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Placing Place Names in Norwegian Archaeology

Current Discussions and future Perspectives

Sofie Laurine Albris (ed.)



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

14
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University Museum of Bergen (UM) and
Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion (AHKR)
University of Bergen
Postboks 7800
5020 Bergen
Norway

ISBN 978-82-8436-006-5 (printed) UBAS 14

ISBN 978-82-8436-007-2 (online)

ISSN 2535-390X (printed)

ISSN 2535-3918 (online)

Editors of the series UBAS

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Layout

Cover: Arkikon, www.arkikon.no

Material: Christian Bakke, Communication Division at the University of Bergen

Reverse side photo

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Print

Aksell AS

Paper: 115g Artic Volume White

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Preface

In 2019, I started the research project ArcNames at the University of Bergen. One of the defined goals of the project was to revive interdisciplinary discussions between archaeology and onomastics in Norway.

The discipline of onomastics is being cut down at most Norwegian universities and only few specialised onomastic researchers remain. Meanwhile, archaeological discoveries are forwarding new understandings of the settlement history in Norway, encouraging us to re-evaluate traditional views on the place name material. The need for an informed dialogue between onomastics and archaeology is growing with the constantly expanding knowledge about landscape and settlement. The application of place name material in archaeology, however, is a debated issue in Norway.

Onomastics has a lot to offer archaeology, and vice versa, and collaboration between the two disciplines could be better facilitated. All the Norwegian archival material related to place names has recently been gathered in the Language Collections at the University of Bergen, creating a new basis for revitalizing place name research in Norway. In this context, I arranged an interdisciplinary seminar at the University of Bergen on October 20, 2020. The aim was to bring together researchers from both onomastic and archaeology working with toponymy in the Norwegian Iron and Viking Age landscape to discuss the status and perspectives of place names in Norwegian archaeology and to bring attention to current problematics, particularly the reduced capacities in the onomastic discipline. The workshop had presenters from various Norwegian institutions addressing the relevance and use of place names in archaeology today and discussing problems and limitations, in addition to exploring future possibilities in this line of research.

Several of the speakers agreed to contribute with written articles. With some additional papers, the result is this collection of articles presenting various perspectives on the use of place names in relation to archaeology in Norway. I am very grateful to all the authors for taking time to contribute to this volume.

This collection of papers serves to illustrate how place names have a continued relevance to archaeology both in and beyond Norway. Views on the material differ and the evidence may seem incoherent, but this should rather encourage interdisciplinary studies than discourage them. Using place names and archaeology in combination has a long range of methodological implications, and it also calls for qualified theoretical discussions, something that has been lacking in traditional research.

Sofie Laurine Albris and Krister SK Vasshus introduce the topic of interdisciplinary work between archaeology and onomastics, giving an overview of the key themes covered in the book and in research history. The paper further discusses the theoretical perspectives in combining two such different source materials as archaeology and place names.

Peder Gammeltoft uses new digitized mappings of the main types of Norwegian settlement names to address settlement patterns in Norway from a macro perspective.

Geir Grønnesby discusses the observed differences in settlement structure between the Early and Late Iron Age in Norway and their implications for our understanding of place names, particularly from a theoretical perspective. The article proposes that the fundamental relationship between people and landscape changed significantly at the end of the 6th century, with significant impact on landscape experience and naming practises.

Per Vikstrand evaluates the linguistic and archaeological evidence of plural tuna-names in Norway. In the Iron Age, plural tuna-names have clear connections with centrality in Central Sweden and are part of a prestigious vocabulary connected with centrality during the Iron Age. Vikstrand concludes that only Tune in Østfold is a clear representative of this type of place name in Norway.

Kjetil Loftsgarden uses a quantitative approach to the place name element *skeid* throughout Norway. The name localities are evaluated in combination with archaeological and historical sources and likely sites of skeid-assemblies are identified and discussed.

Birgit Maixner uses place names in combination with archaeological and topographical evidence to identify and evaluate components of centres of power in the coastal landscape of northern Trøndelag in Central Norway.

