references to a *northern* kingdom and *northern* armies clarify that there were in fact two separate kingdoms at the time. Therefore, in the present study, for want of better terms, *Norwegians* will be used to refer to men of the northern kingdom, and *Danes* to men of the southern kingdom.

the top of the British Isles, exploring Scotland and the Hebrides, then making their way down to Ireland. Here they appear to settle, founding Dublin, Cork, and Limerick as trading posts and military bases, thus creating the beginnings of a Norse Kingdom in Ireland during the ninth century (Robinson 1992: 59). It is important to note that this Norse Kingdom was separate from the Scandinavian homeland and led to a unique blend between Norwegian and Celtic culture. After AD 900 (Wilson 1976: 96) many Norwegian settlers, having now become part of Celtic history (read more in Young 1950), travelled across to the Isle of Man, eventually making their way to the North-West of England.

However, in his archaeological paper on the Scandinavian settlement in Scotland and the Irish Sea region, Wilson (1976) explains that the Norwegians and Danes did not simply settle in separate areas of the British Isles. In AD 919 the Norwegians took control of York, which had previously been settled by the Danes, sparking further conflict between the two Scandinavian kingdoms. As Wilson indicates, this heavy Scandinavian settlement in the north is supported by the frequency of ON place-names in this area. Looking more specifically at Lancashire, with key Norwegian settlements being placed in Cumberland, spreading down to Westmorland; and the Wirral (Figure 2), one would expect the north, south, and west of Lancashire to show primarily Norwegian place-names, while Danish influence from West Riding of Yorkshire may have infiltrated eastern Lancashire. Thus, one would expect most of Lancashire to display Norwegian place-names, with perhaps some individual Danish ‘hotspots’. This hypothesis will be analysed in light of the findings in Section 5.

### 3.2 Linguistic Differences between ONorw and ODan

In order to differentiate between ONorw and ODan place-names we must uncover some of the features which were already distinct within these languages during the Viking Age. Fortunately, König and Van der Auwera (1994: 38) explain that phonological changes between East and West Scandinavian already began to take place in the seventh century. This shift marks the commencement of the Old Scandinavian period, following on from Ancient Scandinavian. The Old Scandinavian period was also the period to which the shift from the runic Futhark script to the Roman alphabet, as a result of the introduction of Christianity, can be traced (König and Van der Auwera 1994: 39). König and Van der Auwera explain that diphthongisation is a predominant factor separating the two languages, with the monophthongisation of the majority of diphthongs in ODan occurring pre 1100AD. ONorw, on the other hand, retained many of these diphthongs. This resulted in distinctions such as <ei> in ONorw and <e> in ODan. However, the extent to which the presence or lack of a diphthong in the earliest form of a place-name is useful for determining its language of origin will be discussed in Section 5.3.

Furthermore, Fulk (2018: 24) discusses the eight ‘weightiest respects in which Old East Norse differs from Old West Norse’. The analysis in Section 5 will show that three of Fulk’s eight phonological



differences are relevant to the present study.<sup>5</sup> The first of these is where ODan <ō> corresponds to ONorw <ú>, resulting in examples such as *kō* vs *kú* ‘cow’ and *gnōa* vs *gnúa* ‘rub’. The second difference is the phenomenon of falling diphthongs becoming rising diphthongs in ONorw, which did not occur in ODan. These were represented by <j> + another vowel in ONorw, and <ī>, <ē>, or <ȳ> + another vowel in ODan. This resulted in differences such as *sēa* vs *sjá* ‘see’, and *bȳar* vs *bjár* ‘farmstead’. Third, the assimilation of a nasal to a stop before a stop of the same place of articulation was regularised in ONorw, but not in ODan. Thus, we find differences such as *krumpin* vs *kroppinn* ‘stunted’, and *bunt* vs *batt* ‘bound’. This assimilation is said to have taken place in most dialects of ONorw by AD 850 (Fellows-Jensen 1985a: 70).

### 3.3 Celtic Influence and its Importance

Both the Danes and the Norwegians came across Celtic people and languages during their raids, trades, and settlements. Writing in the 1850s, Worsaae (1852: 8) describes the Danish invasion of Wales via the River Severn to Anglesey, compared to the Norwegians who gained access to Wales via Ireland. Although the invasion of Wales was difficult, as the usual method of travelling inland from the mouths of rivers proved challenging in the smaller Welsh rivers, the eventual raids and settlements were extensive and devastating (Worsaae 1952). Furthermore, as the title suggests, Fellows-Jensen’s (1985a) book *Scandinavian settlement in Cumbria and Dumfriesshire: the place-name evidence*, explores the toponymical evidence of the Viking Age in Cumbria. Here she concludes that, although place-names indicate that the Scandinavians in the area were largely Norwegian, Danes from the Danelaw also had some influence. Therefore, the evidence presented by Fellows-Jensen, along with the information provided by Worsaae, suggests that both Danes and Norwegians encountered the Brythonic language and people in both Wales and Cumbria.

Celtic influence on the Scandinavians can be seen in several ways. Particularly strikingly, Ekwall (1918) discusses the curious matter of place-names wherein the generic precedes the specific, the so-called *inversion compounds*.<sup>6</sup> Where we are used to seeing names such as *Aynesom*, ON *einn* ‘lonely’ + ON *hús* ‘house’, and *Wesham*, ON *vestr* ‘western’ + *hús*; names such as *Kirkpatrick* ON *kirkja* ‘church’ + *Pátraic*, and *Kirksanton* ON *kirkja* + *Sanctán* (SSN) may seem out of place. Ekwall identifies that Scandinavian place-names often follow the Celtic word order of placing the generic before the specific, something which would have been counterintuitive to the Scandinavians when they first set sail from their homeland. Importantly, for the present study, Ekwall (1918: 52) explains that the Celtic elements found in Scandinavian inversion compounds are Goidelic rather than Brythonic. Having

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<sup>5</sup> In each of the following examples, the ODan variant is always given before the ONorw variant.

<sup>6</sup> The *generic* in a place-name refers to the general topographic or habitative nature of the settlement. The *specific*, on the other hand, usually refers to a particular landmark or other identifiable feature, such as the anthroponym of the owner or dedicatee of the settlement, which can be used to modify the meaning of the place-name.

discussed above that the Danes in the North-West almost exclusively encountered Brythonic Celts – in Cumbria and Wales – , while the Norwegians travelled through, and settled in, both Goidelic Scotland, and Ireland, we can assume that inversion compounds indicate Norwegian settlement.

## 4. Methodology

The primary data for this study consists of 100 place-names found in the North-West of England, a complete list of which can be found in the Appendix. 40 of these are from the original 110 names taken from the *Key to English Place-Names*, with the rest having predominantly been found within the works of Ekwall (1922), Fellows-Jensen (1985b), and Mills (1976). KEPN provides a guide to place-names throughout the country, along with an interpretation of the origin of each name. Although this website has been used to obtain the names of 40 Scandinavian-coined places in the North-West, suggestions of ONorw or ODan origins of the names by KEPN have not been taken into consideration. This is largely due to KEPN's lack of emphasis on the difference between ONorw and ODan. Instead, the linguistic origin of each word has been examined and analysed through three particular methods.

The first, most reliable method for differentiating between Norwegian and Danish place-names is to differentiate between lexically or phonologically distinct ONorw and ODan elements. With orthography having not been standardised at the time of ON (Barnes *et al.* 1999: 4), written language tended to reflect pronunciation more accurately than in the present day. This is particularly useful for the present study. Taking the earliest available form of each place-name, it is sometimes possible to ascertain the exact origin of the name, based on phonological differences between the two languages. Some of these differences have been briefly explained in Section 3 and will be further discussed in light of the findings of this study, in Section 5.

Second, anthroponyms found in place-names are examined. Although many personal names can be found in both Norwegian and Danish history, there are some cases wherein the anthroponym seems to relate more to one of the two kingdoms. In some rare cases a personal name may have, at the time, only been found in one of the two kingdoms. Other names may relate to Norwegian or Danish kings or key figures, which could be indicative of Norwegian or Danish settlers. These kinds of distinctions are used to help determine the nationality of the settlers in certain areas.

Third, the history of the Hiberno-Norsemen (Norwegians in Ireland), as explained in Section 3, can help indicate Norwegian rather than Danish settlement. As discussed in Section 3.3, inversion compounds are indicative of Norwegian settlers, as this was a Goidelic convention, acquired by the Norwegians during their time in Scotland and Ireland. Additionally, hybrid names consisting of Goidelic lexemes and/or anthroponyms as a specific, with an ON generic, provide further evidence for the presence of Norwegians.

Finally, it is important to note that the county borders of the UK were redrawn in 1974. Most historical research, including KEPN and the present study, continues to use the archaic county borders.

Lancashire, in this case, extends from the upper tip of Windermere down to the Mersey, a particularly fitting boundary as *Mersey* means ‘boundary river’ (Leech 2006: 2).

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Lexis and Phonology

The findings are first discussed in light of Research Question 1: *to what extent is it possible to determine whether ON place-names in Lancashire exhibit ONorw or ODan influence?* Figure 3 shows the 49 place-names for which I believe it to be conclusively possible to determine the Scandinavian kingdom of origin.

As discussed in Section 3.2, distinguishing between elements from the two languages is not straightforward, since ON was only just beginning to split into distinct languages at the time of the Viking Age. Therefore, there are very few concrete differences which one can use to analyse toponyms, and the evidence of many of these in place-names has been lost over time. However, the 49 toponyms depicted below each contain one of thirteen elements – which can be seen in Table 1 – which have been deemed to be distinctly ONorw or ODan. We will call these *anchor* place-names, as they are based on quite conclusive information, and can therefore be used as a kind of anchor for other potential Norwegian or Danish settlements. Some of the more *secondary* place-names in this study, which will be discussed later, can only be verified by their proximity to anchor names.

