

## REVIEWS

Carole Hough with Daria Izdebska (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), xxiii + 771 pp. £95 hardback. ISBN 9780199656431 (£35 paperback. ISBN 9780198815532)

The inclusion of onomastics in the Oxford Handbooks series is an important milestone in the discipline's history. It demonstrates the growing prominence of this field through the breadth of sub-disciplines evidenced in this publication and the wealth of current research. This publication offers guidance on some of the established arguments in onomastic theory, toponomastics, and anthroponomastics, and casts light on the relationship to name studies and other disciplines. Edited by Carole Hough, Professor of Onomastics at the University of Glasgow, *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* shows the ongoing progression of onomastics and promotes a sturdy foundation for future research. The publication is divided into seven parts: 'Onomastic theory', 'Toponomastics', 'Anthroponomastics', 'Literary onomastics', 'Socio-onomastics', 'Onomastics and other disciplines', and 'Other types of names'. There are 47 chapters, and the minimal overlap between them shows a healthy cohesion in name studies without becoming repetitive for the reader. The chapters discussed below are those which focus on Scottish onomastics, with several others chosen to show the range of name studies available in the volume.

'Part I: Onomastic Theory' begins with 'Names and Grammar' by Willy Van Langendonck and Mark Van de Velde, which gives a necessary guide to the grammatical function of names, the competing theories in this research field, and the comparison of names to common nouns, pronouns, and determiners with useful examples to aid the reader. A grammatical discussion of sense moves elegantly into the following chapter, Staffan Nyström's 'Names and Meaning', and the brief discussion of connotation sets up the grammatical aspect of this discussion for a number of subsequent chapters. The final section of this chapter regards names as prototypical to their categories, organizing the sub-sections from those argued to be the most prototypical to the least.

Simon Taylor's 'Methodologies in Place-Name Research' which heads 'Part II: Toponomastics' offers sage advice on historical toponymy, closely informed by the author's work on the *Place-Names of Fife* (5 vols., with Gilbert Márkus, 2006-12). Helpfully, Taylor has given a full account of the entry for Balquharn as it appears in the Survey of Scottish Place-Names, accounting for decisions made in the process of collating and displaying toponymic material, and showing that even the most mundane of place-names can benefit from a thorough analysis. 'Even in the cases where there is little or no doubt concerning a given element, a detailed engagement with the landscape can shed much light on the precise definition and application of the element involved' (p. 73). While the 'Fieldwork' section follows on from 'Sources', the landscape might be seen to be the ultimate source for toponomastics, and Taylor's chapter demonstrates his enthusiasm for both the archive and the hilltop.

Scottish, and more widely UK, toponymics, is in a healthy state in regard to the number of researchers currently poring over maps (digital and physical) in the

National Library of Scotland and trekking all corners of Caledonia. This is reflected in the *Handbook*, which alongside Taylor's contribution, boasts four chapters considering aspects of Scottish toponymy. Hough's 'Settlement Names' updates aspects of the seminal work of Nicolaisen on the distribution of generic elements by contextualizing settlement names in the UK in a worldwide context with the careful application of theories of cognitive toponymy to settlement names. As she concludes, 'the ultimate objective is systematic survey work on a global scale. Only then will it be possible to fit all the pieces of the jigsaw together' (p. 103). Alison Grant's 'Names and Lexicography' draws on the work of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, and the *Scottish National Dictionary*. This chapter sheds light on the value of the onomasticon, highlighting the differing values of toponymic and anthroponymic evidence on the lexicon, and echoing Hough in stating the need for systematic analysis of onomastic material for its lexicographical value. One example from the toponymicon is *dod*, for which Grant shows that onomastic evidence antedates the dictionary entry by over five centuries. Scottish hill terms have long been the research focus of Peter Drummond, whose chapter on 'Hill and Mountain Names' builds on his *Scottish Hill Names: Their Origin and Meaning* (2007) within an international setting. His discussion of the use of personal names in oronyms, often but not always of colonial origin, alongside descriptive terms, shows the political power of naming and the prestige attached to the naming of our highest landscape features globally. He also discusses the complexities of renaming, and of dual-naming policies, as can be seen in the well-documented example of Uluru/Ayers Rock (p. 123). From political power in the naming of relief features to political status and social identity in regional language, Margaret Scott's 'Names and Dialectology' maps out several lines of discussion within this sub-discipline, outlining the necessity to study non-standard varieties of language and unofficial names for onomastic research. The international output of sociolinguistic research provides a global framework for this sub-discipline, and the use of social media in engaging the community in onomastic research is demonstrated in the success of the *Scots Words and Place-names* project developed at the University of Glasgow.

