THE STUDY OF SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT IN THE VIKING AGE: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE APPLICATION OF PLACE-NAMES IN ENGLAND AND NORMANDY

Investigating the settlement of Scandinavians outside the homelands in the Viking Age, especially the early stages of the communities they established, is far from simple. We have only the barest hints of what might have happened preserved in contemporary written texts, and later narratives of Scandinavian takeover lose the focus of proximity and muddy the waters further with distorting agendas. In some places more than others material evidence contributes to our knowledge of the ninth- and tenth-century incomers, but this is never unambiguous. Scientific analyses of DNA and isotopes belong to a developing field which has the potential to prove highly informative, but, like archaeology and texts, they need careful handling. The evidence of place-names, an abundant source, is similarly complicated to apply, but it has been fundamental to the construction of narratives about the process of settlement. The conference in Ariano Irpino provided a welcome opportunity to compare the approaches of different national historiographies to the application of this last category of evidence in the study of overseas settlements in the Viking Age[1]. While a comprehensive analysis of the use of place-names in the past and a full assessment of their current contribution to the study of settlements across the whole of the Scandinavia diaspora would be desirable, it is beyond the scope of this paper, and I will limit my discussion to the "Danelaws" of England and France. Although their histories differed, the settlements have much in common, including their toponymic evidence. There have been differences in the historical application of place-names, however, which have had considerable impact on interpretation of the Scandinavian periods of the two regions.

The Scandinavians of the Viking Age left their mark on names wherever they settled. As early as the tenth century, a historically-minded English ealdorman noted that the Danes had a different name – *Deoraby* – for the place he called *Northuuorthige*[2]. In the thirteenth century, the Icelander Snorri Sturluson famously commented on the many

1. I would like to thank the editors for their invitation to the conference and for their patience while this paper was being written up for publication. Thanks are also due to David Parsons for reading an early draft.

2. *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell, London 1962, pp. 36-37.

Les historiographies des mondes normands, XVII^e-XXI^e siècle, P. Bauduin, E. D'Angelo (dir.), CESN – PUC, 2021, p. 207-232

names in Northern England «derived from the Norse tongue»[3]. In England and in Normandy, distribution maps of surviving place-names identified as Scandinavian are routinely used to illustrate discussions of Viking-Age settlement. While eye-catching, this approach is unfortunately misleading, implying as it does that the location (and density) of names is a straightforward indicator of the presence and number of Scandinavian individuals involved in the original settlement. Place-names are far more subtle than that, and a great deal of work is required to turn them into more than dots on a map. Toponymics is a highly technical field, which requires specialist expertise, but it is also interdisciplinary and collaborative. The process of interpretation has to begin with the linguistic analysis of individual names, based as much as possible on early spellings, to correctly identify the component parts: that is the job of specialist linguists. The formation of the names also needs to be considered more generally and the process theorised, with questions raised about how place-names are coined, how they hybridise, how words are borrowed into other languages, and what factors influence their survival. While language specialists are best placed to unravel the subtle technicalities of contact linguistics, this problematising is where we historians can make a contribution.

I will begin with a sketch of the history of place-name study and look at how English and French historians have dealt with toponyms when constructing narratives about their Scandinavian past. The paper will conclude with a short assessment of the state of play at present and a selective summary of what place-names are contributing today to our understanding of the process of Scandinavian settlement.

The historical value of England's place-names is not a modern discovery[4]. Medieval authors commented in passing on the import of names, especially if other languages were involved[5]. Interest escalated in the sixteenth century, when history became crucial in the construction of a new definition of "Englishness", and systematic mapping of the kingdom began during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Cartography was a useful new way of representing the past, an approach which naturally drew the eye to the places on the map. William Camden (1551-1623), who in 1586 produced the first comprehensive topographical survey of Britain, *Britannia*, illustrated later editions of his work with historical maps[6]. Camden was

3. «The Saga of Hakon the Good», chap. 3, in SNORRI STURLUSON, *Heimskringla*, I: *The Beginnings to Óláfr Tryggvason*, trans. A. Finlay - A. Faulkes, London 2011, p. 89.

4. For short historiographical surveys of the uses of place-names in England, see M.J. RYAN, *Place-Names, Language, and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape. An Introduction*, in *Place-Names, Language, and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape*, cur. N.J. Higham - M.J. Ryan, Woodbridge 2011, pp. 1-21, esp. pp. 10-19, and M. TOWNEND, *Scandinavian Place-Names in England*, in *Perceptions of Place. Twenty-First-Century Interpretations of English Place-Name Studies*, cur. J. Carroll - D.N. Parsons, Nottingham 2013, pp. 103-128.

5. William of Malmesbury, for example, commented on the names *Ealdecirce* (Old English) (hereafter OE) and *Ineswitrin* (British) at Glastonbury: WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, I, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors - R.M. Thomson - M. Winterbottom, Oxford 1998, appendix I, chap. 1.21 and 1.28, pp. 804 and 812.

6. R.C. RICHARDSON, *William Camden and the Re-Discovery of England*, «Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society» 78, 2004, pp. 108-123; S. KEYNES, *Mapping the Anglo-Saxon Past*,

a pioneer in the investigation of the etymologies of place-names, but because he and most of his antiquarian colleagues and successors did not know the Old Norse language, the Scandinavians played only a minor role in their story of Britain[7]. A rare few, however, such as John Denton (*d.* 1617) and Thomas Denton (1637-1698), antiquarians from northwest England, recognised as Scandinavian many names in their area. The former understood Thursby in Cumbria, for example, to refer to a place of sacrifice to Thor and the *by* element as meaning «building», although he did not identify what language it belonged to[8]. Somewhat later, in 1695 and 1722, revisions of Camden's *Britannia* were produced by Edmund Gibson (1669-1748). Gibson added a section entitled "General Rules Whereby to Know the Original of the Names of Places in England", which only referenced what he called Saxon etymologies[9]. But Gibson included the following in his "Additions on Norfolk":

> «Near the place where this river runs into the sea, it makes up one side of a Peninsula, call'd at this day *Flegg*. The soil is fruitful, and bears corn very well; and here the Danes seem to have made their first settlement, both because it is nearest their landing, and pretty well fortify'd by the nature of the place, as being almost encompass'd with water; as also because in that little compass of ground we find 13 villages ending in *by*, a Danish word signifying a *village*, or *dwelling-place*»[10].

In this passage, Gibson moved beyond recording and etymologizing to historical interpretation: he established a chronological context, commented on the nature of the landscape and the site chosen by the settlers, classified the place-names by type, and explained the origin of the foreign generic element (*-by*). Gibson seems to have been unusual, however, and ahead of his time. Most antiquaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries simply offered speculative etymologies that traced place-names back to Roman, British, or Saxon roots[11].

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in *Towns and Topography. Essays in Memory of David H. Hill,* cur. G.R. Owen-Crocker - S.D. Thompson, Oxford 2014, pp. 148-170.

7. Camden did learn Welsh, however; Richardson, *William Camden*, p. 117.
8. «Where the Danes had a house or temple of sacrifice, or a publique place where those pagans offered upp the blood of their captives to a god whom in that sort they honored»: *John Denton's History of Cumberland*, Surtees Society and Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, ed. A.J.L. Winchester, Woodbridge 2010, p. 143, citing as his authority Everardus, abbot of the nearby religious house of Holme Cultram until 1192, whose works have been lost. Denton's interest in Danish heritage is evident in his discussion of other names: Ulnesby, for example, p. 153.
9. William Camden, *Camden's Britannia. Newly Translated into English with Large Additions and Improvements*, ed. E. Gibson, London 1695 (rev. ed. 1722), col. clxxii-clxxv; most of the words cited are taken to be "Saxon" (including *by*), with occasional reference to a "Gothic" derivation. Camden made no distinction between Old English and Old Norse.
10. William Camden, *Camden's Britannia*, col. 395-397. I would like to thank David Parsons for alerting me to this passage.
11. R. Sweet, *Antiquaries. The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain,* London 2004. I am grateful to Rosemary Sweet for help with my questions.

Things went up a gear in 1846-1847 when the Danish archaeologist, Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae (1821-1885), came to Britain with a commission from the king of Denmark. The 1840s were a time of political tension in that country, and issues of national identity were particularly sensitive. Danes felt the need to stress their independence from Germany, and one way to do so was to investigate their forefathers' achievements away from home. Worsaae realised that place-names offered «a juster and less prejudiced notion» of his viking countrymen, because they could turn attention away from raiding and warfare to focus on settlement and cultural influence – on laws, language, and farming practice, for example – and other constructive contributions to English life[12]. Worsaae's etymologies have not all stood the test of time, and his use of names could be simplistic, but at other times he had more subtle explanations[13]. What is noteworthy is that, long before the modern fashion for interdisciplinarity, he used the evidence of place-names along with monuments, burials, and texts to try to understand Scandinavian settlement overseas, establishing a highly influential template for subsequent research.

Two further developments influenced the study of the Scandinavian past in England in the nineteenth century. One was a craze for "the Old North". The idea of a Teutonic family of nations, reconstituting a romantic (and fictional) unity that went back to medieval times, had an obvious attraction in a country ruled by the House of Hanover[14]. Norse ancestry and associations were embraced with enthusiasm across the country: tours of Iceland became fashionable, the study of Old Norse blossomed, and the translation of texts, which had begun in the eighteenth century, accelerated[15]. At the same time, the Victorians co-opted England's Scandinavian past and combined it with earlier ideas of the Anglo-Saxon period as a golden age of Germanic freedoms, creating a potent heritage which strengthened the rationale for the extension of their own dominion across the

12. J.J.A. WORSAAE, *An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland, and Ireland,* London 1852; see especially section VII of his discussion of England (pp. 65-76, *Danish-Norwegian Names of Places*). A later publication, *Den danske erobring af England og Normandiet*, Copenhagen 1863, commented further on names in England.