Håkon Reiersen and Christopher Fredrik Kvæstad present a detailed analysis of the Iron Age and Medieval portage at Haraldseid in southwest Norway. The article combines place names, early maps, historical and archaeological evidence, to demonstrate the strategic importance of the site and suggests that there is a core of truth in local legends, associating it with the Viking king Haraldr Fairhair.

Dikka Storm studies the Sámi settlement Stuorgieddi on the island of Innasuoalu in Southern Troms. The local Sámi place names have gone through a process of Norwegianization and translation into Norwegian until work has been in recent decades done to recreate and restore Sámi place names according to the Place Names Act of 1990. The article demonstrates how the local Sámi place names reflect the economy and use of cultural and social space as well as the close connections between people, their activities and place names at Stuorgieddi.

I want to thank the UBAS editorial group and the anonymous peer reviewers for their assistance in editing and reviewing the chapters. Thanks especially to Randi Barndon, who served as the supervisor of the ArcNames project for encouraging me to put the book together. I also thank AHKR (department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion) at the University of Bergen and the University Museum of Bergen for their administrative assistance with the publication.

Both the seminar and this publication were put together as a part of the research project *ArcNames. Individuals, social identities and archetypes – the oldest Scandinavian personal names in an archaeological light*, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The project research focused on personal names and individual identities in the Scandinavian Iron Age from an archaeological point of view. The project was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie individual fellowship under grant agreement No. 797386, running from March 2019 to June 2021 and hosted at the University of Bergen at the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion.

Sofie Laurine Albris

National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, January 2023



Peder Gammeltoft

Place names types and their distribution – what do they signify?

This article is a work-in-progress detailing how the digitization of the central Norwegian settlement name source, Norske Gaardnavne by Oluf Rygh can be used in advancing place name research and spread the results to other research fields. The new digital Norske Gaardnavne was launched in the autumn 2021 together with other place name resources in a new place name portal.

Norske Gaardnavne was digitized around the turn of the millennium, and has recently been updated and coordinates provided to the place names listed in the 19 volumes published from 1897 to 1936. To illustrate the potential in the new digital Norske Gaardnavne, these place name datasets are used to make distribution maps to show period-specific distributions of settlement names and distributions of typologically similar place name types. This enables the reader to gain a quick overview of certain place name type concentrations and even possibly get insight into the times when certain areas experienced major transformations in settlement organization at a national, regional or local level.

Considerations as to what settlement name type distributions signify and the reasons for their distribution concentrations are also touched upon and viewed from a temporal perspective. Comparisons with similar place name types in Denmark and Sweden are also made.

Introduction

At the outset, toponymic research is interdisciplinary in scope. To be able to interpret place names or a name type and understand the context in which it has been coined, the name researcher must be a *Jack-of-all-trades*. Albeit specialised in linguistics, the name researcher also needs to have a broad insight into history, archaeology, history of administration, geography, biology, etc. Interdisciplinary interaction is always present in toponymic research with new insights from relevant disciplines that need to be considered in an onomastic light. This makes place name research ever dynamic in nature – and ever relevant to other disciplines.

Norwegian toponymical research activities have mainly focussed on securing the country's rich treasure trove of minor names before they vanished. One reason for this is that Oluf Rygh, in his *Norske Gaardnavne* (Norwegian Farm Names) (Rygh 1897-1936), has dealt with the majority of settlement names, parish names and regional names. Therefore, very little effort has been made to make Norwegian settlement names available to other research fields. Only the handbook, *Norsk stadnamleksikon* (Norwegian Place name Lexicon, Stemschaug and

Sandnes 1997), has made place names and place name research available to the general public. The lexicon provides a general overview of the Norwegian place name stock, from regional names to the names of municipalities, cities, towns, settlements and natural features.

In connection with the transfer of the Norwegian Language Collections from the University of Oslo to the University of Bergen, the transferred copy of the digital *Norske Gaardnavne* was georeferenced. Therefore, it is now possible to see place names and place name types in a geographical context and eventually compare these to e.g. archaeological finds and cultural or natural phenomena.

This article is a work-in-progress report, but with some considerations on what place name type distributions signify and what the reason for their distribution concentrations might be. The place name types will generally be viewed in a temporal light and will be compared with similar place name types in Denmark and Sweden.