Katharina Leibring's 'Given Names in European Naming Systems' in 'Part III: Anthroponomastics' gives an invaluable and concise history from the pre-Christian period to the present day. Motivations for naming are at the fore of this chapter and Leibring is careful to demonstrate the shortcomings of historical evidence while bringing to our attention the richness of written source material. Serge Brédart's chapter on recalling personal names in 'Part VI: Onomastics and Other Disciplines' clearly sets out the four possibilities for the 'tip-of-tongue' phenomenon. The reader is expertly guided through these hypotheses and as Brédart concludes, 'it is widely accepted that there is no one single factor explaining why personal names are more difficult to recall than are other kinds of words such as common nouns' (p. 487). With Leibring's chapter still in mind, the reader might wonder about tip-of-tongue phenomena in bynames of the Middle Ages or cognomens of the Roman Empire. The example given by Leibring of Marcus Tullius Cicero, of which the cognomen means 'chickpea', might require some thought as to the distinguishing feature it describes,

but perhaps it was difficult to forget the name of Publius Ovidius Naso or 'big nose' on meeting him. Might he have been glad to know he is remembered by posterity as Ovid?

The comparatively young discipline of Literary Onomastics (Part IV) is defined by Paul Cavill in the title of his chapter as 'Language-based approaches to names in literature'. Here, he illustrates the historical use of both personal names and place-names in literary texts. Cavill sets out the chapter with an overview of the subject, then takes the reader on a chronological journey from biblical contexts to Late Modern literature. He highlights the variety of motivations behind naming, including folk etymology, allegory, and punning, bringing a refreshing take to a subject which has not been as extensively researched as toponomastics. Also in this section is Karina Van Dalen-Oskam's chapter, 'Corpus-based approaches to names in literature', which focuses on electronic corpora as tools for researching all personal names in a substantial text, or across the whole body of an author's work. Using quantitative methods allows for alternative analyses of name data, and she persuasively demonstrates the need for this approach alongside qualitative studies in literary onomastics, while stating frankly the problems involved in handling large corpora.

Part V on 'Socio-onomastics' includes Katarzyna Aleksiejuk's chapter on 'Pseudonyms' which details traditional authorial practices as well as current approaches to online usernames, and Paula Sjöblom's chapter on 'Commercial Names', which contextualises globalised business-naming and product-naming practices. Guy Puzey's chapter on 'Linguistic Landscapes' and Laura Kostanski's chapter on 'Toponymic Attachment' showcase their important work in these areas of political toponymy. Puzey and Kostanski's edited volume, *Names and Naming: People, Places, Perceptions and Power* (2016) also furthers current endeavours in the relatively new field of critical onomastics.

The final section, 'Part VII: Other Types of Names', contains a mix of studies currently more peripheral to onomastics. A rollercoaster through the outback of naming, the chapter by Marc Alexander focuses on the names of stars, comets, and planets. In this chapter, the modern rules for naming celestial bodies are explained, along with their rationale, and the imaginative manner in which such rules have been constructed is outlined. For example, 'rules [...] govern which origin language should be used for newly-discovered Saturnian satellites based on the angle of the moon's orbit' (p. 634). One element which might improve Part VII would be the inclusion of a chapter on plant names, but this is a minor quibble in a thought-provoking concluding section to the publication.