13. In *An Account of the Danes and Norwegians*, p. 31, Worsaae commented on the pattern of place-names in Flegg that had interested Gibson; on pp. 204-205 he distinguished population movements (in the Scottish Lowlands, in this case) that affected place-names from those that did not.

14. The Hanoverians were said to have descended from Ragnar Loðbrok: A. WAWN, *The Vikings and the Victorians. Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Woodbridge 2000, p. 6.

15. WAWN, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, pp. 19-33; C.E. FELL, *The First Publication of Old Norse Literature in England and its Relation to its Sources*, and D.M. WILSON, *The Viking Age in British Literature and History in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, in *The Waking of Angantyr. The Scandinavian Past in European Culture. Den nordiske fortid i europæisk kultur*, Acta Jutlandica LXXI:1, cur. E. Roesdahl - P. Meulengracht Sørensen, Aarhus 1996, pp. 27-57 and 58-71; H. O'DONOGHUE, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature. A Short Introduction*, Oxford 2004, pp. 110-124. George Hickes (1642-1715), Thomas Gray (1716-1771), and Thomas Percy (1729-1811) were the first to render Old Norse poetry into English, sometimes from Latin translations by Scandinavian antiquaries. The translation of sagas into English, on the other hand, began in Scotland in the late eighteenth century.

world[16]. The passion for the Old North had many ramifications in British culture, but one result in scholarly circles was the intensification of interest in the names left in the landscape by Scandinavian forebears. W.G. Collingwood (1854-1932), translator, artist, professor of fine art, novelist, and local historian, was one of many writers who were alert to place-names as a cultural footprint left by Viking-Age settlers. Collingwood's short study of the Lake District, for example, took the same approach as Worsaae, bringing place-names and material evidence together with texts[17].

The cultural flowering inspired by Old Norse literature coincided with significant developments in linguistics. Nineteenth-century scholars interested in the history of language were stimulated to build on earlier studies of Old and Middle English, a process which helped to put England's place-names increasingly under the microscope. English philologists and lexicographers such as William Skeat (1835-1912) and Henry Bradley (1845-1923) brought the rigorous methods of their disciplines to onomastics, thereby raising the study of place-names, which had been «largely the preserve of amateurs with far-fetched and undisciplined notions of relationships between words», to a higher level[18]. Strict philological procedures were established. In 1900 the Swedish philologist Erik Björkman (1872-1919) admitted that, while place-names «would also prove extremely useful in many respects» for his study of Scandinavian loan-words in English, he had not yet made the necessary collections and had had to limit his enquiries to textual (mainly literary) evidence[19]. Soon thereafter, however, the challenge was taken up by two of his countrymen, Harald Lindkvist (1881-1974)[20], and Eilert Ekwall (1877-1964). Ekwall, who was Professor of English at the University of Lund, is perhaps best known for his *Dictionary of English Place-Names*, still an essential reference work today, but he also published extensively on the English place-name corpus and more widely on other aspects of English philology[21]. In the 1930s, also in Lund, Olof Anderson published an important study of England's hundred-names[22]. These Swedish and English scholars systematically compiled a corpus of place-name evidence from England and put its interpretation on a rigorous footing.

The formation of the English Place-Name Society (EPNS) in 1923, stimulated by the collaboration of scholars from England and Scandinavia, was a major development in the field. From the start, the Society brought together the expertise

16. Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*; R. Horsman, *The Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain before 1850*, «Journal of the History of Ideas» 37, 1976, pp. 387-410.
17. W.G. Collingwood, *The Vikings in Lakeland. Their Place-Names, Remains, History*, «Saga-Book of the Viking Club» 1, 1895-1897, pp. 182-196, esp. pp. 182-185.
18. *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*, ed. M. Lapidge, Oxford 2002, pp. 18, 66, and 70-71.
19. E. Björkman, *Scandinavian Loan-Words in Middle English*, Halle 1900, p. 28.
20. H. Lindkvist, *Middle-English Place-Names of Scandinavian Origin: Part I,* Uppsala 1912.
21. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, cur. E. Ekwall, Lund 1935 (4th ed. Oxford 1960); O. von Feilitzen, *The Published Writings of Eilert Ekwall*, Lund 1961.
22. O.S. Anderson, *The English Hundred-Names*, Lund 1934. This has recently been put online by the Institute of Archaeology at University College, London, to support their research project, «Landscapes of Governance»: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/ projects/assembly/ElectronicAnderson.

of philologists and historians[23], establishing a «creative interfusion of history and linguistics» which Matthew Townend has recently characterised as one of the defining features of place-name study in England[24]. The first volume published by the Society, an introductory survey of place-names edited by Allen Mawer (1879-1942) and Frank Stenton (1880-1967), a linguist and a historian respectively, came out in 1924; Ekwall contributed chapter 4, «The Scandinavian Element»[25]. Since then 96 county volumes have been published and 51 volumes of a (now annual) journal. Stenton, President of the EPNS from 1942 to 1946, had made place-names the subject of his inaugural Lecture when he became President of the Royal Historical Society in 1937[26]. EPNS stalwarts A.H. Smith (1903-1967) and Kenneth Cameron (1922-2001) published numerous studies and county volumes. Many different aspects of England's toponymy were examined, but Scandinavian names received particular attention. Margaret Gelling (1924-2009) dedicated a chapter to Scandinavian place-names in her influential *Signposts to the Past*, for example, and Gillian Fellows-Jensen has produced three important volumes of analysis of personal names and place-names in northern England as well as many articles[27]. As Townend has observed, the focus of this work was primarily on names relevant to settlement history[28]. Much effort went into grouping place-names into different types and creating hypotheses about their potential relation to different historical processes – land-taking, fragmentation of estates, secondary migration, expansion into new areas, etc. The EPNS recently published an important review of the state of place-name studies which reflects the energy still characterising the field today[29].

In the second half of the twentieth century, however, a wave of revisionism in some circles opened up the subject of the degree of Scandinavian impact on England. Some scholars were influenced by Peter Sawyer's minimalist assessment of the Scandinavian presence[30], and others concentrated their doubts on migration as an explanation of change. This naturally led to the questioning of the evidence of place-names, on which so much interpretation of the Scandinavian settlement

23. J. Carroll, *Perceiving Place through Time. English Place-Name Studies*, in *Perceptions of Place*, pp. xiii-xxxvii; Ryan, *Place-Names, Language, and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape*.
24. Townend, *Scandinavian Place-Names in England*, pp. 115-116.
25. E. Ekwall, *The Scandinavian Element*, in *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, cur. A. Mawer - F.M. Stenton, Cambridge 1924, pp. 55-92.
26. F.M. Stenton, *The Historical Bearing of Place-Name Studies: the Danish Settlement of Eastern England*, «Transactions of the Royal Historical Society» 24, 1942, pp. 1-24, reprinted in *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England*, cur. D.M. Stenton, Oxford 1970, pp. 298-313.
27. M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past*, Chichester 1978, pp. 215-236. For a list of Fellows-Jensen's publications, see *Names through the Looking-Glass. Festschrift in Honour of Gillian Fellows-Jensen,* cur. P. Gammeltoft - B. Jørgensen, Copenhagen 2006, pp. 322-350.
28. Townend, *Scandinavian Place-Names in England*, pp. 121-122.
29. *Perceptions of Place*, cur. Carroll - Parsons.
30. P.H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings*, London 1962 (2nd ed. 1971).

in England had rested[31]. The revisionist position itself then came to be questioned, thanks in part to the surge of finds which followed the introduction of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in England in 1997, which provided a respectable mechanism for the reporting and recording of finds by metal-detectorists[32]. This radically expanded the corpus of objects found in England that had been imported from Scandinavia or copied locally from Scandinavian models. Around the same time, new scientific methods such as isotope analysis, with the potential to identify place of origin of skeletal material, began to be applied to sites of Scandinavian association. The influence of an increasingly globalised world also played a part in renewing the recognition that population movement was not limited to modern times. Although interpretations continue to vary, and there is no absolute consensus on the subject, it is probably fair to say that these factors, combined with a more problematising approach, have helped place-names to regain their standing as evidence. A good indication of where we are now comes from the judgement of Townend, writing in 2013: «it is place-name study that has done as much as any discipline to bring us knowledge about the Scandinavian episode in England's past; the history of the Danelaw would be unwritable without it»[33].

Normandy has a similar body of Scandinavian place-names, but as we shall see, current attitudes to their historical standing are significantly different. Many of the same personal names, such as Hasteinn and Hrólfr, are found in place-names, often combined with a generic (i.e. second element) in (or borrowed from) the local language, such as Old English (OE) *tun* and Romance *ville*[34]. In both England and Normandy hundreds of habitative names with Old Norse (ON) specifics (first elements) were combined with Norse generics denoting settlements, such as *toft*, «area designated for habitation», *þveit*, «clearing», and *þorp*, «secondary settlement»; and many more topographical names were coined with other borrowed Norse words such as *bekkr*, «stream», and *dalr*, «valley». The Scandinavian settlements of England and Normandy differed in many ways, of course: the origins of the latter are associated with a royal grant, not a series of conquests, and its Scandinavian rulers retained their power and independence for longer than those of the several Danelaw polities in England[35].