The outset: *Norske Gaardnavne*.

Norske Gaardnavne (Norwegian Farm-Names) is a series of 19 volumes based on a manuscript prepared by Oluf Rygh and published from 1897 to 1936. Rygh was a highly respected professor of archaeology, philology, and history at the University of Oslo. In 1863, the Norwegian parliament (Stortinget) commissioned a general revision of the public cadastre of Norwegian public and private lands to allow for consistent land ownership records, and to revise land taxation in Norway. Another intention of this work was to correct inconsistencies and errors in place names in previous cadastral maps from 1838 and earlier. In 1878, Oluf Rygh, Professor Sophus Bugge and Johan Fritzner, were appointed members of a commission to revise the place names of the cadastre. The initial work was completed in 1882, in time for the new cadastre to be published in 1886. However, interest in the work was great, and in 1896 the parliament allocated funding to publish the revised place names in a scientific series. The first volume of the series *Norske Gaardnavne* was published in 1897.

The published series is published in county (amt) volumes and is structured according to local government area (herred), thus mirroring the structural framework of the 1886-cadastre. There is a further subdivision into parishes, although this division is not directly relevant to the cadastre. Each cadastral unit of significance – farm settlement areas (gård) as well as individual farm holdings (bruk) – comprises an article structured with a cadastral number and a head form (in a standardised spelling), followed by pronunciation information, source forms, and an etymological description. The etymological interpretation used scientific linguistic principles and was based on pronunciation and a detailed compilation of various written records detailing land ownership. *Norske Gaardnavne* documents almost 61,000 settlement names.

At the time, there was no officially sanctioned standard of spoken Norwegian. This caused challenges to the standardisation effort. Since most Norwegians spoke their own dialect, the main technique for establishing a correct spelling was through recording the oral pronunciation. To accomplish this, the commission studied pronunciations used among common people in everyday conversations. Differences were observed regionally as well as between urban and remote areas (cf. original manuscript by Oluf Rygh, submitted to the Cadastral Commission on June 10, 1882, Place Name Archive of the Language Collections). However, they found consistent relationships between the current verbal forms and the original names as found in

both the current parish records and in historical sources. Since many of the Norwegian farm names are of considerable age and created up to around a thousand years prior to written sources, the historical sources were the main tool for establishing the origin and etymology. The commission reviewed a number of older sources including the *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, old land records such as *Aslak Bolts jordebok*, *Biskop Øysteins jordebok 'Røde bok'*, *Oslo Kapitels Gods jordebok*, *Olaf Engelbrektsens jordebok*, *Bergens kalvskinn*, as well as the cadastral works from 1665 and 1723, etc.

Norske Gaardnavne had a monumental significance for place name research in north-western Europe. Not only did it establish the standard for scientific place name research, but the concept also became the inspiration for similar studies in Denmark (*Danmarks Stednavne*), England (*English Place Name Society Survey of English Place-Names*), Scotland (*The Survey of Scottish Place-Names*), and Sweden (*Sveriges Ortnamn*), to mention some.

The new digital *Norske Gaardnavne*

Norway was at the forefront in digitising its central historical sources. As early as 1981, the Registration Centre for Historical Data was established at the University of Tromsø, with the aim of creating a national population register. One of their digitisations were also the 1886 Cadastre (Matrikkelen av 1886). A few years later, in the mid-1990s, the Dokumentasjonsprosjektet (the Norwegian Documentation Project) began mass-digitising sources, including *Norske Gaardnavne* and the 1950 cadastral draft (Matrikkelutkastet av 1950) which have been digitally searchable for almost 20 years.

Hitherto, no attempt has been made to link these digitised cadastres together or to link historical cadastres to the modern, spatially enabled cadastre. The main reason for this is that the Norwegian cadastral code system is dynamic, a serious limitation to historical-administrative research. The consequence is that, even though the current cadastral system was introduced in 1886, interlinking or merging with modern cadastral data was almost impossible - until now.