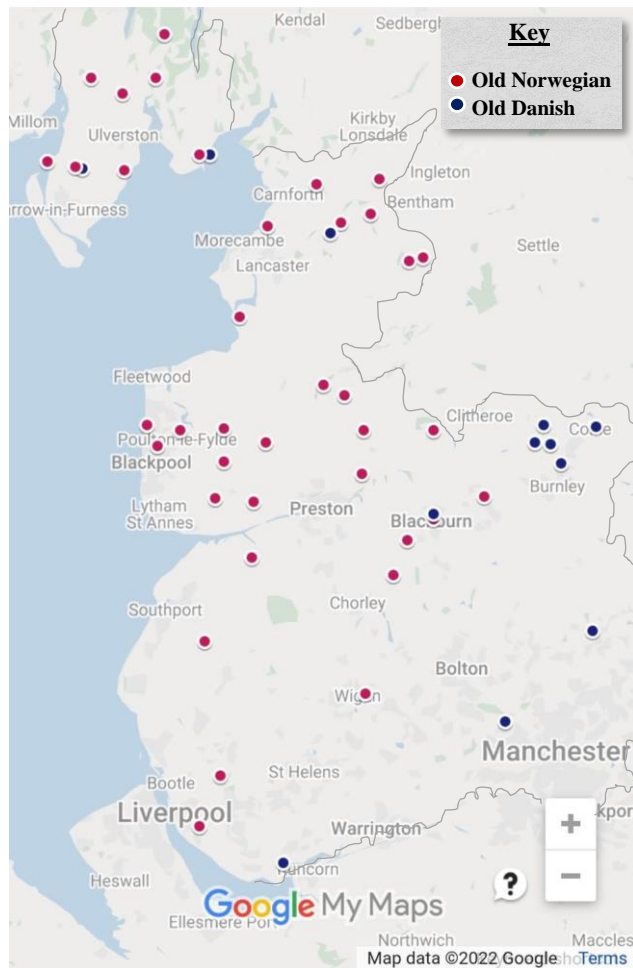


Figure 3: Distribution of Anchor Names

The root languages of these names have been determined with the help of elements which, according to the accounts of the linguistic features of the two languages (Section 3.2), are either lexically or phonologically distinctly ONorw or ODan. The thirteen elements which produce anchor place-names, and the names in which they appear, are shown in Table 1.

ON Element	Norwegian or Danish	Toponym
<i>banke</i>	<i>D</i>	Greenbank Farm, Hale Bank, Kent's Bank, Windy Banks
<i>blesi</i>	<i>N</i>	Bleasdale
<i>bōð</i>	<i>D</i>	Boothby, Dunnishbooth, Goldshaw Booth, New and Old Laund Booth, Oozebooth, Wheatley Booth
<i>brekka</i>	<i>N</i>	Breck, Edenbreck, Esprick, Larbreck, Limbrick, Mowbrick, Norbreck, Scarisbrick, Sunbrick, Swarbrick, Warbreck
<i>búð</i>	<i>N</i>	Bouth
<i>foss</i>	<i>N</i>	Force Beck
<i>klakkr</i>	<i>N</i>	Cloughton
<i>krókr</i>	<i>N</i>	Crook Farm
<i>skáli</i>	<i>N</i>	Brinscall, Davyscoles, Elliscales, Feniscowles, Landskill, Loudscales, Newton with Scales, Sandscale, Scholes
<i>slakki</i>	<i>N</i>	Ashlack, Hay Slacks, Nettleslack
<i>saur-býr</i>	<i>N</i>	Inskip-with-Sowerby
<i>staðir</i>	<i>N</i>	Croxteth, Toxteth
<i>vrá</i>	<i>N</i>	Capernwray, Ribby with Wrea, Whiteray, Wray, Wray with Botton, Wraysholme, Wrayton

Table 1: Elements found in Anchor Place-Names

As explained in Section 3.2, one phonological difference between the two languages was the assimilation of nasals to following stops in ONorw, which had not been standardised in ODan. Common ONorw generics found in place-names which highlight this phonological difference include *brekka* ‘hill-slope’ (SSN), which would appear as *brink* in ODan (Bugge 1921: 180); *klakkr* ‘lump, hill’ (PLE); and *slakki* ‘slope’ (SSN).

Similarly, ODan *banke* ‘ridge, bank’ (Parsons *et al.* 1997: 47) is found in several place-names, where one would expect to see the assimilated form *bakki* in ONorw names. Unfortunately, as explained by Kolb (1969: 139), the ONorw form would generally be indistinguishable from the OE *bæc*. Thus, only the ODan variant can be used as a distinguishing element.

The ON term for ‘waterfall’ shows another type of assimilation found in ONorw but not ODan (Mills 1976). With the former being *foss* and the latter *fors*, the <ɾ> appears to represent an assimilation of /r/ in terms of manner of articulation, to the succeeding fricative. The assimilated variant can be seen in *Force Beck*, where the name appears as *Fosse* in maps from 1577 (Ekwall 1922: 220).

Another phonological marker mentioned in Section 3.2 is the <ō> – <ú> distinction. This is a further phonological feature which can provide an interesting insight into the origin of certain place-names. Most notably, ONorw *búð*, and ODan *bōð* ‘booth’ (PLM) are frequently found in place-names. As seen in Figure 4, seven toponyms have been found with either element, six with ODan *bōð* and one with ONorw *búð*.

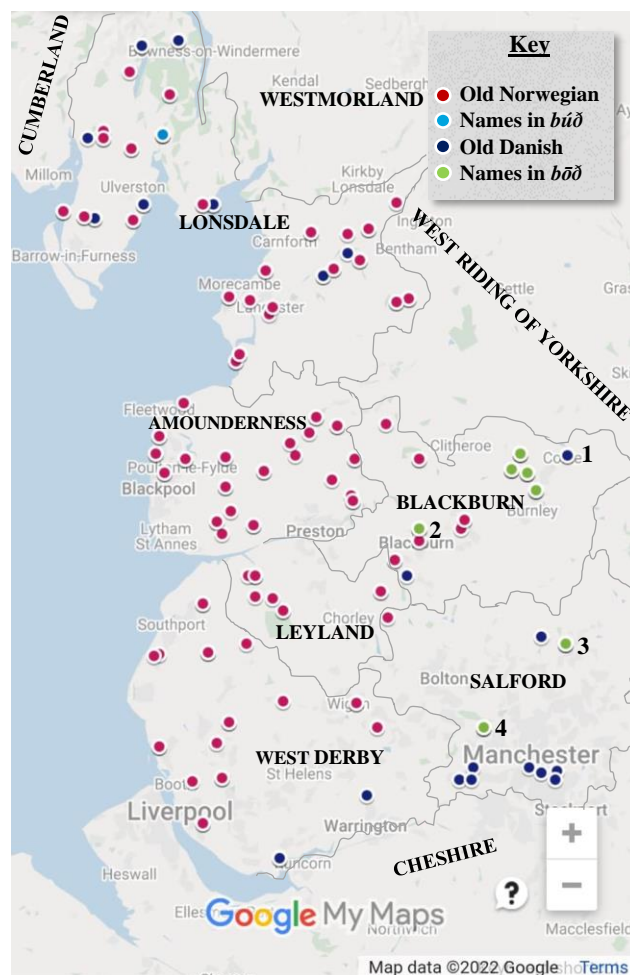


Figure 4: ON Place-Names in Lancashire, highlighting those in *bōð* and *búð*

A cluster of *bōð*s can be found in Blackburn Hundred, close to Windy Banks (‘1’ in Figure 4), another ODan place-name, but is otherwise slightly further from other place-names analysed in this study. It is therefore possible that a small Danish settlement was found in the area, slightly set apart from Norwegian settlements found further towards the centre of Lancashire. However, some minor place-names containing *bōð*: Oozebooth Terraces (‘2’ in Figure 4) in Blackburn, Dunnishbooth House (‘3’ in Figure

4) in Rochdale, and Boothby Road ('4' in Figure 4) in Greater Manchester; must be considered separately.<sup>7</sup> Being minor place-names they are unlikely to indicate the settlement of a group of people by themselves but can support evidence provided by clusters of major place-names. Oozebooth Terraces is surrounded by ONorw anchor names, which may suggest it is not evidence of Danish settlement. However, Ekwall (1922: 74), in giving earlier forms of the name, explains that there were originally two Oozebooths in the area, Upper and Lower Oozebooth. Thus, it seems that this minor name is in fact the last remnant of a former major name and may therefore be indicative of a small Danish presence after all. Dunnishbooth House, on the other hand, is just 2.4 miles from Wolstenholme, a place with another ODan name. Thus, although Dunnishbooth House itself cannot be taken as indication of Danish settlement, the combination of the two may suggest a Danish presence. Finally, Boothby Road, although not within the immediate vicinity of other ODan place-names, is not far from a large cluster of ODan names in the southern Blackburn Hundred, and therefore fits very clearly with the overall pattern of Danish settlements being in the south-east of Lancashire, as will be discussed in Section 5.4.

Furthermore, some lexemes which were only found in ONorw, and not in ODan include *krókr* 'bend' (SSN), where the ODan alternative was *krōkr* (Hill 2010: 184);<sup>8</sup> *skáli* 'temporary hut' (PLM); and *vrá* 'nook, corner' (PLE). *Skáli* is found extensively in the Orkney islands, where both Icelandic and Norwegian settlers were numerous (Harrison 2016). This element may have originally been Old Icelandic. However, if this is the case, it appears that the Norwegians adopted the term through contact with Icelandic settlers and continued to use it during their settlement of Lancashire. Each of these three elements have been used to identify anchor toponyms.