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31. See for example, D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw. Its Social Structure, c. 800-1100,* London 2000, pp. 329-335.
32. See https://finds.org.uk/about.
33. Townend, *Scandinavian Place-Names in England*, pp. 105-106. For a reconsideration of place-names and settlement, see L. Abrams - D.N. Parsons, *Place-Names and the History of Scandinavian Settlement in England*, in *Land, Sea and Home. Proceedings of a Conference on Viking-Period Settlement*, cur. J. Hines - A. Lane - M. Redknap, Leeds 2004, pp. 379-431. For an example of the use of place-name evidence in a regional history, see Townend's *Viking Age Yorkshire*, Pickering 2014.
34. J. Adigard des Gautries, *Les noms de personnes scandinaves en Normandie de 911 à 1066,* Lund 1954, pp. 71-174; he identified 82 (or more) personal names in the Norman material. For the coining of hybrids, see below, n. 103.
35. For recent syntheses see D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England. Settlement, Society and Culture*, Manchester 2006, and P. Bauduin, *La première Normandie (X^e^-XI^e^ siècles)*, Caen 2004 (2nd ed. 2006).

In spite of these potentially different starting-points, historians approaching the early history of the two regions nevertheless have a common difficulty, that the first century of the Scandinavian presence is extremely obscure[36]. The development of their Scandinavian place-names is consequently difficult to trace.

There are no contemporary records of the distribution of land to new Scandinavian lords in either England or Normandy. In England, although charters of the tenth century survive in relative abundance, the Danelaw regions are conspicuously under-represented. A small number of Scandinavian toponyms are recorded in contemporary sources and in later charters, but it is Domesday Book that provides an invaluable country-wide snapshot of the place-name map in 1066. In Normandy, the testimony of ducal diplomas begins in the early eleventh century, almost a hundred years after the Scandinavian takeover. Although they cannot reveal the place-name landscape of the first Norman generations, these ducal charters nevertheless provide important evidence. The earliest known surviving single sheet diploma issued by the regime, for example, a charter of Richard II from 1006[37], included grants of land at *Scrotivilla* (Ecretteville) and *Harofloz* (Harfleur), place-names coined with, respectively, the Scandinavian personal name Skrauti and the Old Norse elements *hár* («high»), and *flóð* («flood», «tide»). Richard's charter used a new unit of measurement – the duke granted *xxx hacreis terrae arabilis* – which may have been borrowed from Old Norse *akr*, and it is noteworthy that this term had already acquired Latin declensional endings by 1006[38]. Documents such as these clearly demonstrate that Norse personal names and vocabulary had already been incorporated into the regional terminology and place-names of Normandy by the time that charters began to record them.

Attitudes to the Scandinavian past in England and France have had much in common, as the countries shared many of the same intellectual fashions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[39]. The epic, romantic, chivalric, and poetic North ran alongside the image of the violent, but potentially purifying, viking. The Swiss-born scholar Paul-Henri Mallet (1730-1807), a professor of French in Copenhagen, published the first part of his *Introduction à l'histoire du Danemarch où l'on traite de la religion, des moeurs, des lois, et des usages des anciens Danois* in 1755 on commission from the Danish government, the remainder being published the following year[40]. Mallet, whose work helped to propagate the confusion between Celts and Scandinavians, was translated

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36. L. ABRAMS, *Early Normandy*, «Anglo-Norman Studies» 35, 2013, pp. 45-64.

37. M. FAUROUX, *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066, Caen 1961*, p. 80, nº 9.

38. ABRAMS, *Early Normandy*, pp. 51 and 56.

39. R. BOYER, *Vikings, Sagas, and Wasa Bread*, in *Northern Antiquity. The Post-Medieval Reception of Edda and Saga*, Enfield Lock 1994, pp. 69-81, esp. pp. 71-73; P. VAN TIEGHEM, *La mythologie et l'ancienne poésie scandinaves dans la littérature européenne au XVIII^e siècle*, «Edda. Nordisk Tidsskrift for Litteraturforskning» 11, 1919, pp. 185-207; J.-J. BERTAUX, *Vikings et drakkars dans la littérature régionaliste normande 1850-1950*, in *Dragons et drakkars. Le mythe viking de la Scandinavie à la Normandie XVIII^e-XX^e siècles*, cur. J.-M. Levesque, Caen 1996, pp. 57-70.

40. The complete work was entitled *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des celtes, et particulièrement des anciens scandinaves*, Copenhagen 1756.

into English by Thomas Percy in 1770 under the title *Northern Antiquities*[41]. It seems that *les Scandinaves* came to represent the quintessential barbarian, exemplifying the purifying force that had brought about the end of a decadent Rome. Mallet had an enormous influence in both France and England. Apparently stimulated by the Danes' need to counter foreign charges of political absolutism, Mallet's work examined and extended earlier ideas of Scandinavia as the home of freedom[42]. His primary interests were not in Scandinavians in western Europe but in the mythological material of the Old Norse poetic corpus and what we might call social and cultural history, gleaned from a variety of sources. The stress on the physical and cultural vigour of Viking-Age Scandinavians, and on their subsequent gift of the poetry that helped to revivify French literature, tended to overshadow in the national consciousness the role they had played in the history of Normandy. Nevertheless, the learned societies which proliferated in France in the nineteenth century contributed to the development of a substantial and multi-facetted local history, and Normandy's Scandinavian origins came to be seen increasingly as the cornerstone of its identity[43].

Early investigations of the Norman past had included etymologies which were often, as in England, «hypothèses de pure fantaisie»[44]. One of the first more professional explorations was by the historian Georges Depping (1784-1853), born in Germany but later a French citizen. His *Histoire des expéditions maritimes des Normands et de leur établissement en France au dixième siècle* went through several editions in France and was also translated into both Danish and Swedish soon after its publication[45]. Scandinavian interest in Depping's work encouraged Auguste Le Prévost (1787-1859) to establish further links with scholars there[46]. Le Prévost made careful studies of the names in medieval manuscripts for his own detailed work on the Eure[47]. Meanwhile, Worsaae added Normandy to his itinerary of overseas visits to Viking-Age destinations,

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41. T. Percy, *Northern Antiquities: or, A Description of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws of the Ancient Danes, and Other Northern Nations; including Those of Our Own Saxon Ancestors. With a Translation of the Edda, or System of Runic Mythology, and Other Pieces, from the Ancient Icelandic Tongue*, London 1770.

42. T.J. Beck, *Northern Antiquities in French Learning and Literature (1755-1855). A Study in Pre-Romantic Ideas*, I, New York 1934, pp. 9-24.

43. F. Guillet, *Entre stratégie sociale et quête érudite: les notables normands et la fabrication de la Normandie au XIX^e siècle*, «Le Mouvement social» 203, 2003, pp. 89-111; F. Guillet, *Le Nord mythique de la Normandie: des Normands aux Vikings de la fin du XVIII^e siècle jusqu'à la Grande Guerre*, «Revue du Nord» 87, 2005, pp. 459-471.

44. Adigard des Gautries, *Les noms de personnes*, p. 2; R. De Gorog, *A History of the Research on Scandinavian Influence on French*, «Studies in Philology» 59, 1959, pp. 459-470, esp. p. 459.

45. *Histoire des expéditions maritimes des Normands et de leur établissement en France au dixième siècle*, Paris 1826.

46. Adigard des Gautries, *Les noms de personnes*, p. 4; Guillet, *Le Nord mythique*, p. 465.

47. *Dictionnaire des anciens noms de lieux du département de l'Eure*, Évreux 1839, and *Mémoires et notes de M. Auguste Le Prévost pour servir à l'histoire du département de l'Eure; recueillis et publiés sous les auspices du Conseil général et de la Société libre d'agriculture, sciences, arts et belles-lettres de l'Eure*, Évreux 1862.

and his report to the Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters emphasised the interest of the place-names in ascertaining the origins of its founders; in 1863 he published a comparative study of England and Normandy[48]. According to Jean Adigard des Gautries, however, the credit for the first systematic examination of Scandinavian personal names and place-names in Normandy and the collection of an important corpus of early forms belongs to the Dane, A.K. Fabricius (1822-1902), whose work in the 1850s and 1860s was finally published in 1897[49]. Interest in Scandinavia in Normandy's history continued to grow, as did contacts between the countries. In 1881 the first volume of a compendious four-volume work by the Dane Johannes Steenstrup (1844-1935), *Normannerne*, abridged and translated into French by the author, was published in a Norman learned journal[50]. The Norwegian historian and philologist Gustav Storm (1845-1903) cited the work of many French and Danish authorities in his own examination of Normandy's place-names in the 1880s[51].

In the meantime, French scholars were addressing the history of France's place-names more broadly, among them Jules Quicherat (1814-1882), historian and archaeologist, who published *De la formation française des anciens noms de lieu* in the 1860s, and Albert Dauzat (1877-1955), whose *Les noms de lieux. Origine et évolution, villes et villages, pays, cours d'eau, montagnes, lieux-dits* came out in 1926[52]. While they paid only passing attention to Normandy[53], words of Scandinavian origin «were given very careful treatment» in the *Dictionnaire général* of 1892[54]. From the early nineteenth century several Norman scholars, among them Édouard Le Héricher (1812-1890), were making analyses of local language[55]. The *Dictionnaire du patois normand* published in 1849 by Édélestand and Alfred Duméril (1801-1871, 1825-1897)

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48. ADIGARD DES GAUTRIES, *Les noms de personnes*, p. 6; WORSAAE, *Den danske erobring af England og Normandiet*; his discussion of the origins of Normandy begins on p. 140; see pp. 174-185 for Normandy's place-names. I have been unable to find any reference to translations of this work into either English or French.