A book edited in Glasgow, which has taken the reader to Saturn, with tours of islands, pseudonyms, and dialectology along the way, this is a much-needed compendium for every onomast's shelf. As a handbook, this publication balances the variety of topics within current onomastics research, not overemphasizing one area to the detriment of another, and provides a coherent appraisal of the research to this point in time. The geographical range of chapters oscillates from those which cover one region, to those which compare two regions, to those which take their examples from multiple regions. However, the handbook does perhaps struggle to bring the overarching discussion outside of the Eurocentric (including Britocentric) sphere.

Exceptions include Neethling's chapter on 'Street Names', which focuses on South Africa, Koopman's chapter on 'Ethnonyms' which discusses some African naming systems, and the 'Personal Naming Systems' chapter, a work of many hands collated by Edwin D. Lawson, with brief commentary on Chinese, Māori and Zulu names. While the Handbook could be seen to fall short in respect of its global reach, it does bring innovative and inspiring research to the fore, pointing to the many areas in which the next generation of onomasts might focus their research. It provides an ambitious framework for the discipline and amiably invites more to be done that does not merely tread the same path. In providing this structured approach to the discipline, the *Handbook* enables researchers to contextualize their own work and for the student, chapters conclude with further reading and possible future directions for topics, efficiently familiarizing the reader with the context of each study. I have no doubt this publication will be well-thumbed by academics, students, and many more with an interest in names. Perhaps the most necessary attribute of a handbook is not to be comprehensive, but to act as a gateway to a subject and to set a standard within an area of research, and this volume does this with the open invitation for others to join onomastic endeavours.

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**Christian Cooijmans** (ed.), Alan Macniven and John R. Baldwin (assoc. eds.), *Traversing the Inner Seas: Contacts and continuity in and around Scotland, the Hebrides, and the North of Ireland* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 2017), 290 pp. £14.95. ISBN 9781527205840

This volume is drawn from the 2015 residential conference of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies, comprising ten peer-reviewed papers, each of which stands alone as an important contribution to our understanding of the underlying Scandinavian stratum to the Gaelic heritage of the Hebrides, while they together weave a marvellously interdisciplinary tale of the sudden arrival of an enduring Viking culture along the 'Inner Seas', and across and beyond this littoral of the West Highlands and Islands. And it is this persistence that despite linguistically conceding to Gaelic pressure from the east and south makes *Innse Gall* 'the isles of foreigners', stand out from the semi-Scandinavian cultures of the mainland and Clyde.

There is little to criticise and much to digest in this high-quality publication, which includes a good number of fine maps and illustrations, many in colour. Unedited mistakes? There are a few, mostly in dealing with Gaelic names, along with a couple of formatting slips; but these are neither plentiful nor problematic. One repeated irritation is an adherence to the landlord-imposed spelling 'Rhum' for the island, despite it being some time since current owners Scottish Natural Heritage reverted to Rùm, subsequently adopted by the Ordnance Survey (OS), complete with diacritic. But the only major weakness in the book is its lack of an index, which will restrict the impact of its contents on related debates. The structure – not followed in this review – can only go some way in minimising this deficit, but is still useful in grouping the papers as subjects: 'Along', 'Across' or 'Beyond the Inner Seas'.

But in looking at the clear message coming out of the book, let us first turn to its last paper, dealing with the surprisingly late, closing chapter of Viking activity – in the fifteenth century, no less, and even into the sixteenth. And to really shake up our preconceptions, these last followers of the tradition were not only Gaelic-speaking caterans from the ‘highly militarised Hebridean society’ (p. 286) and associated lordship, but the target of their ‘recurrent, large-scale attacks’ (p. 275) was the docile Norse community of Orkney, with not even Shetland immune. In this paper, Ian Peter Grohse concentrates on one such assault of about 1461, which false-news folklore pictured as the result of a feud stemming from a bake-off breakfast at the royal court, but which seemingly had more to do with MacDonald ambitions for primacy in what was becoming Northern Scotland.