Additionally, *staðir* 'place, site' (SSN), found in *Croxteth* and *Toxteth*, may be considered to be ONorw. Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 312) explains that although *staðir* is otherwise rare in Lancashire, it is abundant in the Isle of Man. It is therefore likely that these names were coined by Scandinavians who had previously settled in the Isle of Man. As mentioned in Section 3, we know these to have been Norwegians. Contradictorily, one element which is held to be ODan is *slet*. Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 119) discusses the occurrence of *slet*, found in *Deerslack*, in detail. She explains that the element can be found in many place-names in Danish settled areas of the British Isles, as well as in the current place *Fodslette*, in Denmark. However, as much of Fellows-Jensen's confidence in the origin of the element appears to come from its occurrence in overwhelmingly Danish areas of the British Isles, this element has not been listed as an anchor name. On the other hand, its occurrence in Danish but not Norwegian names provides potential evidence for its Danish origin. Thus, the name has been included in the present study. Figure 5 provides further information, showing the names surrounding *Deerslack*.

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<sup>7</sup> Minor place-names are those of houses, streets, woods, or other smaller locations. In opposition to major place-names, which refer to villages, cities, counties, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, it may be the ONorw name *Krókr* (McLeod 2008: 12).

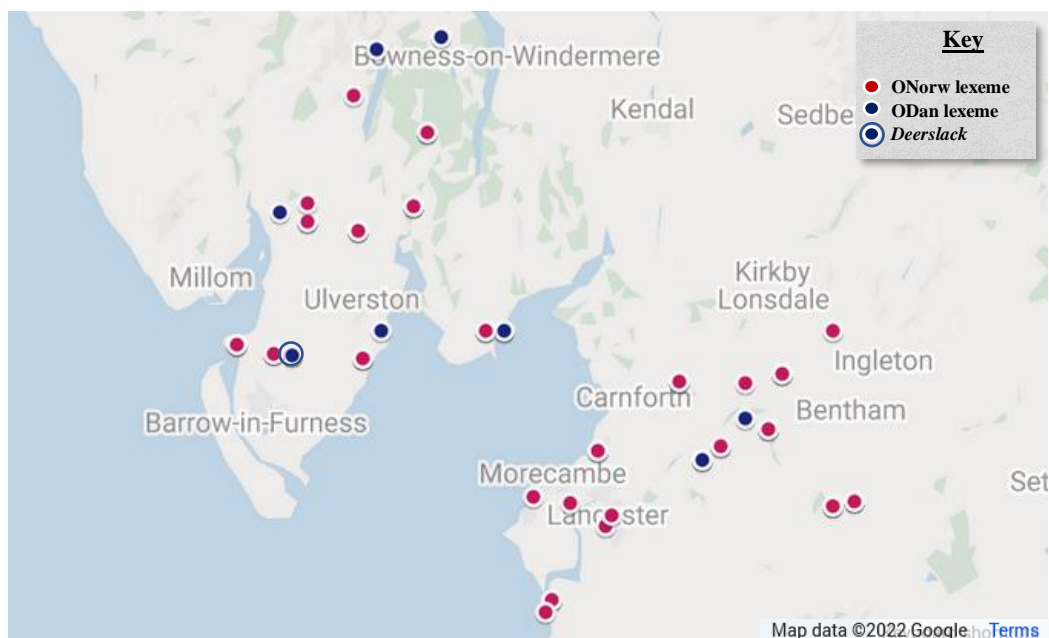


Figure 5: ON Place-Names in Lonsdale Hundred, surrounding Deerslack

Lonsdale Hundred, in the north of Lancashire, shows a mixture of both ODan and ONorw names (Figure 5). Therefore, the claim that this name is Danish based on its occurrence within Danish areas cannot be applied here. However, as the surrounding area is not overwhelmingly Norwegian-influenced, we also cannot counter this claim. Thus, with *slet* occurring primarily in Danish sources, it does not seem unreasonable that it may have been coined by Danes.

Another interesting place-name is Inskip-with-Sowerby. Grant (2003) discusses the infrequency of names in *-bý* in areas assumed to have been settled by Norwegians. However, the notable exception to this pattern is names in ON *saur-býr* ‘swamp-village’. These can be found around Scotland, including the Scottish Isles; the Isle of Man; and, importantly, Lancashire. According to Grant, this name-type originated in Norway, which is reflected in the frequent occurrence of the name-type in Norway. The name *Inskip-with-Sowerby*, found in Lancashire, has therefore been included as an anchor place-name. In Figure 6 we can see that Inskip-with-Sowerby is surrounded by other ONorw names. The presence of a name in *saur-býr* further supports the theory that this was an area of Norwegian settlement.



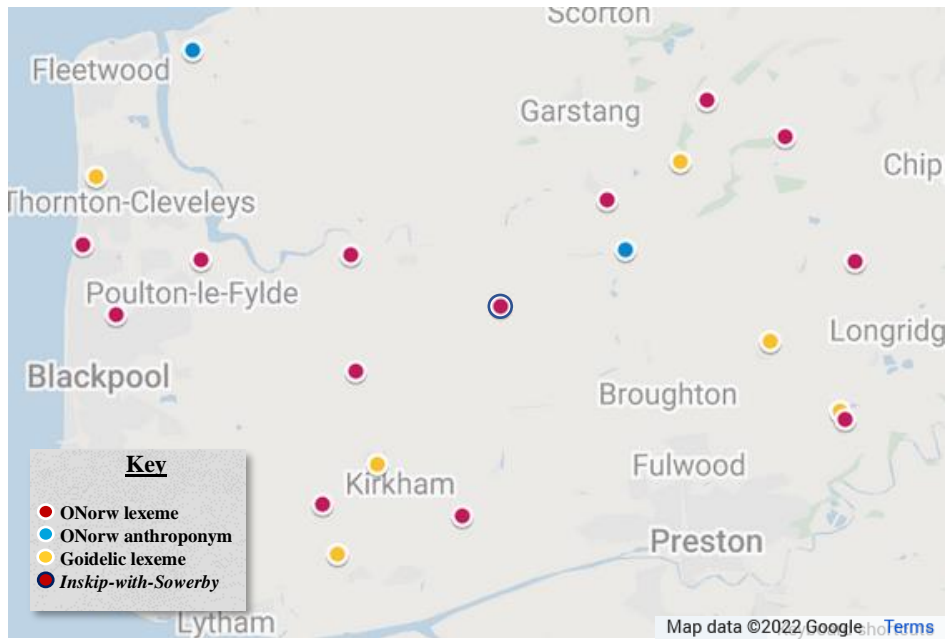


Figure 6: ON Place-Names in Amounderness Hundred surrounding Inskip-with-Sowerby

The final anchor place-name to consider is Bleasdale. The semantic differences between ONorw and ODan for certain lexemes can sometimes be used to highlight the origin language of the toponym. For example, *blesi* (as in Bleasdale) occurred in ON meaning ‘white spot on a horse’s forehead’ (PLM). However, in ONorw it has been recorded to mean ‘bare spot on a hillside’ (PLM). With Bleasdale being situated on a hill, it is viable to conclude that the ONorw meaning may have been intended, thus indicating Norwegian settlement.

As well as each of the elements found in Table 1, which have now been explained, some place-name elements can be postulated to be ONorw or ODan, despite their origin being less clear than that of the abovementioned elements. One intriguing place-name is Catterall, found in Amounderness Hundred, in the centre of Lancashire. Different scholars have varying views on the etymology of this toponym, making it both interesting and difficult. Both Ekwall (1922: 162) and Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 114) explain that the name is found in the form *Catrehala* in the Domesday Book. Fellows-Jensen provides a fairly good overview of the differing views, stating that the name could be derived from the Scandinavian *kattar-hali* ‘cat’s tail’, or the Norwegian place-name Katralen; or it could be a compound comprised of the OE generic *halh* ‘nook’ and an obscure specific, rendering it a non-ON place-name. Ekwall (1922: 162-3) expands on the first suggestion, stating that *kattar-hali* itself comes from a Norwegian name. Thus, two of the three options point towards Norwegian settlement, with the final option avoiding any ON link altogether, and therefore certainly not implying Danish settlement. Furthermore, neither Ekwall, nor Fellows-Jensen examines the distribution of Norwegian and Danish settlements and therefore do not seem to have considered the etymology of Catterall in the context of approximal ON place-names. In light of this, Figure 7 shows the surrounding place-names.



Figure 7: ON Place-Names in Amounderness Hundred surrounding Catterall

All toponyms surrounding Catterall are of Norwegian origin (Figure 7). Thus, based on possible etymologies, and proximity to more certain ONorw names, it has been concluded that Catterall may well have been coined by Norwegian settlers.

Furthermore, some place-names which originally appeared to be clearly categorizable, must be reanalysed in light of the research I have since undergone; these names are not included in Figure 3 or Table 1. For example, let us consider names in *bekkr* ‘brook’ (PLE). Fellows-Jensen (1968: 66-9, cited in Parsons *et al.* 1997: 10) states that *bekkr*, when found in combination with another ON element, may indicate Danish settlement. Therefore, *Grizebeck*, consisting of ON *gríss* ‘pig’ + *bekkr*, could be considered Danish. However, Parsons *et al.* (1997: 10) also provide the counter example of *Boutherbeck*, *búð* + *bekkr*, found in Cumbria. The first element here is *búð* which, as we have previously seen, is ONorw. Thus, we cannot be quite so certain that ON place-names in *bekkr* are conclusively ODan. The example of *Boutherbeck* may indicate the mixing of ONorw and ODan elements, or even the use of *búð* in Danish contexts. However, Figure 8 shows that several names surrounding Grizebeck are identified as showing ONorw influence. Therefore, although we cannot state with any confidence that Grizebeck is Norwegian, we certainly cannot claim that it must be Danish.