49. A.K. FABRICIUS, *Danske minder i Normandiet*, Copenhagen 1897; ADIGARD DES GAUTRIES, *Les noms de personnes*, pp. 6-7, 10-13.

50. *Études préliminaires pour servir à l'histoire des Normands et leurs invasions,* «Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie» 10, 1881, pp. 185-418. *Normannerne*, Copenhagen 1876-1880, was printed with a résumé in French (pp. 292-310). Steenstrup's *Études préliminaires* did not cover place-names, but a section of his *Normandiets historie under de syv første hertuger, 911-1066,* Copenhagen 1925, featured a discussion (pp. 255-265).

51. G. STORM, *Om nordiske stedsnavne Normandiet*, «Historisk Tidsskrift» 6, 1888, pp. 236-251.

52. J. QUICHERAT, *De la formation française des anciens noms de lieu*, Paris 1867; V.E. GRAHAM, *Proust's Etymologies*, «French Studies» 29, 1975, pp. 300-312, at 304, characterised it as «little more than a series of notes on phonological change, with a few notes on historical phenomena»; A. DAUZAT, *Les noms de lieux. Origine et évolution, villes et villages, pays, cours d'eau, montagnes, lieux-dits*, Paris 1926.

53. DAUZAT, *Les noms de lieux*, pp. 140 and 146-148, for example.

54. DE GOROG, *A History*, p. 463; A. HATZFELD - A. DARMSTETER - A. THOMAS, *Dictionnaire général de la langue française*, Paris 1892-1900.

55. É. LE HÉRICHER, *La Normandie scandinave ou glossaire des éléments scandinaves du patois normand*, Avranches 1861.

contained numerous inaccuracies, but Charles Joret (1829-1914) clearly knew the more accurate work of Scandinavians when he cited and listed Norse toponymic elements in 1883[56]. Auguste Longnon (1844-1911), who held the chair of historical geography at the Collège de France and is credited with the first historical atlas of France, discussed Normandy's place-names in his lectures at the Sorbonne in the 1890s[57]. Longnon's work reached a wider audience than it might have thanks to the etymologies featured in Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, beginning with *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*), published in 1913, and most strikingly in a long set-piece in *Sodome et Gomorrhe II* (sometimes called *Cities of the Plain* in English), published in 1922. In the latter, the academic Brichot lectured his travelling companions on the Norse elements in the names of the places in Normandy through which they were passing[58]. Proust clearly drew on professional studies. V.E. Graham argued that Quicherat's etymologies provided some of the material for Brichot's mockery of an amateur student of place-names, the *curé* of Combray, and that although Longnon's lecture notes were published after Proust's novel, Proust had relied on Longnon's research[59].

While Longnon used place-names to draw a number of general conclusions – that there had been substantial numbers of settlers in Normandy, that their language did not disappear for several generations, and that some Norse words were borrowed into Romance speech[60] – a recurring preoccupation of many of those writing on Normandy's names, Scandinavian and French alike, was the origins of its founders. Since the early nineteenth century, scholars from both Denmark and Norway had claimed Rollo as a compatriot by enlisting philology in support of their respective claims, and in 1911 the millennium of Normandy's foundation provoked renewed nationalist polemics, such as the studies of Jakob Jakobsen (1864-1918), a Faroese linguist with a doctorate from Copenhagen, and the Dane Anders Petersen[61]. In Normandy, Joret used the anniversary to publish a study using Jakobsen's classifications of place-names[62], and Henri Prentout (1867-1933) grappled briefly with place-names

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56. É. and A. Duméril, *Dictionnaire du patois normand*, Caen 1849; C. Joret, *Des caractères et de l'extension des patois normands, étude de phonétique et d'ethnographie*, Paris 1883; Adigard des Gautries, *Les noms de personnes*, p. 8; De Gorog, *A History*, pp. 461-462.

57. These lectures were later published posthumously as *Les noms de lieu de la France, leur origine, leur signification, leurs transformations,* cur. P. Marichal - L. Mirot, Paris 1920-1929; see pp. 276-300 for discussion of Scandinavian elements.

58. M. Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. S. Moncrieff - T. Kilmartin, II, Harmondsworth 1981, pp. 917-921; M. Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. J.-Y. Tadié *et al.*, III, Paris 1988, pp. 280-284; R. Bales, *Proust and the Middle Ages*, Geneva 1975, pp. 141-142. I owe this information to Ros Faith.

59. Proust discussed place-names in his letters and *Cahiers*, the earliest reference being in 1913; Graham, *Proust's Etymologies*, pp. 300-312, at 301-302 (and 310-312 for an index of Proust's onomasticon).

60. Longnon, *Les noms de lieu*, pp. 277-278.

61. J. Jakobsen, *Stednavne og personnavne i Normandiet med særligt hensyn til den nordiske bosættelse*, «Danske Studier», 1911, pp. 59-84; Adigard des Gautries, *Les noms de personnes*, pp. 8-16.

62. *Les noms de lieu d'origine non romane et la colonisation germanique et scandinave en Normandie,* in *Congrès du millénaire de la Normandie (911-1911). Compte rendu des travaux,* II, Rouen 1912,

in his millennial study of the origins of the duchy, drawing on numerous Norman and Scandinavian authorities[63]. But many Norman scholars were hampered by their imperfect knowledge of Old Norse, and, on their side, the Scandinavians, although often more qualified in this regard, did not always have the most accurate material to work with[64]. As a result there was probably less philological rigour than there might have been in the work that was done[65]. The lack of commonality between Romance and Old Norse, in contrast to the closeness of Old English and Old Norse, may have been a factor in discouraging more collaborative work. Despite the intimate connections throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of Danish, Norwegian, and French scholars interested in the subject[66], no French (or Norman) Place-Name Society developed to match the EPNS.

Normandy's place-names were nevertheless not neglected in French-language scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century. From Jean Adigard des Gautries (1889-1974) came another Franco-Scandinavian contribution, a hefty and still important study of Scandinavian personal names in Normandy published in 1954 in Lund; a Norman aristocrat who had taught at the Universities of Oslo and Copenhagen, Adigard des Gautries is best known for his work on personal names, but he also produced some studies of place-names[67]. The original research of the great Norman historian Lucien Musset (1922-2004) was largely concerned with texts, but he frequently cited toponymic evidence, stressing that the absence of archaeological remains meant that the Scandinavian presence could only be identified through place-names[68]. He noted, however, that while there had been a «bouleversement totale de la toponymie» in the countryside, a radical renaming, this major change in place-names could seriously mislead if it was taken to mean that all pre-existing

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pp. 97-160; ADIGARD DES GAUTRIES, *Les noms de personnes*, p. 16; on the celebrations more generally, see J.-P. CHALINE, *Rouen 1911. Le millénaire de la Normandie*, in *Dragons et drakkars*, pp. 71-78.

63. H. PRENTOUT, *Essai sur les origines et la fondation du duché de Normandie*, Paris 1911, pp. 252-263; on p. 289 he reproduced a list of thirteen place-names shared by the name-stock of Denmark, England, and Normandy from Worsaae's *Den danske erobring af England og Normandiet*.

64. ADIGARD DES GAUTRIES, *Les noms de personnes*, p. 18; DE GOROG, *A History*, p. 470.

65. F.M. STENTON, *The Scandinavian Colonies in England and Normandy*, «Transactions of the Royal Historical Society» 27, 1945, pp. 1-12, reprinted in *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England*, cur. D.M. Stenton, Oxford 1970, pp. 335-345, at 337-338, complained that Fabricius and Longnon were not good philologists and were too happy to attribute to Old Norse something that was potentially attributable to earlier speakers of a Germanic language.

66. For publications between 1911 and 1959, see DE GOROG, *A History*, pp. 465-469.

67. ADIGARD DES GAUTRIES, *Les noms de personnes*. A number of short publications followed his return to France in 1940; see G. FELLOWS-JENSEN, *Les noms de lieux d'origine scandinave et la colonisation viking en Normandie. Examen critique de la question*, «Proxima Thulé» 1, 1994, pp. 63-103, at pp. 70-71.

68. For example, in L. MUSSET, *Essai sur le peuplement de la Normandie (VI^e^-XII^e^ siècle)*, in *Nordica et Normannica. Recueil d'études sur la Scandinavie ancienne et médiévale, les expéditions des vikings, et la fondation de la Normandie*, Paris 1997, pp. 389-402, at p. 394. His observations on place-names are too numerous to catalogue here; see *Essai sur le peuplement*, pp. 392-399, for a representative sample.

settlements had been swept away in the Scandinavian takeover[69]. Musset was very familiar with scholarship in England, including that of his contemporary, Stenton, whose own discussion of Normandy's early history rested heavily on interpretation of the place-names (see below). In the 1980s and 1990s the English scholar Gillian Fellows-Jensen, based in Denmark, provided a compendious synthesis in French of post-war scholarship on Normandy's Scandinavian place-names[70], and in the 1970s and 1980s François de Beaurepaire produced gazetteers of the commune-names of three of Normandy's five *départements*[71]. De Beaurepaire was forced to exclude minor names for reasons of space (thousands more names would have to have been included)[72]. More recent work in France includes that of dialectologists such as René Lepelley (1925-2011), author of many books and articles, among them an etymological dictionary, and Stéphane Laîné, still active in the field[73]. The place-names of the Orne have been studied extensively by the local historian Guy Chartier[74], and, although the toponymic evidence is peripheral to her arguments, Élisabeth Ridel's studies of the influence of Old Norse on the local vernacular also have much to offer[75]. After a long

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69. Musset, *Essai sur le peuplement*, p. 392; Id., *Les apports scandinaves dans le plus ancien droit normand*, in *Nordica et Normannica* pp. 245-261, at p. 251. He categorised Normandy's settlement as a *colonisation d'encadrement*: *Essai sur le peuplement*, p. 396.