So a cultural trait, devoid of linguistic specificity, was so well established in the west as to long outlive its main staging post upstream in the route of Viking expansion. In a paper which is hopefully to be the last in toponymics entitled with the trope ‘What’s in a Name?’, Alan Macniven wonderfully tackles head-on the tropes of the Vikings as ‘restless adventurers’ involved in ‘seasonal exploitation’, with the level of ninth-century ‘cultural disjuncture’ (p. 23) identified in recent archaeological, linguistic and toponymic studies of the Western Isles, and the example of Iceland, exposing the Norse arrival as being an attack with ‘large-scale plantation of supporters [as] an important part of the colonisation process’ (p. 28). This would presumably have been the first chapter, setting the context for the others, were it not for the conference having taken place on the island of Coll and pride of place understandably going to a study of neighbouring Tiree (see below).

Focusing on the isle of Islay to the south, Macniven outlines the impact of Gaelic linguistic phenomena on original Norse names, such as projection, back-formation, prosthesis and the process by which Norse first-syllable stress can lead to the loss of unstressed middle and end elements of a name. He emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary corroboration and real-world comparators, and the linguistic variation to be found between the perception and reality of correct Norse. Once coined, names cease to be of necessity susceptible to grammar changes and fashions, but are unique address labels apart from the language. Not that they are immune to fashion, and gaelicisation by the OS in Islay – unusually, it should be said, though similar anglicisation of Gaelic names is found in Sutherland – lead to such puzzling but established monstrosities as *Beinn Tart a’ Mhill* ‘the hill of the thirsty hill’ (better, ‘of the hill-thirst’), from a probable *\*Hjartafjall* ‘hill of stags’, via a more modest Gaelic form.

Macniven defines name borrowing as onomastic transfer, in which the socially subordinate adopt established names and possibly adapt them phonologically, or even by lexical substitution. But there are no examples of such transfer from Gaelic into Norse. The social standing of the newcomers was such that the local traditions could be ignored. The Norse toponymic presence is to be found across all of Islay and on all land forms, with no focus on marginal terrain or defensive points. This was no piecemeal or humble arrival. But in subsequent centuries, from the mid twelfth to the eighteenth, Islay experienced repeated waves of Gaelic immigration of a different kind; one that

was subordinate, but 'relentless', to be seen in the many exegetic incorporations of Norse name units into Gaelic names and in a newer form of Gaelic names with a medial article. The important conclusion is that contrary to the established view of a north-south division in Viking activity, the southern Hebrides also suffered culturally, 'probably' from population disjunction, before experiencing a gradual and 'largely peaceful' re-gaelicisation (p. 45).

John Holliday compares 'almost 100%' (p. 2) of township and farm names in Orkney of Norse derivation with the count in Tiree, where the cover would appear from modern settlements to be nearer a third of that. He demonstrates that this comparison obscures evidence of a similar intensity of Norse. He tells of the good fortune of Tiree, due to widespread cultivation, being wholly covered by large scale OS mapping at 25", which 'rescued' 23 names with Norse elements. Further, he himself, after three decades of intimate knowledge of an island once on the rim of Dàl Riata, has amassed a collection of over 3,300 additional names; some being unrecorded 'last gasp' names on the point of being lost from memory. These provided further instances of Norse derivation.