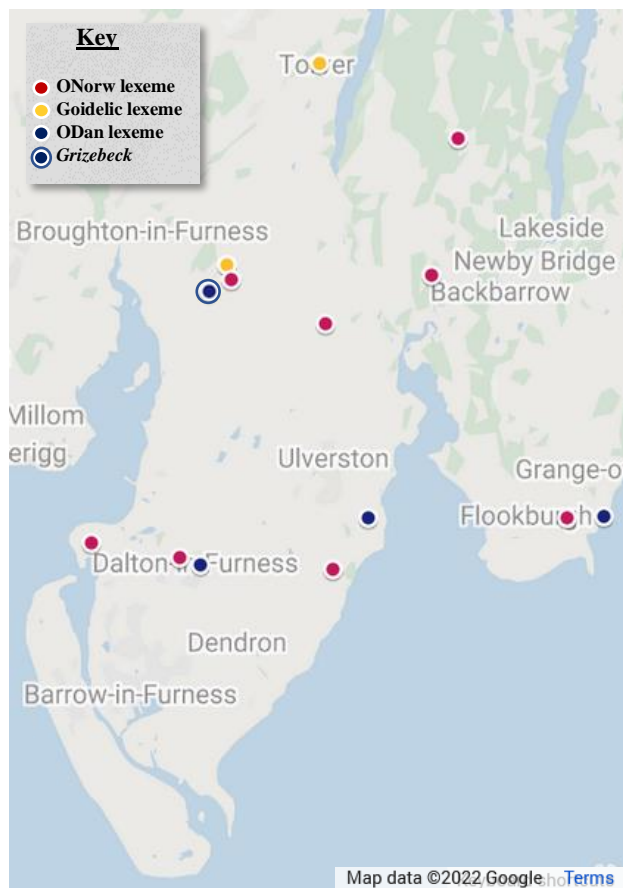


Figure 8: North Lancashire ON Place-Names surrounding Grizebeck

Moreover, some place-name elements are recorded overtime with their vowel sounds inconsistently orthographically represented. These have in the past been used to examine Danish presence. For example, Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 223) states that the ONorw word for ‘king’ was *konungr*, while the ODan variant was *kunung*. Similarly, many previous scholars have differentiated between the overarching ON word for ‘water meadow’ (Harding 2007) *holmr*, and the ODan variant *hulm*. These words show a very similar pattern, with the ODan orthography seemingly representing the raising of /o/ to /u/ and the simplification of a word-final consonant cluster. However, it is often difficult to determine the exact vowel used in the original place-name. Therefore, in names such as *Cunscough* where the earlier forms include both *Cunigescofth* and *Conigscofth* 1190 (SSN), it is impossible to tell which variant was used to coin the name. In fact, Ekwall (1922: 119) says, with little concern, that *Cunscough* consists of *skógr* preceded by ‘O.N. *konungr* (earlier no doubt also *kunungr*)’. He is thus suggesting that the <o> – <u> variation is in fact a temporal difference, rather than relating to the language of origin. Similarly, Flom (1925: 253) states that the variation in vowel over time in names containing *hulm* shows that it cannot be used as evidence of ODan influence. Providing examples such as *Wolstenholme* which appeared as *Wlstanhulm* in 1193; and even *Torrisholme*, which almost exclusively has an <o>, but then appeared as *Torryshulme* in 1557, Flom speculates that *hulm* is in fact the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of *holmr*. Due to this uncertainty, toponyms containing either variant of *konungr* or *holmr* have not been included in

the list of anchor place-names. However, when such names are found in proximity to ONorw or ODan names, it may be possible to infer their origin language (see Figure 9).

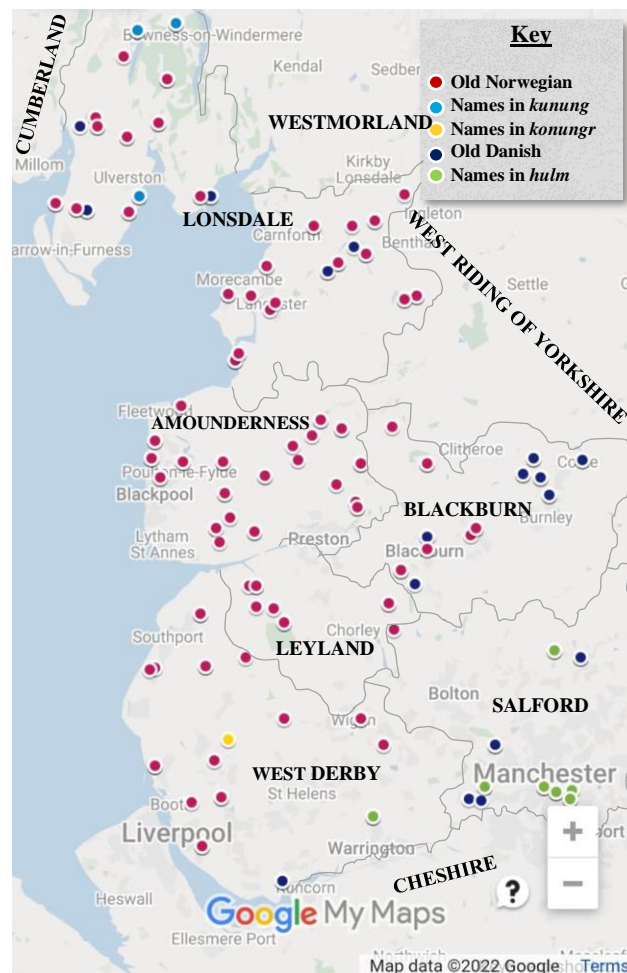


Figure 9: ON Place-Names in Lancashire, highlighting Names in ko/unung(r) and hulm

Figure 9 shows a rather large cluster of *hulms* in the south-east of Lancashire. A few other ODan names can be found in the area, and no ONorw names. Thus, although one instance of *hulm* would not be reason to assume Danish presence, such a cluster supports the information provided by the surrounding ODan toponyms. Names in *konungr* and *kunung*, on the other hand, are more ambiguous. The three instances of the ODan *kunung* in the northern part of Lonsdale Hundred are predominantly surrounded by ONorw names, many of which are anchor names. Therefore, these names may indicate Danish influence in the north of Lancashire but cannot be used to assume specific Danish settlement. The one instance of *konungr* is found within a largely ONorw area. Thus, although occurrence of *konungr* alone does not imply Norwegian settlement, the surrounding names further support the theory that *konungr* is the ONorw variant.

Finally, two elements which are commonly used as evidence of Danish presence are *-þorp* and *-bý*. However, upon further research it became apparent that these must be excluded from the present

study. First, let us examine the claim that *-þorp* ‘outlying farmstead’ (PLM) is of Danish origin. This claim is made on the basis that place-names in *-þorp* are mainly found in the east of England, where the Danes are presumed to have settled (Yokota 2004, Bugge 1921: 179). Therefore, the findings of names in *-þorp* in the west may either indicate Norwegian use of the word, or the presence of Danish settlers, one cannot be sure. Furthermore, one aim of this study is to identify the correlation between place-name evidence and previous claims over Norwegian and Danish areas of settlement. It would therefore be redundant to use such definitions as a basis for the study. Additionally, Fellows-Jensen (1985a: 66) explains that, with *-þorp* referring to farmsteads, the lack of its use in the west may be more due to the nature of the settlements found in the west than the lack of Danish influence.

Similarly, the habitative generic *-bý* ‘settlement, farmstead’ (SSN) is often considered to be indicative of Danish settlement. The lexeme can appear in many forms including *-býar*, *-bjár*, *-bær*, *-býr* and of course, *-bý*. These various forms are most likely tied to different languages or dialects, and therefore could be an easy way of determining between ONorw and ODan place-names. The *býar* – *bjár* distinction mentioned in Section 3.2 suggests that any occurrence of *-býar* would be indicative of ODan. Similarly, Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 10) suggests that the form *-bý* was found only in ODan, with *-bær* and *-býr* appearing in Old West and Old East Norwegian respectively. However, the earliest available form of place-names often do not help distinguish between such minor differences. It is usually possible to see whether the original name contained a <y> or a <j>, but the latter variant is incredibly rare and, as far as I have found, virtually non-existent within Lancashire. The <j> in ONorw only appears when succeeded by a vowel. As can be seen in the list above, most variants of *-bý* include only one vowel, meaning they would appear as <y> in both languages. Additionally, the earliest available form usually does not distinguish between *-bý* and *-býr*. Thus, despite knowing of these distinctions, studying the earliest forms of place-names provides us with little more information. Furthermore, Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 10) explains that the Danes tended to use the element for ‘prosperous villages’ while the Norwegians used it for ‘single farmsteads’. Although this appears to be useful semantic distinction, she then goes on to say that in the Danelaw *-bý* can be found in ‘every conceivable kind of settlement’ (Fellows-Jensen 1985b: 10). This therefore leaves us with little to go on in terms of names in *-bý*.

An additional distinction mentioned in Section 3.2 was the monophthongisation of diphthongs in ODan. This phonological difference could be used to claim that place-names whose original form included a diphthong, were most likely coined by Norwegians. However, just as with the different variants of *bý*, it is rarely possible to determine whether the original form contained a diphthong, or not. Our earliest available forms of place-names are often taken from records such as the Domesday Book, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, or other such old texts. Although many of these names were coined in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the forms of place-names from before the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century are often not given. Thus, diphthongs found within the earliest recorded forms of ON toponyms may be used to support other

evidence of ONorw influence but should not be used as evidence themselves. This issue is addressed in the context of a specific place-name in Section 5.3.

## 5.2 Anthroponyms

Another method for differentiating between Norwegian and Danish nomenclature is by examining anthroponyms which can often be found as the specific of a place-name (Section 4). Table 2 displays fourteen place-names containing thirteen different anthroponyms. The present-day form of the place-name is given, followed by the anthroponym which makes up its specific, and finally, the most likely place of origin of each anthroponym. This section analyses the nature of these place-names, looking at the combination of anthroponyms with generics of different origins. Additionally, the reason for linking these anthroponyms with their places of origin is discussed.