70. Fellows-Jensen, *Les noms de lieux*, and a shorter version in English, *Scandinavian Place-Names and Viking Settlement in Normandy: A Review*, «Namn och bygd» 76, 1988, pp. 113-137.

71. F. de Beaurepaire, *Les noms des communes et anciennes paroisses de la Seine-Maritime*, Paris 1979, *Les noms des communes et anciennes paroisses de l'Eure*, Paris 1981, *Les noms des communes et anciennes paroisses de la Manche*, Paris 1986.

72. While extremely useful, his collections also cause problems for scholars. The entries generally cite the early forms of names – an essential resource – but they do not identify the sources of attestations. This makes it impossible to assess their reliability, especially as the dates that are given cite only the (alleged) date of composition of the text, not that of the manuscript in which it is found. So, for example, «*fin XII*^{e}» for a suggested instance of ON *skáli*, «hall or shieling» in *Scalis* (Écalles, Seine-Maritime), or «1046-1048» for *Esketot* (Ectot-l'Auber, Seine-Maritime), derived from ON *eski*, «ash», and *topt/ toft*, «village», do not clarify whether the names are found in authentic original documents of the stated century or in copies of a much later date: de Beaurepaire, *Les noms des communes et anciennes paroisses de la Seine-Maritime*, pp. 68-70.

73. R. Lepelley, *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de communes de Normandie*, Caen 1993 (3^{e} éd. 2003); most recently, see S. Laîné, *L'onomastique scandinave en Normandie: mythes et réalités*, in *Scandinavian Names and Naming in the Medieval North-Atlantic Area*, Proceedings of the 44th symposium of NORNA, cur. G. Akselberg - I. Særheim, Uppsala 2017, pp. 171-195.

74. For example, G. Chartier, *Les éléments d'origine scandinave dans l'anthroponymie normande actuelle*, Sèvres 1989 ; G. Chartier, *De quelques toponymes normands*, «Nouvelle Revue d'Onomastique» 35-36, 2000, pp. 265-301. I would like to thank the author for sending me his unpublished papers, *Les éléments scandinaves et anglo-saxons de type topographique dans la toponymie normande*, and *L'héritage ornais des vikings*.

75. É. Ridel, *Les vikings et les mots. L'apport de l'ancien scandinave à la langue française*, Caen 2009; É. Ridel, *Paroles de vikings. Dictionnaire des mots issus de l'ancien scandinave dans les parlers de Normandie, des îles Anglo-Normandes et de Bretagne (du Moyen Âge à nos jours)*, Bayeux 2012. For an earlier study, by an American scholar, see R.P. De Gorog, *The Scandinavian Element in French and Norman. A Study of the Influence of the Scandinavian Languages on French from the Tenth Century to the Present*, New York 1958, which includes a lexicon of borrowings on pp. 61-131.

gap since 1946, when the Swede Bengt Holmberg included a section on Normandy in his wider study of *toft*-names[76], Scandinavian scholars have recently taken up the task again[77]. In 2014, the *Nordiska samarbetskommittén för namnforskning* (Scandinavian Place-Name Society) held a meeting in Normandy, only its second outside Scandinavia or the North Atlantic since its establishment in 1971[78].

Despite this renewed attention, there are very good reasons for scholars approaching the Scandinavian place-names of Normandy to be wary. In comparison with England, the Norman data remains in a very raw state; a lot of it has not even been collected (many charters are unpublished, for example). Early forms *are* available, but many more place-names first occur in documents of the sixteenth century and later, or, worse still, only on the modern map. Much of the name-stock has therefore not been analysed by philologists, and the involvement of enthusiastic amateurs and underqualified "experts" has led to the circulation of many dubious and erroneous etymologies[79]. Another complication is that place-names were heavily "frankified" in the process of their recording, and their modern forms are consequently more difficult to interpret[80]. Overall, therefore, the material has been very insufficiently processed, a situation which inhibits both small-scale studies and authoritative syntheses. This is, unfortunately, almost as true now as it was in 1945, when Stenton commented on it[81]. It is clear, then, that a lot more preliminary work by experts is required for the place-names to be used to their full potential.

Their evidence has also been compromised in other ways. Although Worsaae's visit to Britain encouraged his English audience to see the pursuit of native antiquities as an exercise in «enlightened patriotism»[82], he favoured an approach that opposed insularity and deployed comparisons across countries. He saw archaeology as «a source

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76. B. HOLMBERG, *Tomt och toft som appellativ och ortnamnselement*, Uppsala 1946.

77. Such as Å.K. WAGNER, *Les noms de lieux issus de l'implantation scandinave en Normandie. Le cas des noms en -tuit*, in *Les fondations scandinaves en Occident et les débuts du duché de Normandie*, cur. P. Bauduin, Caen 2005, pp. 241-252. Jean-Pierre Mabire, originally from Normandy but based in Denmark for many years, recently published a short compilation, *Nordiske stednavne i Normandiet*, Lemvig Gymnasiums Skriftserie 8, Lemvig 2016; I am most grateful to the author for a copy.

78. The papers have now been published in *Scandinavian Names and Naming in the Medieval North-Atlantic Area*, Oslo 2017 (see n. 73). Unfortunately it was not possible to absorb the material and conclusions of all the papers in this important collection before the publication of this article.

79. As demonstrated by LAÎNÉ, *L'onomastique scandinave en Normandie: mythes et réalités*.

80. The last letter of *Harofloz* is likely to have been trying to represent *ð*, and therefore *flóð*, «flood», «tide», for example. For recent analyses of the issue, see S. LAÎNÉ, *Influence de la langue savante sur la graphie et la prononciation des toponymes du Nord-Cotentin (Manche, France)*, in *I nomi nel tempo e nello spazio*, Pisa 2005, cur. M.G. Arcamone *et al.*, V, Pisa 2012, pp. 625-642, and S. LAÎNÉ, *Modifications phonétiques et morphologiques affectant les toponymes et les anthroponymes d'origine scandinave lors de leur introduction en français*, in *Names in Multi-Lingual, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Contact*, cur. W. Ahrens - S. Embleton - A. Lapierre, Toronto 2009, pp. 627-636.

81. STENTON, *The Scandinavian Colonies*, pp. 337-338.

82. J. WILKINS, *Worsaae and British Antiquities*, «Antiquity» 35, 1961, pp. 214-220, at p. 218, quoting the Anglo-Saxon historian J.M. Kemble.

of national pride in small and oppressed countries, among which he included Scotland and Ireland, and as itself the outcome of the respect for the rights of the people that was a legacy of the French Revolution»[83]. In 1899, the Victoria History of the Counties of England (VCH), «the greatest publishing project in English Local History» was launched, conceived as «an encyclopaedic record of England's places and people from earliest times to the present day»[84]. It was intended from the start to cover the whole of England and was constructed with a template that imposed a uniform treatment across all the counties. Locating itself «in the forefront of progress», it gave equal attention to archaeological remains and historical texts; place-names featured fleetingly, if at all, but the grand conception of the project was to make a national unity and identity out of a multiplicity of local elements[85]. Similar ideas pertained in contemporary France[86]. Increasingly after 1870 the Third Republic encouraged the balance of local and national identities, fostering the concept of France's marvellous diversity in a variety of ways, including through the education system[87]. The millennial anniversary was celebrated in Rouen not just by guests from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden but by the President of France[88]. But local history and local identities also took a different direction. The historical passions of men like Proust's *curé* of Combray, for example, were driven by a kind of territorial nostalgia, and from the early nineteenth century such desires put a populist and pseudo-historical *mythe viking* at the heart of Norman identity[89]. The insistence on an unbroken and uncorrupted continuity which linked the contemporary population of Normandy directly to the Scandinavian conquerors was predicated on ahistorical and essentialist assumptions and played upon the contemporary fascination with Nordic glamour. This exaltation of Normandy's Scandinavian heritage took on an added dimension during the Occupation in the Second World War, when Nazi myth-making idealised vikings as perfect Aryans[90]. After 1945, right-wing nationalist thinkers based in Normandy such as the prolific Jean Mabire harkened back to a grand Germanic past and disseminated their ideas in books and journals with titles such as *Viking* (originally subtitled *Cahiers de la jeunesse des pays normands*) and *Heimdal*. I

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83. Wilkins, *Worsaae*, pp. 219-220.

84. https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/about.

85. R.B. Pugh, *General Introduction*, Oxford 1970, pp. 2-4; *The Little Big Red Book. A Celebration of 75 Years of the Victoria County History at the Institute of Historical Research*, cur. M. Hackett - K. Whitston, Woodbridge 2008.

86. S. Gerson, *Une France locale: The Local Past in Recent French Scholarship*, «French Historical Studies» 26, 2003, pp. 539-559; S. Gerson, *The Pride of Place. Local Memories and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France*, Ithaca 2003; Guillet, *Entre stratégie sociale et quête érudite*.

87. A.-M. Thiesse, *Ils apprenaient la France. L'exaltation des régions dans le discours patriotique*, Paris 1997.

88. Guillet, *Le Nord mythique*, p. 469.

89. G. Nondier, *Le mythe viking en Normandie et ses paradoxes*, in *L'héritage maritime des vikings en Europe de l'Ouest*, cur. É. Ridel, Caen 2002, pp. 503-512, esp. pp. 510-512; R. Jouet, *... et la Normandie devint française*, Paris 1983, pp. 206-230.