With the transfer of the Norwegian Language Collections from the University of Oslo to the University of Bergen in 2016, the opportunity arose to reorient the Norwegian Place-Name Archive and modernise the collections. Having established an overview, the decision was made to begin the modernisation with the cadastral works. However, to enable the cadastre to be given coordinates, it was necessary to implement the management system for the Norwegian cadastre over time. In 2018, Kåre Bævre, of the Folkehelsesinstituttet (Institute of Public Health) in Oslo, provided the Language Collections with a copy of his work on the historical cadastre. This enabled the historical cadastre to be combined with the modern digital Norwegian cadastre. I have since then upgraded the historical cadastre and assigned coordinates to the historical cadastral records. Thus, it became possible to georeference the 1886 Cadastre as well all the other digital historical cadastral works from 1838 to 2010, in addition to other historical and administrative resources, such as censuses and statistical accounts (Gammeltuft 2021, p. 81f).

The work was undertaken in several stages. Since the cadastre documents property history, I have introduced the unique Historisk matrikkelnummer (historical cadastral code), *MIDu*, developed by Kåre Bævre, as well as a new Historisk gårdsnummer (historical farm area code, or township code), *GNIDu*, and applied them to each historical cadastre since 1838. Kåre

Bævre's unique historical cadastral number, MIDu, uses a twelve-digit code system, i.e. four digits for the kommunenummer (municipality code) + four digits for gårdsnummer (farm area/township code) + four digits for bruksnummer (single farm holding/cadastral code). I have introduced the unique historical farm number, GNIDu. It consists of the same first eight digits of the cadastral number kommunenummer + gårdsnummer. For the data set of relevance to Norske Gaardnavne, the 1886 Cadastre, this could be done automatically for 95% of the material and with manual or semi-automatic adjustment for the rest of the material.

After the 1886 Cadastre and Norske Gaardnavne had been coded with historical cadastral and farm numbers, all farms and single holdings could be assigned point coordinates. The point coordinate deposition was quite complicated. Although the system remains the same, the Norwegian cadastre has undergone considerable development. This means that it was only possible to enter an exact location for about 2/3 of the historical cadastral numbers (bruksnummer). Exact location here is in the form of either an address point, a building point or a building centroid (if there are several addresses per single cadastral unit). The remaining cadastral numbers have been given coordinates with a lower degree of precision. Lesser precise point coordinates are either a centroid of the main land plot (hovestedteig) of the cadastral unit, if the unit still exists but has no buildings attached to it (approx. 15% of the material), or a centroid point of the overall farm area if the cadastral unit no longer exists (approx. 18%). Norske Gaardnavne also records a number of lost settlements. These have not been assigned coordinates. In this way, some 99.2% of the cadastral units treated in Norske Gaardnavne have now been assigned coordinates. The fact that not all the cadastral material is precisely allocated is a direct consequence of a decentralised system of updating the cadastre with no central archival registration of changes.

The result, as shown in figure 1, is a complete and full localisation of Norwegian farm names in all of Norway, apart from Finnmark (which did not have the same cadastral system as the rest of Norway until the second half the 20th century). As the figure also shows, the concentrations of names vary considerably from region to region. The greatest concentrations are found in the Viken area around the Oslofjorden, the Mjøsa region north of Oslo, as well as on the southern tip of Norway between Kristiansand and Flekkefjord. Lower concentrations can be found along the entire coast and fjords of Vestlandet, Telemark, central Trøndelag and to a lesser degree in southern Nordland. These concentration areas correspond to the main agricultural areas of Norway (OECD 2021, p. 37).