Toponym	Anthroponym	Origin	Toponym	Anthroponym	Origin
Amounderness	Agmundr	Norway	<b>Hornby</b>	Horni	Denmark
Anglezarke	Anlaf + <i>ærgi</i>	Norway	<b>Mellishaw</b>	Maelan	Ireland
Beaconsall	Becan	Ireland	<b>Tarleton</b>	Þaraldr	Norway
Dunkenhalgh	Donnchadh	Ireland	<b>Tarlescough</b>	Þaraldr	Norway
Flixton	Flik	Denmark	<b>Tockholes</b>	Tóki	Denmark
Goosnargh	Gosan/Gusan	Ireland	<b>Torver</b>	Torfi + <i>ærgi</i>	Norway
Hackinsall	Hákon	Norway	<b>Urmston</b>	Urm	Denmark

Table 2: Anthroponyms found in ON Place-Names in Lancashire

Different ways of combining anthroponyms with generics may provide information on the settlement patterns of the Scandinavians. Fekete (2015: 7) explains that place-names which are a combination of a Scandinavian anthroponym with an English generic may be indicative of a Scandinavian overlord in an otherwise Anglo-Saxon area of settlement. In the present study, such hybrid place-names include Tockholes *Tóki* + OE *hol(h)* ‘hollow’ (SSN), as well as the Grimston Hybrids Flixton *Flik* + OE *tūn* ‘village’ (SSN), Tarleton *Þaraldr* + OE *tūn* (SSN), and Urmston *Urm* + OE *tūn* (PLM).<sup>9</sup> Each of these can be further analysed to shed light on its Scandinavian kingdom of origin.

<sup>9</sup> Grimston hybrids are names combining an ON anthroponym with the OE habitative element *tūn* (Peterson 2020: 323).

As seen in Table 2, *Tóki*, *Flik*, and *Urm* are considered ODan anthroponyms. Olesen (2010) explores Danish personal names from Medieval Denmark, discussing in depth the occurrence of the Danish name *Tóki*. Similarly, Mills (1976: 84, 144) states that the personal names *Flik* and *Urm* are mentioned only in Danish sources, suggesting they were common Danish names, and not used by Norwegians at the time. *Paraldr*, on the other hand, have been marked as being Norwegian at the time of the Scandinavian settlement. Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 190) explains that *Þóraldr* was a general Scandinavian anthroponym, while *Paraldr*, was the assimilated Norwegian equivalent.

The second type of place-name combination discussed by Fekete (2015: 7) is those where a Scandinavian anthroponym is combined with an ON generic. These may be indicative of a greater number of Scandinavian settlers, rather than just one overlord, making use of a previously uninhabited area. In the present study this includes the following names: Amounderness, *Agmundr* + *nes* ‘headland’ (SSN); Hackinsall, *Hákon* + *haugr* ‘mound’ (PLM);<sup>10</sup> Hornby, *Horni* + *bý* ‘settlement’ (PLM); and Tarlescough, *Paraldr* + *skógr* ‘wood’ (SSN).

Table 2 shows that *Agmundr*, *Hákon*, and *Paraldr* are all considered to be Norwegian. One way of finding the origin of an anthroponym is by looking to the history of each of the Scandinavian kingdoms. Bugge (1921: 199) refers to *Agmundr* as being a Norwegian name, with it occurring exclusively in ONorw records. This is supported by the description of *Agmund Hold*, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, with *hold* being a Norwegian title (Lehiste 1958: 7). Equally, *Hákon* is considered to be a Norwegian anthroponym due to Norway’s history of kings named Hákon. Hákon Haraldsson reigned from AD 933 – 960, followed by Hákon Sigurdsson from AD 970 – 995 (Bagge 2012: 389). The Norwegians only began to make their way across to North-West England from Ireland after AD 900 (Wilson 1976: 96), and the earliest recording of *Hackinsall*, in the form *hakunhou*, is from AD 1190 (SSN). These dates support the suggestion that *Hackinsall* was named after either of the first two King Hákons of Norway, or after someone who himself was named after either of these kings. This would, of course, most likely also have been a Norwegian. *Tarlescough* is considered Norwegian for the same reason as *Tarleton*.

*Horni*, on the other hand, may be indicative of a Danish presence. Mills (1972: 96) states that the anthroponym in question is only found in East Scandinavian sources. While lack of evidence of a name within Norwegian sources by no means proves its exclusively Danish nature, it certainly suggests stronger Danish ties to the name. Unfortunately, the distribution of ONorw and ODan names surrounding Hornby sheds no further light on the question at hand. Figure 10 shows the categorised ON place-names of Lonsdale Hundred, in the north of Lancashire.

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<sup>10</sup> *Haugr* can also mean ‘burial mound’ which has generated a popular legend stating that the mound, still found in Hackinsall today, was the burial ground for a Viking seafarer named Hákon.

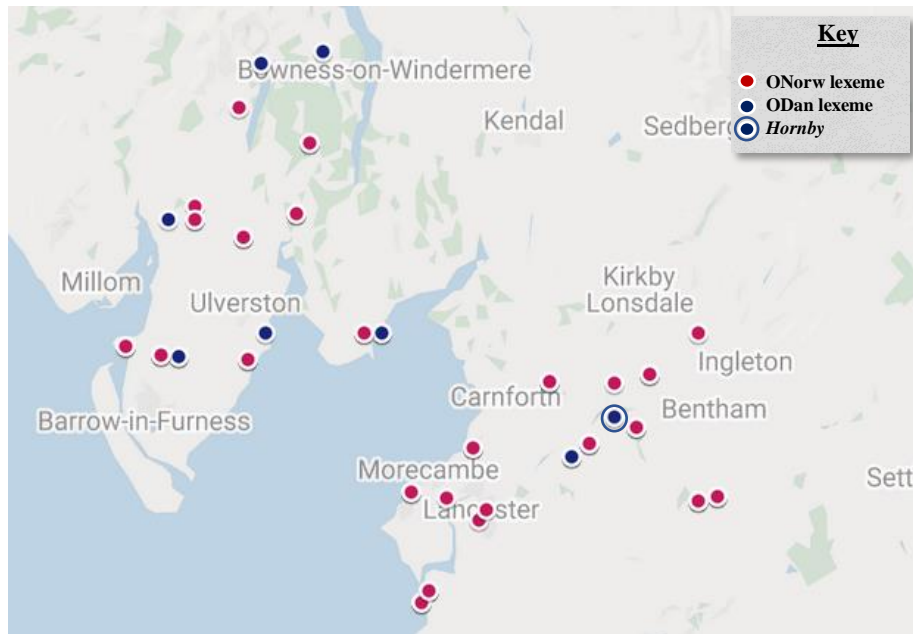


Figure 10: ON Place-Names in Lonsdale Hundred, surrounding Hornby

While the area seems overwhelmingly ONorw-influenced, Hornby is not the only Danish settlement in the Hundred. Thus, this distribution does not directly counter the suggestion that *Horni* may be of Danish origin. The mixture of ODan and ONorw names in this Hundred is further discussed in Section 5.4.

Four names in Table 2 are stipulated to be of Irish origin. These are Beconsall, *Becan* + *haugr* ‘mound’ (PLM); Dunkenhagh, *Donnchadh* (PLE); Goosnargh, *Gusan* + *ærgi* ‘shielding’ (PLE); and Mellishaw *Maelan* + *haugr* (SSN). Although the implications of Goidelic influence will be further discussed in Section 5.3, the result of analyses of each of these names is discussed here. The anthroponyms *Becan*, *Gusan*, and *Maelan* are all described as Irish by Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 103, 64, 147 respectively), and *Donnchadh* as such by Ekwall (1922: 89). Additionally, Schulze-Thulin (2001: 55) mentions the Irish name *Beccán* (Becan) becoming the ON name *Bekan*. These claims are supported by Petrie’s (2015) discussion of St Becan, an Irish monk of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, in his book *Christian inscriptions in the Irish language*. Similarly, several *Maelans*, including *Maelan mac Cathmogha*, are listed in the *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* (O’Donovan 1851: 239). Special mention of *Maelan mac Cathmogha* has been made as he is said to have been the King of Maigh Seóla, an early territory of Ireland. However, this claim is disputed by Byrne (1973), who omits *mac Cathmogha* from his monarchical Genealogical Tables. Contradictorily, *Donnchadh*, is mentioned in several of these Genealogical Tables, suggesting this was the name of several kings of Irish territories.

With *Becan*, *Donnchadh*, and *Maelan* not only being of Irish origin, but also having been the names of influential people at the time of the Scandinavian invasion of Ireland, or before, place-names which combine these anthroponyms with Scandinavian elements were likely coined by Hiberno-Norsemen. *Gusan*, on the other hand, although Irish in origin, has not been found to have been the name of any well-known Irishmen at the time of the invasion. Therefore, the assumption that Goosnargh was



coined by Norwegians, is all the more tenuous. However, when looking at Goosnargh on a map of Norwegian and Danish toponyms, one can see that it is surrounded by Norwegian-coined names (Figure 11).