90. See R. Jones, *The Viking Diaspora. Historical Genetics and the Perpetuation of National Historiographical Traditions*, in the present volume, pp. 233-246.

have been unable to access these journals, but according to Benoît Marpeau some of these works were dedicated to disseminating a vision of Normandy's debt to its Scandinavian past which was underpinned by an obsession with racial purity, virility, and force[91]. The Mouvement Normand founded by Didier Patte in the late 1960s likewise downplayed the complexities of Normandy's long history and stressed a direct connection of its people to viking ancestors. Unfortunately, place-names played a part in these developments, acting as a crucial tool for those exponents of a political agenda who wished to create a special exclusionist past for Normandy. After all, the land was where the timeless and authentic Nordic values were imagined to be rooted, and its place-names could help to tie a romanticised peasant culture to the industrialised Norman landscape of modern times. Toponymic evidence was therefore cited alongside hair and eye colour and head measurement as indicators of Scandinavian impact[92]. The deployment of place-names in the service of this unsavoury racist ideology has tainted their evidence and alienated many[93]. Attitudes range from casual neglect to more serious accusations. For example, the archaeologist Vincent Carpentier has recently blamed «linguists infatuated with *normannisme*» for encouraging a «mythe colonisateur»: «a clearly differentiated Nordic ethnicity … is not historically founded, but rather ideologically based in the racist and ultra-nationalist tendencies of the contemporary era»[94]. Carpentier and Cyril Marcigny have described the idea that Scandinavians who settled in Normandy had anything other than a minor impact as «a historical mirage», first constructed by nineteenth-century scholars, supported in the twentieth century by philologists and folklorists and inappropriate archaeological parallels, and still going strong, «feeding the incurable idolatry of certain devotees besotted with Norman linguistics», and peddled by «generations of scholars with romantic and racist inclinations»[95].

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91. B. MARPEAU, *Le rêve nordique de Jean Mabire*, «Annales de Normandie» 43, 1993, pp. 215-241; GUILLET, *Le Nord mythique*, pp. 459-471; B. HAMELIN - B. MARPEAU, *Intellectuel Normand ou intellectuel en Normandie? Michel de Boüard et Jean Mabire, itinéraires croisés*, in *De part et d'autre de la Normandie médiévale. Recueil d'études en hommage à François Neveux*, «Cahier des Annales de Normandie» 35, 2009, pp. 269-293.

92. MARPEAU, *Le rêve nordique*, pp. 237-238; J. MABIRE - G. BERNAGE - P. FICHET, *Les vikings en Normandie*, Paris 1979, pp. 20-33.

93. RIDEL, *Paroles*, p. 7.

94. «On aurait tort cependant de persévérer dans la thèse d'une colonisation massive, encore trop souvent ravivée par certains linguistes entichés de normannisme»: V. CARPENTIER, *Les Vikings en Normandie. Archéologie d'un paradoxe identitaire*, «Les Dossiers d'Archéologie» 344, March/April 2011, pp. 72-77, at p. 76. «Assurément, la quête en Normandie d'une ethnicité nordique clairement différenciée ne peut-elle déboucher que sur une impasse car elle n'est pas historiquement fondée, mais elle trouve en revanche une assise idéologique dans les dérives racistes et ultranationalistes de l'ère contemporaine»: V. CARPENTIER, *Du mythe colonisateur à l'histoire environnementale des côtes de la Normandie à l'époque viking : l'exemple de l'estuaire de la Dives (France, Calvados)*, in *Vers l'Orient et vers l'Occident. Regards croisés sur les dynamiques et les transferts culturels des Vikings à la Rous ancienne. Eastwards and Westwards. Multiple Perspectives on the Dynamics and Cultural Transfers from the Vikings to the Early Rus'*, cur. P. Bauduin - A.E. Musin, Caen 2014, pp. 199-213, at p. 212.

95. «Ce mirage historique, d'abord forgé par les érudits du XIX^{e} siècle, s'est trouvé étayé par les philologues et folkloristes du siècle suivant. Aujourd'hui encore, il nourrit l'incurable idolâtrie de quelques adeptes

It is difficult to imagine an English context where the attribution of Scandinavian ancestry could be denounced as racist. Students of England's place-names have not always been innocent of politics, of course, and scholarship has been ideologically driven there as well. Antiquaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made choices about what documents to transcribe, for example, motivated as much by the search for authorities to address contemporary issues as by more purely scholarly concerns. Although the Anglo-Saxons might have seemed barbaric to some early modern eyes, they were credited with introducing the best of British values: «the traditions of Parliament, limited monarchy, common law, the jury system, and Christianity in its truest form»[96]. The Victorians built these ideas of the Anglo-Saxon period as a golden age of freedoms into their ideology of empire, constructed with a conviction of superiority and entitlement which still has some life today. While in our day the extreme right in England roots its identity in a national fantasy of imperial glory, unchanged despite the passage of time, regional self-definition does not seem to have taken on this essentialist narrative, and such attitudes have had little or no impact on English local identities. Investigations into regional and personal roots are well established and positively welcomed in Britain, whereas, because the constitution ensures the equality of all citizens without distinction of origin and race, even the historical pursuit of ethnic origins can be seen as a threat to national sovereignty in France[97]. So far, although worldwide the alt-right has appropriated a distorted and violent ideal of 'Viking' culture, regional identities in England have generally avoided these political overtones, and scholars have therefore been free of the ideological baggage which affected France in the late twentieth century and still casts its shadow over the issue of Normandy's debt to its Scandinavian founders.

Turning finally to the place-name material itself, we have seen how the English evidence has been fundamentally important for at least 150 years in the study of the country's Scandinavian history. Any summary of the current state of play risks oversimplifying, but I would like to outline here three particular insights which, in my view, England's place-name evidence offers today's historians. One involves the question of spoken language. Place-names are notoriously difficult to date, raising problems for anyone aiming to incorporate them into a narrative. Sceptics have argued that Old Norse vocabulary was borrowed by English-speakers and that many, maybe most, so-called Scandinavian place-names were coined long after the period of settlement. That clearly was the case for some names, such as Rickerby, *Ricardeby* (Cumbria)[98], unlikely to have been coined before the arrival of the personal name

férus de linguistique normande ou de reconstitutions inspirées de réalités archéologiques scandinaves transposées telles quelles sur le continent»; «véhiculé par une lignée de savants acquis aux penchants romantiques, mais parfois aussi racistes» : V. Carpentier - C. Marcigny, *Traces et absence de traces. L'archéologie moderne face au paradoxe de l'implantation des Vikings en Normandie*, «Nordiques» 29, 2015, pp. 25-43, at pp. 26 and 39.

96. Sweet, *Antiquaries*, p. 190.

97. See Jones in the present volume, pp. 233-246.

98. Recorded first in 1247; *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, cur. E. Ekwall, p. 386.

Richard with the Normans after 1066. On the other hand, place-names survive which preserve Norse inflections, providing evidence of actual Norse speech. For example, there are genitive plurals in *Normanebi* (Normanby, from the ON genitive plural *Norðmanna*, several examples each in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire) and *Liderlant* (Litherland, Lancashire, ON genitive plural *hlíða*, «slope»); and the dative plural *ergum* («at the shielings») gave rise to Airyholme, Argam, and Arkholme (in North and East Yorkshire and Lancashire)[99]. It is unclear when the Norse language stopped being spoken in England. Linguists argue that it could have survived as late as the twelfth century in some parts of the Northwest, but that elsewhere the language may have been given up within a few generations of arrival[100]. Whatever the uncertainties about the length of its survival, place-names with evidence of inflections, because they must have been coined before Norse speech died out, offer evidence of Norse-speakers[101].

Secondly, place-names also attest to the Scandinavians' impact on landholding and their exploitation of rural resources. Norse personal names are very frequently found in association with words for settlement, such as *by* or *tun*, for example[102]. Flegg in Norfolk attracted the attention of Edmund Gibson in the early eighteenth century because of its unusual concentration of names in *-by*, but there are many such names across the Scandinavian parts of England, recording some kind of relationship between individuals named Skrauti, Hrólfr, and Ormr, for example, and the settlements in Flegg that we now call Scratby, Rollesby, and Ormesby. Many so-called Grimston hybrids (ON personal names + OE *tun*) likewise suggest a relationship between men and women with Scandinavian names and settlements, and such personal names are also combined with other Old Norse (and Old English) generics denoting a relation to a variety of man-made or landscape features[103]. In addition, there are abundant topographical place-names which, by preserving a rural vocabulary, throw light on the exploitation of resources[104]. Norse words for valleys, streams, and fords (ON *dalr*, *bekkr*, and *vað*),

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99. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, pp. 343, 300, 168. Even so-called hybrids formed with OE generics show evidence of being coined by Norse-speakers: Osmotherley (Lancashire) (p. 352), recorded in 1246 as *Asemunderlawe*, combines the ON personal name Ásmundr in the ON *–ar* genitive form with OE *hlāw*, «mound». For hybrids, see further below, note 103.

100. D.N. PARSONS, *How Long Did the Scandinavian Language Survive in England? Again*, in *Vikings and the Danelaw. Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress*, cur. J. Graham-Campbell - R. Hall - J. Jesch - D.N. Parsons, Oxford 2001, pp. 299-312, esp. p. 308.

101. ABRAMS - PARSONS, *Place-Names*, pp. 397-399; TOWNEND, *Viking Age Yorkshire*, pp. 95-99. These Norse-speakers may also have been speaking English; there is no need to see the languages as exclusive.