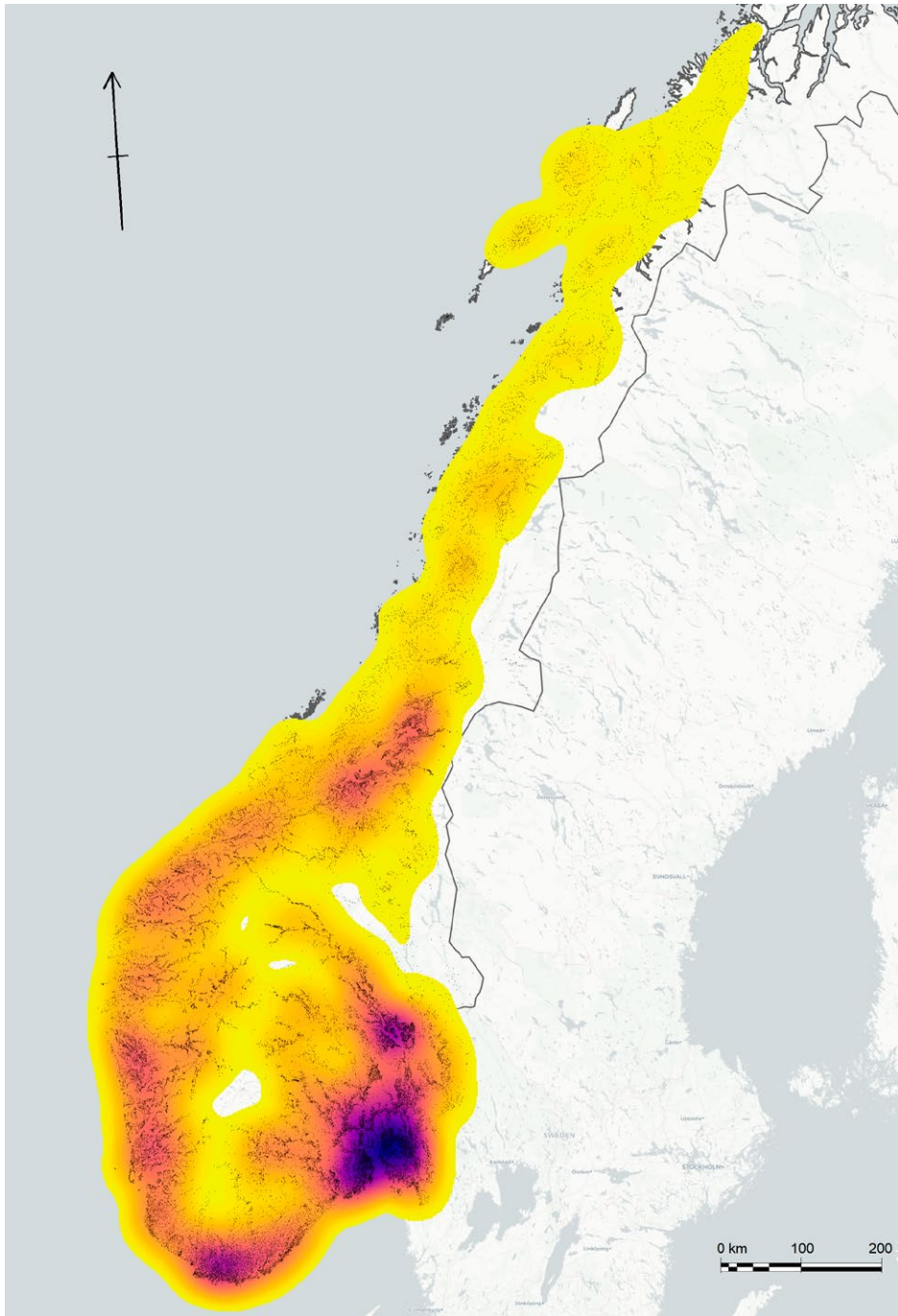


Figure 1. Map of the ca. 38,000 place names from *Norske Gaardnavne* recorded prior to 1730, overlaying a place name density map. The darker the area, the denser the settlement concentration. Map by Peder Gammetoft, *Språksamlingane* and *CartoDB*, all CC-BY. Map size 3,200 x 2,150 km.

