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Title: Scandinavians in Cumberland: elite takeover, mass migration, or something else?

It has been suggested that the Scandinavian settlement in Cumberland was, if not encouraged, condoned by the Kingdom of Strathclyde as a buffer between themselves and English Kingdoms to the south. The settlement could therefore have been the result of agreement rather than conquest, the district of Coupland (Old Norse *Kaupaland* 'bought land') may also point to the exchange of land through a transaction. The 11th century Gospatrick's Writ, confers rights to a small region of Cumberland to Thorfynn mac Thore. The main subject of the writ and his father both have Scandinavian names, but it is Gaelic 'mac' and not Old Norse 'sonr' that is used to signify their relationship. The writ also contains personal names and terms from Old English, Brittonic, as well Gaelic and Old Norse and this diversity is mirrored to some extent in the place-names of Cumberland. The allied to the presence of what have been called 'hybrid names', would seem to give the impression of Cumberland as an ethnic melting pot, with a mixed linguistic milieu. Overall, this would seem to point to a relatively peaceful infiltration of a relatively small elite, who may have integrated into pre-existing social structures.

However, this linguistic diversity may be misleading, the retention of some pre-existing place-names by Scandinavian settlers is well attested in other areas of England. Many of the minor topographical features have Old Norse names, which would suggest any settlement had a major impact on the area. Similarly, many of the 'hybrid names' are formed from Old Norse generic elements, such as, *byrlbær* ('farm'), *sætr* ('shieling') and *þveit* ('clearing'). The 'hybrid' nature of such names may be illusionary, names formed from personal names with *byr*, for instance, may simply signify the later replacement of a specific with a new owner's name. The appellative meaning of the generic element would still seem to be the same and this in turn would suggest it was coined by Old Norse-speakers.

This paper will look at the distribution of key place-name elements, to identify and evaluate the extent and density of any likely Scandinavian settlement. A comparison of major and minor place-name elements from selected case study areas, will allow an assessment of the intensity of the settlement and the influence this had on both habitational and minor topographical names. The key aim is to understand whether the Scandinavian settlement of Cumberland involved: 1) the peaceful infiltration of Viking settlers between existing linguistic groups; 2) an elite takeover of selective settlements; 3) a more intensive settlement that led to a language shift.