102. ABRAMS - PARSONS, *Place-Names*, pp. 398-399; TOWNEND, *Viking Age Yorkshire*, pp. 99-109, and *Scandinavian Place-Names*, pp. 117-121.

103. Such as Sculthorpe (Norfolk), ON Skúli and OE/ON *þorp*, «secondary settlement». For Grimston-hybrids, see TOWNEND, *Scandinavian Place-Names*, pp. 117-121, and D.N. PARSONS, *On the Origin of "Hiberno-Norse Inversion Compounds"*, «The Journal of Scottish Name Studies» 5, 2011, pp. 113-152, esp. p. 117 n. 4 for a definition.

104. TOWNEND, *Viking Age Yorkshire*, pp. 110-112, and *Scandinavian Place-Names*, pp. 124-126. Scandinavian place-names in Flegg other than *by*-names include Flegg itself, ModD *flæg*, «flag», «marsh plant», and *Sco*, ON *skog*, «wood».

for example, or for portions of land, clearings, and mounds (ON *deill*, *þveit*, and *haugr*) reflect the language of everyday life in the countryside, absorbed into the local toponymy. Many of the same elements that are found in names of what are now villages also appear in smaller land-units. Field-names are recorded even later than the major settlement names, so conclusions must be handled with care, but they can nonetheless also serve as solid evidence of the borrowing of Old Norse vocabulary into English[105].

A third insight derives from the way that place-names can produce more local narratives. We have already seen the example of Flegg. The extraordinary concentration of *-by* names there is not matched in the rest of Norfolk – or anywhere in England, for that matter[106]. There are no written sources that can help to explain this unusual pattern, but we can speculate that it might reflect a development of different date from those elsewhere in the county, or a different density of Norse-speaking settlers, or a different type of Scandinavian takeover. Norfolk has an unusual number of hundred-names with Scandinavian elements (six). These probably represent a different scenario from names in *-by* and could survive as a token of a more top-down influence rather than the influence of speech (what linguists call 'bestowed' rather than 'evolved' names). Constructing a story about Norfolk's Scandinavian period using place-names is an exercise in speculation, but the patterns certainly suggest that Flegg had a different experience from the rest of the county.

On the other side of England, on the Wirral peninsula in the county of Cheshire, some elements of the toponymic picture are the same[107]. There are numerous place-names in *-by*, and some Norse personal names (Þorsteinn in Thurstaston, *Turstaneton* in Domesday Book) and vocabulary[108]. On the other hand, some place-names were formed with elements of Goidelic origin. If the Irish influence they show was contemporary with the formation of the names, it would suggest that some at least of the Wirral's Scandinavian-speakers came from Ireland[109]. Further north, the coastal region of Furness in Cumbria has a mixture of Old Norse, Old English, and Celtic names, while inland the names are almost

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105. See, for example, E. Rye, *Dialect in the Viking-Age Scandinavian Diaspora. The evidence of medieval minor names*, University of Nottingham PhD thesis, 2015; R. Gregory, *Minor and Field-names of Thurgarton Wapentake, Nottinghamshire*, University of Nottingham PhD thesis, 2017.

106. L. Abrams, *Scandinavian Place-Names and Settlement-History. Flegg, Norfolk*, in *Vikings and Norse in the North Atlantic, Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress*, cur. A. Mortensen - S. Arge, Torshavn 2005, pp. 307-322.

107. P. Cavill - S.E. Harding - J. Jesch, *Wirral and its Viking Heritage*, Nottingham 2000, esp. pp. 3-6.

108. Meols, ON *melr*, «sandbank», and Thingwall, ON *þingvǫllr*, «assembly-plain», for example.

109. *Ergi* (Old Irish (OI) «shieling»), now Arrowe Park; *Nocctirim* (OI *cnoc*, «hill», + *tirim*, «dry»). Irby (the *by* of the Irish), is also noteworthy; Cavill - Harding - Jesch, *Wirral*, p. 3. Jayne Carroll's work on group-names in place-names (Danbys, Normanbys, and Irbys) shows that these references to group identity seem to be most common in areas where Scandinavian linguistic influence was the greatest: J. Carroll, *Identifying Migrants in Medieval England. The Possibilities and Limitations of Place-name Evidence*, in *Migrants in Medieval England, c. 500-1500*, cur. J. Story - E. Tyler, Oxford 2020, pp. 90-120. I would like to thank Jayne Carroll for a copy of the paper before its publication.

exclusively Scandinavian, suggesting a greater impact of Scandinavian incomers away from the coast, on previously unexploited land.[110] On a much smaller scale, Rebecca Gregory's work on minor names in one part of Nottinghamshire shows an even more localised borrowing pattern with a particularly pastoral element[111]. Distinctively local naming on this scale is excellent evidence not just for language contact but for the way that small-scale landscapes were exploited. Place-name patterns, therefore, are persuasive indicators that there were different ways of experiencing the Scandinavian impact, and they force us to recognise the diversity of the English experience, whether on the scale of a small kingdom or a single valley. This is crucial to our current understanding of the Danelaw and contrasts with an older, more generalised, approach which imagined a more homogeneous experience of settlement.

These three very general insights based on English place-names can give us a bottom-line large-scale narrative: that Norse-speakers came, that they settled in significant numbers outside the urban centres, and that they had a major impact on the land. Their impact, however, varied from region to region. Because the formation of the names is not datable, the question of chronology necessarily remains open. It is possible that the majority of surviving Scandinavian place-names in England were formed in the late ninth and tenth centuries, in conjunction with the initial landtaking and the development of administrative structures: but new discoveries may change this working hypothesis.

While Normandy's place-names could have as much capacity to enlighten, a recent study by Peder Gammeltoft must suffice to show their potential here[112]. According to Gammeltoft, *toft*, which means something like «an area designated for habitation», is the most widely used place-name element across the Scandinavian diaspora, and Normandy has the highest concentration of *toft*-names of all the overseas settlements: at least 305 examples. Many of these lack early forms, and there is therefore no textual evidence of when they were first used. Some were obviously coined late, and it is difficult to tell whether the presence of *toft* in a name was due to Norse influence or to English[113]. But Gammeltoft has developed an argument which places many of Normandy's *toft*-names in the context of Norse-speakers.

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110. H. RAJALA, online at http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/documents/innervate/09-10/0910rajalap-lacenames.pdf.

111. GREGORY, *Minor and Field-names of Thurgarton Wapentake*; see n. 105.

112. P. GAMMELTOFT, *The Place-Name Element Toft in Normandy*, in *Scandinavian Names and Naming in the Medieval North-Atlantic Area*, pp. 113-158. I am very grateful to the author for giving me a copy of his text before its publication.

113. *Toft* was evidently an early borrowing into English: the earliest appearance of the term is in a charter of 963 (whose two texts date from the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries), and by the time of Domesday Book *toft* shows signs of English declensional endings. It is therefore difficult to tell whether *toft*-names in England were Scandinavian or English coinages: P. GAMMELTOFT, *I Sauh a Tour on a Toft, tryelyche-i-maket*, *Part Two*: *on Place-Names in –toft in England*, «Nomina» 26, 2003, pp. 43-63, at pp. 46-47.

Most of the specifics of the *toft*-names – the first elements which are combined with *toft* – are Norse: almost 75%[114]. This proportion, says Gammeltoft, is high and must say something about the language in which this type of name was formed, in his opinion «a purely Scandinavian linguistic context». Old High German and Frankish specifics, all of which are personal names, make only a very small contribution to Normandy's *toft*-names (under 6%). It is also important to note that 41% are not compounded with personal names, but with appellatives, that is to say ordinary nouns and adjectives in the Norse language[115]. Most of these words relate to the management of rural resources – soil quality, animals, vegetation (trees and plants) and so on – and would seem to represent the language of farmers, not administrators. No less than 44% of the appellatives refer to plant-growth. It is worth asking why Norse words of this everyday sort were required in the process of creating so many place-names. They must have been used because they were useful.

The coining of place-names in Norse speech is attested by some of the same kind of evidence of inflections that we have seen in England. So, for example, although French-speakers struggled with the «s» of Norse genitives, one is still visible in *Heldestot* (Héritot, Cléville, Calvados). Descriptive place-names like Miquetot (Angerville-la-Martel, Seine-Maritime) and Nointot (Seine-Maritime) were coined by combining *-toft* with Norse words meaning «big» and «new». Furthermore, as Gammeltoft has pointed out, the *toft*-names follow normal Scandinavian word-order and morphology, as do the names in *-tuit* (ON *þveit*) studied by Åse Kari Wagner[116]. Would French-speaking locals themselves describe land in this way, in a different language, with different word-order? There is also evidence that Old Norse vocabulary enhanced the local Romance vernacular: words like Old Norse *deill*, «portion» (which was a prolific borrowing), acquired Romance prefixes or suffixes to create new words in the vernacular (*dellage*); and Romance verbs were created from Norse (*guinder*, «hoist», from ON *vinda*, «to wind»)[117]. It is often said that only a small number of words were borrowed from Norse into French, mainly words of maritime or commercial relevance, such as *fiskigarðr*, «fishery», and this has been taken to indicate that Scandinavians had only a marginal impact in Normandy, making only a niche contribution limited to trade and activity on the coasts[118]. Frequently repeated, this generalisation has been very influential. Because almost no Norse agricultural terms survived in Latin

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114. Compare English *by*-names: D.N. Parsons, *Anna, Dot, Thorir ... Counting Domesday Personal Names*, «Nomina» 25, 2002, pp. 29-52 (fig. 1, p. 34).