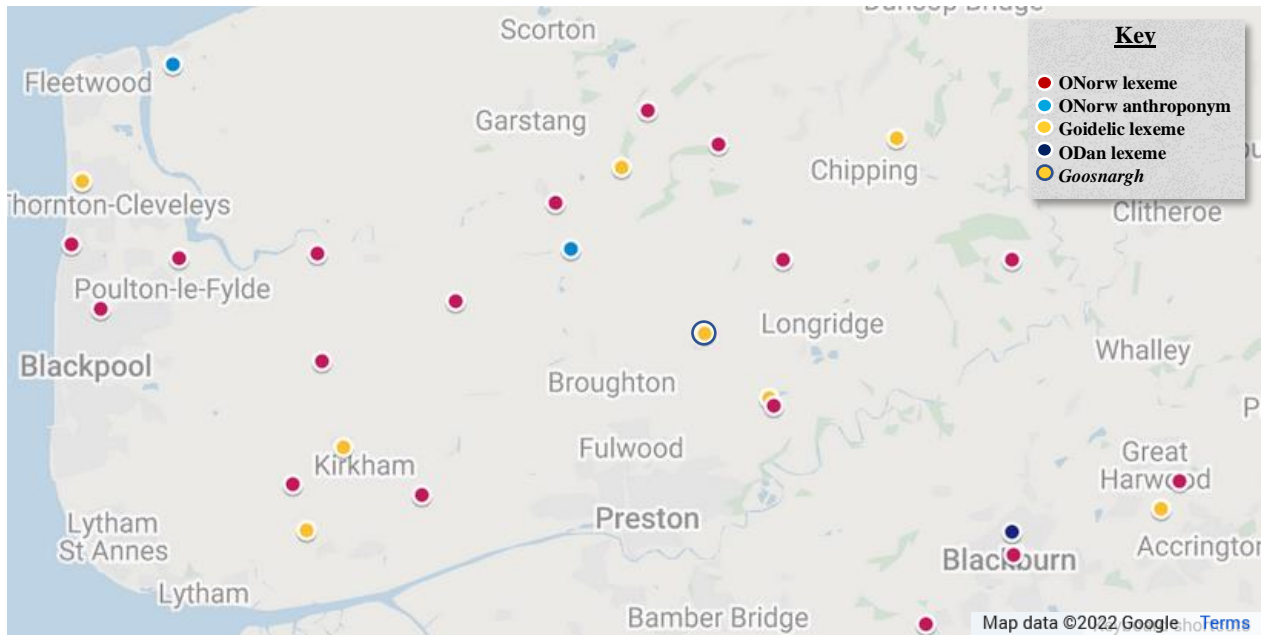


Figure 11: ON Place-Names in Amounderness Hundred surrounding Goosnargh

This tenuous assumption can be therefore supported by approximal names. More importantly, Figure 11 not only shows the surrounding place-names, but also highlights anchor names in the area. Although the red points simply show any name whose origin has been identified using phonology or lexis, in Figure 11 each of these red points happens to also indicate an anchor name, a name which can be found in Table 1.

Finally, continuing with Goidelic influence, some place-names have an ON anthroponym as their specific, and a Goidelic generic. In Table 2, this applies to *Anglezarke*, and *Torver*. Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 60, 72) suggests that both of these are examples of toponyms in *ærgi*, a Gaelic borrowing in ON, meaning ‘shielding’. This is a very common element found in ON place-names, and its implications will be further discussed in the following section.

### 5.3 Goidelic Influence

The final method for identifying specifically ONorw names is to look for Goidelic influence within toponyms. Two ways in which Goidelic can influence certain ON toponyms have been found. The first is the occurrence of exclusively Goidelic lexemes or anthroponyms within otherwise ON toponyms; the second is the Celtic ordering of elements within a toponym. The four Goidelic anthroponyms found in this study were discussed in the previous section. Therefore, the present section focuses on Goidelic lexemes and inversion compounds.

It is possible to find evidence that provides a strong indication of a toponym’s Scandinavian kingdom of origin through the identification of uniquely Goidelic lexemes, just as through the occurrence of lexemes which belonged exclusively to either of the ON languages in question. Three such Goidelic elements have been discovered and analysed in this study: *ærgi* ‘shielding’ (PLE), *kross* ‘cross as a religious symbol’ (PLE), and *Iri* ‘Irishman’ (SSN).<sup>11</sup> Table 3 shows the toponyms in which each of these elements appear.

Goidelic Element	Toponym
<i>ærgi</i>	Anglezarke, Arkholme, Aynesargh, Brettargh, Dandy Birks, Grimsargh, Medlar, Oddisherhe, Siverthesarhe, Torver
<i>kross</i>	Askelescros, Crosby, Cross Cop, Crossens, Croston, Norcross
<i>írar</i>	Ireby, Kirkby Ireleth

Table 3: Goidelic Elements found in ON Place-Names in Lancashire

Each of these elements is a Goidelic borrowing in ON. There is dispute about whether the Scandinavians learned the element *ærgi* in Ireland, or during their raids in Scotland. Fellows-Jensen (1985a: 74) highlights the distinct lack of names in *ærgi* in Ireland, compared to an abundance thereof in Scotland, thus providing potential evidence for the name’s origin lying in Scotland. However, this debate is somewhat irrelevant to this study, as both theories indicate Norwegian settlers. As shown in Table 3, ten of the eighteen toponyms with Goidelic lexemes discussed in this study have been identified as such due to the element *ærgi*. This element, being both frequent in Lancashire, and of clear Goidelic origin, indicates that there was a clear presence of Hiberno-Norsemen in Lancashire, as supported by the historical account of Norwegian invaders travelling to the North-West of England via Scotland and Ireland.

Somewhat less frequent, but still with a clear presence in the North-West, is the Goidelic element *kross*, found in six of the toponyms in this study. Wilson (2017) discusses the conversion of the Vikings to Christianity during their settlement in England. Their extensive contact with Christianity, both in England and, more importantly previously in Ireland, provided many opportunities for Christian loanwords to emerge in their native Scandinavian languages. As Norwegian settlers lived with, and acculturated to the Irish, it is suggested that *kross* in ON place-names is most likely an indication of Norwegian presence.

<sup>11</sup> Some elements are not as clearly recognisable in present-day English as *kross*, or potentially *Iri*. One excellent example of this is the name *Ewe Dale*, found in Lancashire. Here the element *ewe* actually comes from the ON *ulf* meaning ‘wolf’ (PLE). Thus, the name is essentially a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Ekwall (1918: 73-4), however, is more reluctant to conclude that ON names in *kross* explicitly indicate Goidelic influence. He states that this element was introduced to English very early on, as well as to all Scandinavian languages, rendering it redundant for the present study. On the other hand, he concedes that in the North-West *kross* is almost exclusively found in ON place-names, not those of OE origin, suggesting that the element does in fact have strong ties to the Scandinavian settlers. Furthermore, he suggests that many of these names in *kross* are found in particular areas in Lancashire. Exploring this suggestion further, Figure 12 shows a map of the names in *kross* in relation to other Norwegian and Danish names.

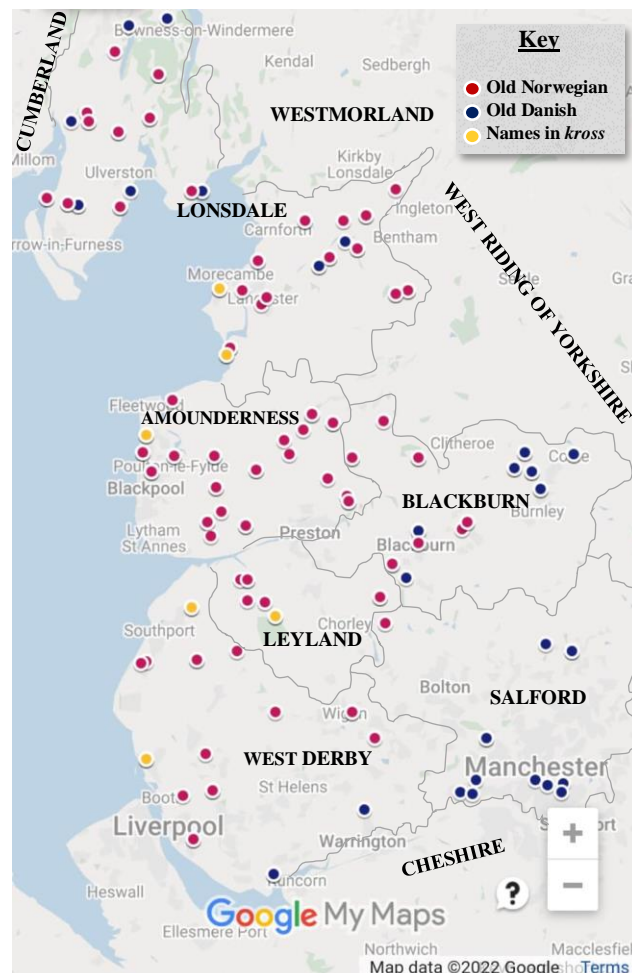


Figure 12: ON Place-Names in Lancashire, highlighting Names in *kross*

Figure 12 seems to show that the names in *kross* themselves do not cluster in particular areas. Rather, they are fairly evenly spread along the West coast of Amounderness, Leyland, and West Derby Hundreds. However, when considering the distribution of these names in comparison to specifically Norwegian or Danish names, there is a very clear pattern. Names in *kross* appear to occur exclusively in heavily Norwegian influenced areas. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that names in *kross* in Lancashire were generally coined by Norwegians with Goidelic influence.

The final Goidelic lexeme to be examined is *Írar*. This element is distinct from the previous two lexemes, as it is not only a Goidelic element, but refers in itself to a Goidelic person, an *Irishman* (SSN). Harding (2002: 42) explains that names in *Írar*, when combined with an ON element, either referred to Scandinavians having arrived from the west with Irish settlers, or simply to Scandinavians who had come from Ireland. Harding then goes on to suggest that when this element is combined with *-bý* as in *Ireby*, it may be more likely that the name in question was coined by Danes. However, as mentioned in Section 5.1, it has been found that the suggestion that *-bý* is exclusively Danish cannot be supported by sufficient evidence. Nonetheless, one cannot simply conclude that names in *Írar* must be Norwegian. Therefore, Figure 13 shows the distribution of surrounding ON toponyms.