Many of the former Norse names have been 'well curated' in their later Gaelic guise, including instances of the Gaelic definite article being applied; possibly even of translation. There is evidence too of the Norse post-nominal article, though this would have been limited to three cases were it not for the additional names. This he believes, whilst acknowledging that our understanding of the date for the development of this feature is being pushed back, puts Norse as perhaps still being productive for place-names in Tiree in the fourteenth century, with the language being that of the community from the mid ninth to mid twelfth, continuing till the fifteenth – just as monoglot Gaelic had continued for 300 years despite not being the language of the landowners. He concludes that there was 'a transformational and possibly violent Norse campaign to take control of the island' (p. 17), whereas 'Gaelic resettlement appears to have been gradual and only locally disruptive' (p. 18).

A major question in Scottish Scandinavian studies has been where to place the ninth-century *Laithlinn* from whence the Vikings were said to have come. The Gaelic annals have been thought to be referring to *Lochla(i)nn*, modern Gaelic for Scandinavia, and for a part-mythical Norway from at least 1102. But how (more significantly I would say, why) would Norwegian fjords be seen as defining to the beleaguered Gael so early with *linn* 'loch'? Or if this, or *loth* 'marsh', is for estuary encampments, why a hybrid with Norse *land*, and for that matter a vowel evidenced only once. Indeed why assume a monophthong; and Kruse doesn't. He argues for a Common Scandinavian *\*laiþ*, producing *leið* 'road, sea course'; with the generic *land*, particularly common in south-west Norway and in the late ninth century applied to a 'territory'. Here too was the start of the maritime *Leið* leading up the coast and past a network of large farms.

And so this would be a Gaelic report of a Norse polity name *\*Laiþland* 'the land along the *Leið*'. Reported, says Kruse, just as our only record of Dàl Riata or of Fortriu come from Irish sources; just as Hwicce wouldn't be known from the toponymic record alone, and how *Norðweg/Nórveg* for Norway was recorded in England long before the Scandinavian carved sources.

Going to the other end of the Viking route via the Hebrides, Clare Downham

considers the view of Scottish affairs from Ireland, as transmitted to us by the annals of the Gaelic conflict with the Norse, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*. As ever with media dealings on Scotland, we have to beware propaganda, and even the 'chronologically impossible' (p. 89). The *Cogadh* presents a picture of constant antipathy between the Scots of Alba and a Viking people in unison across the waters between Scotland and Ireland. This suited well the interests of the descendants of Brian Boru, who at his most powerful had the Lennox and Argyll, then outwith Alba, in his ambit; Alba is the only polity not in Ireland to get significant attention. It is seen as part of the Gaelic world and as a potential ally in promoting Uí Bhriain rule in the Hebrides.

Cultural, social and economic networks – again arguably as in the modern media – are to be seen in the chronicles discussed by Nicholas Evans. These are communication networks, but selected for association with, and importance to, the Columban familia and the Norse colony of Dublin. Overall, it was as if the Vikings had closed down Irish international horizons, and possibly encouraged the development of Irish national identity. But Alba was still a viable ally.

Of more direct toponymic interest is Ryan Foster's 'site and situation' study of the Norse elements *sætr* and *ærgi* in Skye and the Outer Hebrides. They are to be seen in the context of what he identifies as a Hebridean regional polity of Innse Gall, with titled positions up to a *righ* 'king', in evidence. This developing hierarchy Foster postulates is reflected in the place-names, with subordinate farming units emerging. The continuity in genetics from the homeland to the colonies 'seems to suggest that overseas settlement included the importation and implementation of a farming economy from Scandinavia, rather than just a takeover of pre-existing settlements' (p. 108). A clean sweep.