115. Gammeltoft has drawn on the place-name evidence of Scandinavia to reinterpret some elements which had been previously categorised as personal names. See also De Gorog, *The Scandinavian Element*, pp. 90-116, for ON words relating to animals, plants, buildings, and landscape features borrowed into the local vernacular.

116. Wagner, *Les noms de lieux*, pp. 248-252.

117. Ridel, *Les vikings et les mots*, pp. 114, 119-120, 192-193, 220.

118. For example, Ridel, *Paroles*, pp. 6-7 ; Carpentier - Marcigny, *Traces*, p. 39.

texts or modern speech, Stenton, for example, could claim that «there is no sign anywhere in Normandy of the wholesale incorporation of Scandinavian loan-words into the local agricultural vocabulary»[119]. But the Norse habitative terms which occur in so many place-names inland, such as *toft* and *þorp*, and topographical and agricultural vocabulary such as *bekkr*, *deill*, and *þveit* should be taken into account as well. There are good reasons for their subsequent disappearance from French – not merely the abandonment of spoken Norse, but also the impact of industrialisation and the decline of regional speech. But while they do not survive in spoken French today, at some time these Norse words were evidently borrowed into the local vernacular; and they were current enough at the time the place-names were coined to have had a major impact on name-formation. On the other hand, simplex forms like Le Torp and Le Bec or derived forms like *dellage* and *guinder* are probably better explained as created by later generations of French-speakers using words that had become part of their language[120].

Gammeltoft's recording and mapping of all the *toft*-names has allowed him to observe that *tofts* may have been smaller land units than the average commune (6.8 km² as opposed to 8.8 km²)[121]. This might challenge Stenton's characterisation of the settlement in Normandy. «Regarded as a whole», he said, «the place-names of Normandy give the impression that the Scandinavian colonization was a process essentially aristocratic». This contrasted, in his view, with England's experience, which he believed to have been the settlement of large groups of peasants[122]. Stenton was attempting to explain why Normandy lacked names in *-by* – a question that remains to be answered. But his conclusion, that «colonization in village settlements was far less common in Normandy than in England», is ripe for reassessment. As we have seen, there is much more evidence of the borrowing of habitative and agricultural terms than Stenton was aware of, and as Gammeltoft has shown, with tools like GIS it is easier now to co-ordinate information about names and land use and begin to develop a picture of the situation on the ground. It is tempting to speculate how the new evidence would have influenced Stenton's thinking.

Gammeltoft's analysis should encourage reassessment of several assumptions – that the majority of Normandy's place-names are late formations, for example, and that the language of the Scandinavians (and by extension, the Scandinavians themselves) only ever had a limited, mainly maritime, influence. He has shown that the word-stock and the word-order suggest that many place-names were coined

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119. STENTON, *The Scandinavian Colonies in England and Normandy*, p. 339; for the rare exceptions, see Musset, *Essai sur le peuplement*, p. 393.

120. For Le Torp/Le Tour, see J. ADIGARD DES GAUTRIES, *Études de toponymie Normannique I: les noms en -torp*, «Études Germaniques» 6, 1951, pp. 3-10; although few in number, *thorps* are found across Normandy (with a cluster in the Cotentin). For England's much greater corpus, see P. CULLEN - R. JONES - D.N. PARSONS, *Thorps in a Changing Landscape*, Hatfield 2011.

121. GAMMELTOFT, *The Place-Name Element Toft in Normandy*.

122. STENTON, *The Scandinavian Colonies in England and Normandy*, pp. 339-340.

not just in the language of the Scandinavians, but *by* Scandinavians. The survival of these names, on the other hand, is probably to be attributed to the population of French-speakers, perpetuating the borrowings in their own language after Norse speech died out.

The downplaying of the Scandinavian impact, and along with it the importance of Normandy's place-names, has often been justified by the absence of physical evidence of Scandinavians across the province. The situation is certainly different in England. The *entente cordiale* established between English archaeologists and metal-detectorists since the 1990s has meant that hundreds of brooches, other personal accessories, coins, and coin hoards connected with Scandinavian activity have been found and recorded. Defended camps associated with the movements of armies in the 870s have been identified and investigated, towns like York have yielded significant evidence of Scandinavians since the boom in urban archaeology beginning in the 1960s, and there is a well studied corpus of stone sculpture which manifests the influence of Scandinavian culture in (probably) the tenth century[123]. Some of the contrast with Normandy, where similar evidence is largely lacking, could be explained by different circumstances in the two regions, both at the time of settlement and in the processes of integration thereafter; but while metal-detecting remains illegal, it is impossible to know whether there are similar finds to be made in the Norman countryside. The absence of a visible, *physical*, mark in the rural landscape has led many, including Pierre Bauduin and Elena Melnikova, to conclude that the Scandinavians had «no observable impact on the dynamic of settlement»[124]. In England, however, Scandinavian rural settlements are also invisible: outside the towns it is equally difficult to find diagnostically Scandinavian sites of domestic occupation to lend physical form to the multitude of names, and identifiably Scandinavian burials are few. And yet, according to the latest assessment of Scandinavian settlement in northern England after 876, the assemblages of metal finds suggest that there was a significant «disruption of Anglo-Saxon settlement patterns…. [T]he new evidence tells a story of the abandonment of farmsteads, traditional market places, and estate centres»[125]. The absence of identifiably different house types and distinctively Scandinavian burials in England, where a large Scandinavian presence is identified by other means, should raise questions about the premises of interpretation across the Channel.

English scholars, beneficiaries of an enduring tradition of collaboration between historians and linguists, have long accepted place-name evidence and woven it into their understanding of Scandinavian settlement. A century ago, when Longnon

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123. Hadley, *The Vikings in England*.

124. P. Bauduin - E. Melnikova, *L'acculturation des Scandinaves en Europe orientale: quelques jalons pour une comparaison*, in *Russie viking, vers une autre Normandie? Novgorod et la Russie du Nord, des migrations scandinaves à la fin du Moyen Âge (VIII^e^-XV^e^ s.)*, cur. S. Berthelot - A. Musin, Caen 2011, pp. 27-29, at p. 29; Carpentier - Marcigny, *Traces*.

125. J.D. Richards - D. Haldenby, *The Scale and Impact of Viking Settlement in Northumbria*, «Medieval Archaeology» 62, 2018, pp. 322-350 (quotation from p. 345).

used place-names to conclude that Normandy's «colonisation fut réalisée sur une grande échelle»[126], it seems that scholarship on the subject in England and France was more or less on the same page. Thereafter, Normandy's Scandinavian past was increasingly caught up in regional myth-making, and interpretation of its place-names derailed by the taint of racist associations. Aspects of Longnon's analysis would not stand up to modern scrutiny, but for a long time there was little enthusiasm for reevaluating his material in the light of advances in onomastic method. Although some contemporary scholars in France continue to challenge overhopeful etymologizing, it can be hoped that in the future more linguists and name-scholars will reconsider the potential of Normandy's place-names and take up the challenge of processing and analysing the copious raw material. After all, although place-names may have been misused, there is nothing inherently racist about their evidence. In the meantime, there is other work to do, unpicking the processes by which place-names were coined and adopted, thinking about how they changed, what influenced their survival, and how they were affected by the transition to writing[127]. A reconsideration of Normandy's place-names, integrating their evidence with that of the rest of the Scandinavian diaspora, has the potential to open out the lens and change perspectives, especially with respect to the impact of Scandinavians in the countryside. For one thing, place-names offer a more rounded picture, across the entire province, than the focus on Rouen that is encouraged by the written sources. Furthermore, although it can be argued that place-names remain largely undatable, in the absence of contemporary written sources for the tenth century and without an archaeological culture sympathetic to metal-detecting, only they currently have the capacity to throw light on the obscure early stages of settlement, before the dukes' grip tightened on the whole province and it was transformed into a single centralised polity. If all the evidence that place-names can offer is not taken into account, we might be missing a more dynamic story of interaction and integration in the tenth century than is currently allowed.

Many Scandinavian personal names found a place in Normandy's landscape, and Old Norse rural vocabulary is abundant in its toponymy. There is no need to extrapolate from this to a mass migration and thoroughgoing replacement of the local population with Norse-speaking incomers, nor to the existence of an exclusive society with superior values. Place-names are not narratives, but recent analyses suggest that, subject to careful interpretation, they can bear sufficient witness to the presence of Norse-speakers in the countryside to throw a welcome light on the process of integration. While there are compelling reasons for contemporary scholars in France to be reluctant to embrace them, the fact that their evidence

126. Longnon, *Les noms de lieu*, pp. 277-278.

127. *Ville*-names are ripe for reassessment, for example. The hundreds of place-names formed by the addition of the suffix *-ville* to a Scandinavian personal name are in my view unlikely to be Norse coinings, as has been claimed; they might instead be understood as a reflection of administration, and, eventually, a product of the transition to writing.

has been marginalised by its political baggage has sidelined place-names in Normandy's historiographical narrative. The comparison with England suggests that a reconsideration of Normandy's evidence could find real historical value in its place-names and contribute to a new understanding of the early stages of this great Scandinavian success-story[128].

Lesley Abrams

128. Some of this article was included in my Cameron Lecture in 2019, now published by the Institute of Name Studies with illustrations, maps, and further examples and references (especially of relevance to place-names); see https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/ins/cameron-lectures/cameron-lecture-2019.aspx, and *Vive la Différence? The Historical Value of Scandinavian Place-Names in England and Normandy*, Nottingham forthcoming 2021.