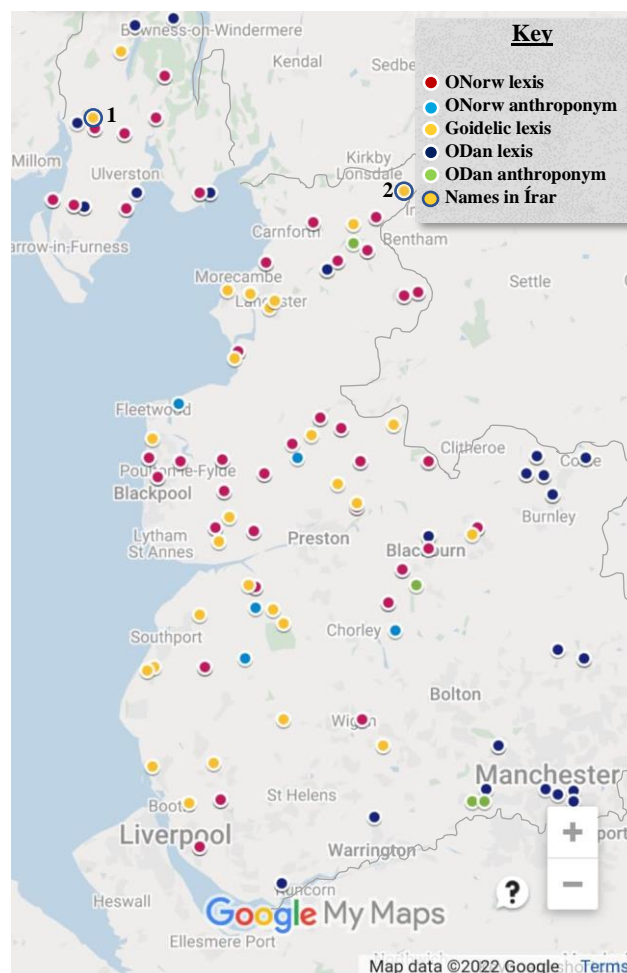


Figure 13: ON Place-Names in Lancashire, with Names in *Írar* highlighted

Although both Kirkby Ireleth (1) and Ireby (2) are in largely Norwegian-settled areas, neither is exclusively surrounded by non-Danish toponyms (Figure 13). In fact, we can see that Kirkby Ireleth is directly next to both a Danish and a Norwegian toponym. However, this Danish toponym is Grizebeck. In our discussion in Section 5.1 it was concluded that, although *bekkr* has been considered to be a Danish feature, its combination with *búð* in *Boutherbeck* renders *bekkr* less convincing than the

elements used to identify anchor place-names. The Norwegian name directly below Kirkby Ireleth is *Ashlack*, an anchor name. Thus, Kirkby Ireleth continues to be in an area which seems to be overwhelmingly influenced by Norwegian. This distribution is to be expected as ethnonyms are in fact ‘negative evidence’ for the people group which they denote (Fellows-Jensen 1985a: 65). That is to say, references to Irishmen imply that Irish settlers were rare, and therefore noteworthy.

The final indication of Goidelic influence, and therefore Norwegian rather than Danish nomenclature, is the inversion compound. As mentioned in the Section 3.3, in Germanic languages placing the specific before the generic was the norm, in Goidelic languages the opposite was true. Thus, toponyms with ON influence where the elements are in such an order, are suggestive of specifically Goidelic influence, and therefore Norwegian coinage. Six inversion compounds have been identified in Lancashire (Table 4).

Toponym	Elements
Bickershaw	<i>bý + kjarr + sceaga</i>
(Birstaf) Bryning	<i>bjár + staðir + Bryning</i>
Chercaloncastre	<i>kirkja + loncastre</i>
Leagram	<i>hlaða + Grimr</i>
Rudswain	<i>ruð + Sveinn</i>
Scartherwlmer	<i>skarð + Wulfmær</i>

*Table 4: Inversion Compounds in Lancashire*

*Bryning* is an interesting inversion compound since the first elements, which make it an inversion compound, have been lost over time. Ekwall (1922: 151) provides these previous occurrences of the name: *Birstaf Brinning* 1201, *Birstatbrunning* 1236, *Burstad Brining* 1243, *Burwadburning* 1249, *Brunigg* 1252. The name appears to have alternated between being orthographically combined or split into two parts, until losing the first part entirely around 1250. However, as shown in Table 4, *Birstaf* consists of the generics *bjár* ‘settlement’ + *staðir* ‘landing place’, and the specific *Bryning*, an OE personal name. Therefore, *Bryning* was originally an inversion compound, despite only one element remaining. Leagram is another example of an ON place-name with an anthroponym as the second element. Ekwall (1922: 142) identifies the elements within this name as being ON *hlaða* ‘barn’ + the ON anthroponym *Grimr*. Once again, the positioning of the anthroponomic specific after the generic indicates Goidelic influence, and therefore Norwegian nomenclature.

*Bickershaw*, much like *Bryning* in its original form, is made up of three elements: *bý* ‘village’ + *kjarr* ‘marsh’ + *sceaga* ‘wood’ (PLE). In addition to it being unusual for the element *bý* to make up the first element of a toponym, the implication of a specific versus a generic element is that the specific points to a more *specific* feature which can be used to distinguish the generic from other such features in the area; or to point to a specific location within the area described by a topographic generic. In the case of *kjarr* and *sceaga*, *sceaga* is arguably geographically more specific than *kjarr*. Thus, the ordering of the three elements appears as rather counterintuitive for Scandinavians and may indicate a kind of inversion compound.

Both *Rudswain*, ON *ruð* ‘clearing’ + ON *Sveinn*; and *Scartherwlmer*, ON *skarð* ‘mountain pass’ + OE *Wulfmæc* (SCE) are two further examples of typical inversion compounds, wherein the first element is topographical, and the second anthroponomic. Additionally, Ekwall (1918: 46) identifies the anthroponym *Sveinn* as Old West Scandinavian due to its diphthong, which differentiates it from the more common *Sven*. The earliest recording of *Rudswain* is found in the Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey in 1267-68, in the form *Ruðsveinn* (Ekwall: 1918: 46). As mentioned in Section 5.1, diphthongal evidence alone cannot be used to identify the language of origin of a toponym, due to the late date of the earliest recording of place-names. However, in this case, the diphthong simply further supports the suggestion that *Rudswain* is Norwegian.

Finally, the ON element *kirkja* ‘church’ presents an interesting paradox in inversion compounds. *Kirkja* is commonly found as a generic, following an anthroponym, as in *Felixkirk* (North Riding of Yorkshire), or *Ormskirk* (Lancashire) (KEPN). Thus, when *kirkja* precedes an anthroponym, it is classed as an inversion compound. Many examples of this kind, such as *Kirkanders* and *Kirk Bride* can be found in Southwest Scotland and the Isle of Man (Yamaguchi 1997), both of which were heavily Norwegian-populated areas (Section 3.1). However, when *kirkja* is followed by a topographical or habitative element it can become a specific. This can be seen in names such as *Kirkby* ‘church settlement’ and *Kirkdale* ‘church valley’. These are not examples of inversion compounds, but simply examples of *kirkja* being used as a specific to describe the habitative or topographical feature found in the area.

There are very few examples of *kirkja* being combined with anthroponyms in Lancashire, and none of the inversion compound type have been found. However, a very similar phenomenon is that whereby *kirkja* prefixes a pre-existing place-name. Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 202) discusses the example of *Chercaloncastre*, *kirkja* + *loncastre* ‘Lancaster’, found in the Domesday Book. Two separate Manors of Lancaster were distinguished by prefixing one with *kirkja*.<sup>12</sup> The prefixation rather than suffixation of *kirkja* suggests potential Goidelic influence. However, Fellows-Jensen (1985b: 197) highlights that while it is possible that *Chercaloncastre* was coined by Scandinavians – and therefore, by my assessment, by Hiberno-Norsemen – it is also possible that this was a rather late coinage and may have been an Anglo-Saxon nomenclature at the time when many ON words had made their way into the local

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<sup>12</sup> Manors were economic and political areas of land, ruled by lords.

dialect. In this case, while the inversion compounding nature of the name still suggests Goidelic influence, this may be entirely separate from the ON influence.

#### 5.4 The Distribution of Norwegian and Danish Toponyms

Let us now consider these findings in light of Research Question 2: *to what extent does the apparent distribution of Norwegian and Danish place-names support previous historical research on the distribution of Viking Settlements?* All 100 toponyms in Lancashire for which an ONorw or ODan origin has been found, can be seen in Figure 14.



Figure 14: ONorw and ODan Place-Names in Lancashire

In Section 3.1 it was stated that historical research on the settlement of the Vikings in Britain has found that the Danes largely settled in the east, and the Norwegians in the west of the British Isles (Figure 2). However, Wilson (1976), among others, has highlighted that the settlers of the two Scandinavian kingdoms spread across the British Isles, encountering each other along the way. As a result, the hypothesis stated in Section 3.1 conjectured that Lancashire would largely show Norwegian settlement, with a smaller Danish presence towards the east of Lancashire, due to influence from West Riding of Yorkshire (WRY).

The overall pattern seen in Figure 14 shows an overwhelming Norwegian presence in Lancashire, with more Danish occupancy on the inland borders, especially towards the south east of Lancashire. The two Hundreds with almost exclusively intra-county borders, Amounderness and Leyland Hundred, present a very clear pattern of distribution, with only Norwegian toponyms having been identified. Salford Hundred, on the other hand, bordering both Cheshire and WRY almost exclusively shows names which have been identified as Danish. Similarly, a Danish cluster can be seen on the WRY border of Blackburn Hundred, with Norwegian settlements being situated closer to Leyland and Amounderness Hundreds. West Derby also demonstrates this overall pattern, being overwhelmingly Norwegian-influenced, with only two Danish toponyms toward the Cheshire border. These patterns almost perfectly support previous historical research on the Viking settlement in the North-West. The Norwegians, having arrived from the west via Ireland and the Isle of Man, will have come across Amounderness, Leyland, and West Derby Hundreds before making their way to Blackburn and Salford. The Danes, on the other hand, had reached WRY and Cheshire, and appear to have infiltrated the borders of West Derby, Salford, and Blackburn Hundreds. The Danish names towards the east of Lancashire, and the Norwegian names towards the west therefore support Fellows-Jensen's (1985b: 412) statement that the Anglo-Saxons in and around Lancashire were surrounded by Norwegians and Danes arriving from both sides (Section 2).