So why the borrowing of *ærgi* 'shieling' (with 30 identified instances in the study area) from Gaelic, when their own *sætr* (54 instances) superficially has the same meaning and is equally situated to avoid wind-blown salt spray, with nothing to note in altitude differences? There are clear distribution differences, but also areas with both, and both are found exported beyond the Hebrides in Cumbria. Difference does appear, however, in aspect, with both open to the south, but *sætr* also to the east or even north-east. This aspect gives a wetter environment, and so more herbage mass and thus more nitrogen – often on rough, peaty soil, but fine for beef cattle. To this can be added the evidence of archaeology of cattle remains with fewer young calf deaths in Bostadh, Great Bernera, in *sætr*-dominant Lewis, indicating beef cattle, compared with over half killed in their first year, as associated with dairy cattle, at Bornais (Bornish) in *ærgi*-dominant Uist. Further, Foster points out that Early Gaelic *áirge* has more of a dairy-herd implication than its modern reflex. He tentatively concludes from what is an exciting excavation of a number of disciplines that the place-names show an overall intensification of farming during the Viking Age, with *sætr* applied to a summer farm with general grazing, and *ærgi* a borrowing made in the Hebrides or Ireland for an intensive summer milking place.

Another toponymy-history interface is tackled by Alexandra Sanmark. Focussing on the 11 previously proposed West Coast island sites, Sanmark considers the evidence for Norse *þing* sites for outdoor parliament and court activities here and at Govan.

One conclusion is that place-names in disciplinary isolation is insufficient, but they have to be part of an academic package; as too must be, for Norse names, comparison with what is known of contemporary Scandinavia. Drawing on this approach, another conclusion is that three of the sites must be rejected. Location is key, with genuine sites at the convergence of routes and close to water, fresh or saline, and to a mound; status can vary in bids for more than local prestige, as postulated for Finlaggan in Islay. No Scottish sites are mentioned in textual sources, however, so the toponymic record remains a crucial element of the package.

Not that *ping* itself, famously found elsewhere in Dingwall and Tingwall, is the element in all cases, as with Cnoc nan Gall, an antiquarian 'the hill of the foreigners' (better, 'others'), in Colonsay. But it is notable that two of the three rejected sites have no suggestion of the element as evidence: Manna in Tiree and Lagal(garve) in Kintyre (the other is Grulin in Eigg). Of significance is the outlier to the study, Govan, royal and administrative centre of the polity of Strathclyde. A direct Norse inspiration for the former Doomster Hill is questioned, and instead a post-Norse tradition of stepped mounds in Scotland and a redeveloped Tynwald Hill in Man is tentatively suggested. On the other hand, a possible indication of continuing tradition, or at least memory of it, through the linguistic change to Gaelic is to be found in À(i)rd nan Eireachd 'the height/point of the assemblies', near the mouth of Glen Hinnisdal in Skye (1733 Glen Tinwhill).

It will be a new topic to many and perhaps seen as peripheral, but it would be a mistake to skip the paper on hybridity in gaming culture by Mark A. Hall. This serves to the novice as an excellent introduction to overview of its archaeology and history, and tells a fascinating tale of cross-cultural and societal practice that is 'strongly indicative of the Norse-Gaelic transition' (p. 60). The best board-game players had high status (much like professional internet gamers of today), with fourteenth-century Gaelic *fithcheallaigh* among those qualifying for the best cut of ham at feasts. Hall reminds us that the distance between the cultures was not all that great: '[S]ome of the deeper rhythms of late Iron Age life in the Western Isles [...] continued during the new Scandinavian hegemony, and so it was with board games' (p. 77).

Likewise, in an account of his ongoing investigation of a corpus of upwards of 23 Viking Age hammerhead crosses, Jamie Barnes sees sculptures evidencing hybrid cultural practice. The epicentre seems to be the Solway area in the tenth to eleventh centuries, with a northern outlier at Kilmory Knap in Argyll. The mix of crucifix and Thor's hammer implies to Barnes syncretic religious practice, recognising and consuming different ideologies to form a new identity in a colonial environment. The crosses themselves were probably associated with the archaeologically elusive beach markets, with Luce Bay a prime candidate, in a 'conscious strategy deployed to create and manage a third space' (pp. 261–62).

The Gael had been replaced. But Gaelic was back, and the Viking culture stuck around for a good while. Together they contributed to a syncretic community that continues to influence Scottish life.

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