However, one notable downfall with this study must be taken into consideration. Many other ON toponyms were found throughout Lancashire, whose ONorw or ODan origin could not be determined. While this is simply an answer to Research Question 1, it poses some difficulties for the present question. We cannot claim that the Danes did not enter Leyland or Amounderness Hundreds, nor that the Norwegians largely kept clear of Salford Hundred. Each name for which an exact origin has not been found may well have been coined by settlers from either Scandinavian kingdom. Nevertheless, the profuse presence of Norwegian place-names, compared to the lack of those of Danish origin, supports Robinson (1992: 59), Wilson (1976: 96) and all other scholars who state that the Norwegians settled in the west, while the Danes filtered across from East England.

The only Hundred which has not yet been discussed is Lonsdale Hundred, in the north of Lancashire. The pattern here seems much less clear. Although there are more Norwegian toponyms than Danish, the difference is far smaller than that found in the other five Hundreds. Equally, the exact distribution also shows a much more complex pattern. Two Danish names can be found near the northern border of Lonsdale, along with five additional names spread throughout the Hundred, showing potential influence from Westmorland and Cumberland to the north. However, Norwegian toponyms can also be found throughout the Hundred. As discussed in Section 3.3, Fellows-Jensen (1986) found toponymical evidence for both Danes and Norwegians in Cumberland and Westmorland. Therefore, the rather unclear pattern in Lonsdale Hundred can be seen as providing further support for theories of Danish and Norwegian intermingling in North Lancashire, Cumberland, and Westmorland.



## 6. Conclusion

The principal aim of this paper is to explore the feasibility of determining the Norwegian or Danish origin of ON toponyms in Lancashire. Despite having discovered some unreliable methods for distinguishing between the two, such as diphthongs; and the elements *þorp* and *by*; it was found that lexical, semantic, and phonological distinctions provided the best evidence for identifying the origin of place-names. In addition to 49 toponyms identified in this way, a further 51 were identified as having ONorw or ODan influence. With some of these analyses being based on further, less definitive lexical, or phonological evidence; some on anthroponomical evidence; and some on evidence of Goidelic influence; one can conclude that there are several ways of determining the Norwegian or Danish origin of ON toponyms.

Having found that some methods of analysis are less reliable than others, it was discovered that the distribution of toponyms is vital to this study. As the saying goes, there is strength in numbers. With toponyms whose origin is slightly less certain appearing in clusters with anchor names of the same origin, not only has the importance of identifying anchor names been shown, but also the importance of analysing place-names in relation to their proximity to other names.

Additionally, the subsequently found overall distribution of ON toponyms, as shown in Figure 14, highlights the extent to which place-names do in fact support previous historical research on the distribution of the Norwegians and Danes of the Viking Settlement. The findings support the hypothesis given in Section 3.1, which postulated that Norwegian influence from the north, and west, would result in an overwhelming Norwegian presence in Lancashire, with some Danish influence coming from the east. Not only does the very clear pattern of settlement in South Lancashire support previous historical research on the routes and settlements of the Vikings, but as does the not so clear pattern of North Lancashire. It was found that Fellows-Jensen's (1985a) previous toponymical stipulation that both Danes and Norwegians settled in Cumberland and Westmorland, is further supported by the evidence found in North Lancashire. Thus, not only has it been shown that in many cases it is possible to determine the Scandinavian kingdom of origin of ON toponyms, but it has also been shown that toponymical research can support archaeological and historical research.

While previous toponymical researchers have indicated an awareness of certain key words which can be used to differentiate between ONorw and ODan toponyms, such as *brekka*, *slakki*, *skáli*, etc; no research has been found which maps names of this kind and uses their position to verify the language of origin of further toponyms. Additionally, the detailed use of anthroponyms to make such a distinction has not been found in previous research on the place-names of Lancashire. Thus, the final map given in Figure 14 is, as far as I know, a new contribution to the field of ON toponymy in the North-West. The findings highlight the value of such toponymical research as a support to other historical, archaeological, and even geographical studies.

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## 8. Appendix

\* I/C = Inversion Compound

	Toponym	Source Language	Defining Element
1.	Amounderness Hundred	Old Norwegian	<i>Agmund</i>
2.	Anglezarke	Old Norwegian	<i>Anlaf + ærgi</i>
3.	Arkholme with Cawood	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
4.	Ashlack	Old Norwegian	<i>slakki</i>
5.	Askelescros	Old Irish	<i>kross</i>
6.	Aynesargh	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
7.	Barley-with-Wheatley Booth	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
8.	Bickershaw	Old Norwegian	<i>bý + kjarr = I/C*</i>
9.	Bleasdale	Old Norwegian	<i>blesi</i>
10.	Boothby Road	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
11.	Bouth	Old Norwegian	<i>búð</i>
12.	Breck	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
13.	Brettargh	Old Norwegian	<i>ærgi</i>
14.	Brinscall	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
15.	(Birstaf) Bryning	Old Norwegian	<i>býjar-staðir + Brýningr = I/C</i>
16.	Capernwray	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>
17.	Catterall	Old Norwegian	<i>kattarhali</i>
18.	Chercaloncastre	Old Norwegian	<i>kirkja + loncastre = I/C</i>
19.	Church Coniston	Old Danish	<i>kunung</i>
20.	Claughton	Old Norwegian	<i>klakkr</i>
21.	Conishead	Old Danish	<i>kunung</i>
22.	Crook Farm	Old Norwegian	<i>krókr</i>

23.	Crosby	Old Irish	<i>kross</i>
24.	Cross Cop	Old Irish	<i>kross</i>
25.	Crossens	Old Irish	<i>kross</i>
26.	Croston	Old Irish	<i>kross</i>
27.	Croxteth	Old Norwegian	<i>staðir</i>
28.	Cunscough Lane	Old Norwegian	<i>konungr</i>
29.	Dandy Birks	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
30.	Davyhulme	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>
31.	Davyscoles	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
32.	Deerslack	Old Danish	<i>slet</i>
33.	Dunkenhalgh	Old Norwegian	<i>Donnchadh</i>
34.	Dunnishbooth	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
35.	Edenbreck	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
36.	Elliscales Avenue	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
37.	Esprick	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
38.	Feniscowles	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
39.	Flixton	Old Danish	<i>Flik</i>
40.	Force Beck	Old Norwegian	<i>foss</i>
41.	Goldshaw Booth	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
42.	Goosnargh	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
43.	Greenbank Farm	Old Danish	<i>banke</i>
44.	Grimsargh with Brockholes	Old Norwegian	<i>ærgi</i>
45.	Grizebeck	Old Danish	<i>bekkr</i>
46.	Hale Bank	Old Danish	<i>banke</i>
47.	Hay Slacks	Old Norwegian	<i>slakki</i>

48.	Hesketh with Becconsall	Old Irish	<i>Becan</i>
49.	Higher Lanskill Farm	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
50.	Hornby with Farleton	Old Danish	<i>Horni</i>
51.	Hulme	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>
52.	Hulme Hall, Rusholme	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>
53.	Inskip-with-Sowerby	Old Norwegian	<i>saurr + býr</i>
54.	Ireby	Old Irish	<i>Iri</i>
55.	Kent's Bank	Old Danish	<i>banke</i>
56.	Kirkby Ireleth	Old Norwegian	<i>Iri</i>
57.	Kirkmanshulme Lane	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>
58.	Larbreck	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
59.	Leagram	Old Norwegian	<i>hlaða + Grimr = I/C</i>
60.	Levenshulme	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>
61.	Limbrick	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
62.	Loudscales	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
63.	Medlar with Wesham	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
64.	Melling-with-Wrayton	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>
65.	Mellishaw	Old Irish	<i>Maelans</i>
66.	Monk Coniston	Old Danish	<i>kunung</i>
67.	Mowbrick Lane	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
68.	Nettleslack	Old Norwegian	<i>slakki</i>
69.	New Laund Booth	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
70.	Newton with Scales	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
71.	Norbreck	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
72.	Norcross	Old Irish	<i>kross</i>

73.	Oddisherhe	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
74.	Old Laund Booth	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
75.	Oozebooth Terraces	Old Danish	<i>bōð</i>
76.	Preesall with Hackinsall	Old Norwegian	<i>Hákon</i>
77.	Ribby-with-Wrea	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>
78.	Rudswain	Old Norwegian	<i>ruð + Sveinn = I/C</i>
79.	Sandscale	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
80.	Scarisbrick	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
81.	Scartherwlmer	Old Norwegian	<i>skarð + Wulfmær = I/C</i>
82.	Scholes	Old Norwegian	<i>skáli</i>
83.	Siverthesarhe	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
84.	Skelmersdale	Old Irish	<i>ærgi</i>
85.	Sunbrick	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
86.	Swarbrick Avenue	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
87.	Tarlescough	Old Norwegian	<i>Paraldr</i>
88.	Tarleton	Old Norwegian	<i>Paraldr</i>
89.	Tockholes	Old Danish	<i>Tóki</i>
90.	Torver	Old Norwegian	<i>Torfi + ærgi</i>
91.	Toxteth	Old Norwegian	<i>staðir</i>
92.	Urmston	Old Danish	<i>Urm</i>
93.	Warbreck	Old Norwegian	<i>brekka</i>
94.	Whiteray	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>
95.	Windy Banks	Old Danish	<i>banke</i>
96.	Winwick with Hulme	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>
97.	Wolstenholme	Old Danish	<i>hulm</i>



98.	Wray	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>
99.	Wraysholme	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>
100.	Wray-with-Botton	Old Norwegian	<i>vrá</i>

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