The new, spatially enabled digital Norske Gaardnavne (available at <https://toponymi.spraksamlingane.no>) differs somewhat from the printed series, as well as the Norske Gaardnavne digitised by the Dokumentasjonsprosjektet (https://www.dokpro.uio.no/rygh_ng/rygh_felt.html). The printed volumes contained roughly 60,800 entries, consisting of farm names (ca. 40,000), single holdings (ca. 15,600), lost, no longer existing settlements (ca. 4,200), as well as administrative names, such as parish (sogn) and municipality (herred) names (ca. 1,000). In the online version from Dokumentasjonsprosjektet, however, only farm names and single holdings are searchable, that is, a total of 55,600 items. The new digital Norske Gaardnavne has one entry per cadastral unit. Some 3,600 entries in Norske Gaardnavne cover several cadastral units, the so-called *navnegård* (multiple same name cadastral units, resulting from the splitting up of a parent farm into two or more independent farm units prior to the publication of the 1886 cadastre). In the printed version, these are distinguished by having more than one cadastral farm number. This means that an additional 8,100 entries have been added to the dataset. In total, the new digital Norske Gaardnavne has ca. 69,000 entries with cadastral information and coordinates.

Mapping the new digital Norske Gaardnavne

Obviously, many of the entries in the new digital Norske Gaardnavne are onomastic duplets. Therefore, to study older name types, only unique name entities should be used. Moreover, far from all names are of an age relevant to this study, as a substantial number of place names in Norske Gaardnavne are of recent date. So, to avoid 'noise' from modern place names, be they name transfers or names modelled on existing place name patterns, all place names not mentioned earlier than 1730 are excluded. This leaves just under 38,000 individual place name localities in existence.

For this study, I have used all place names recorded prior to 1730, i.e. a corpus of place names numbering ca. 38,000. This enables us to make distribution maps and quantitative analyses of virtually any place name type recorded in Norway. This work is far from complete, so this article must be seen as a work in progress and one that is not yet fully quality assured. The dataset includes, as mentioned above, names of municipalities (herredsnavn), parishes (soknenavn), multiple cadastral unit entities (navnegård), farm areas (gårdsnavn), individual farm holdings (bruk/gårdsbruk) and lost settlements (albeit without coordinates).

Place name distributions and place name densities – what do they signify?

Place name visualisations are powerful means of showing where place names of a certain type occur and where they are most frequent. With the current georeferenced Norske Gaardnavne, it is possible to visualise virtually any kind of imaginable place name distribution, be it single names, name types, name types from certain periods such as the Viking Age, or place name types combined with archaeological finds or anything else with cadastral information.

Every place name distribution map must be approached with caution. For instance, what appears to be a very specific distribution may in reality be the result of an 'overspill' from a neighbouring country. Similarly, distribution maps from a single country completely cut out the context and connection with other countries and tend to display place names as national entities (following modern borders!) and not as the linguistic entities they are. In some cases,

the source situation may also warp the distribution, if the source situation is radically different from one part of a country to another.

In the following, I shall show just a few visualisations to suggest the potential that lies in this new digital Norske Gaardnavne. I will make use of a combination of distribution maps and density maps. This type of combinatory visualisation has the advantage that they show both the distribution of a place name type, as well as where it most frequently occurs. The maps will show a few place name types grouped on the basis of the classical Scandinavian place name periodisation: The Iron Age, Viking Age and the transition period between the late Viking Age and the Middle Ages.

Three Iron Age examples

Of the Norwegian place name types usually taken to be pre-Viking Age (AD c. 0-800), Old Norse (ON) *vin*, f. and ON *heimr*, m. are considered almost archetypal (cf. Stemschaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 393f. and 203f.). Another place name type which is generally seen in Scandinavia as belonging to the same period is the place name derivation *-ing*, m./f. This place name type is not emphasised at all in Norske Gaardnavne, despite the fact that there are no fewer than 171 definite or probable *-ing* farm name derivations in Norway. In Danish and Swedish name research (Jørgensen 1994, p. 142f, Wahlberg 2016, p. 155f), the name type is generally considered to be among the very oldest place names, many of which originate from the first half of the first millennium AD, mainly because this name type causes so-called i-mutation under certain circumstances. The Norwegian place names also show examples of this, although the name type may have been in use for a longer time period than in the rest of Scandinavia (Gammeltøft, 2022, 39-69).

In Scandinavian research, the name types ON *vin*, f. and ON *heimr*, m. are all considered to be pre-Viking Age, although the former is only very marginally attested in Danish (Hald 1965, p. 73f). In Swedish name research, *vin*, f. is considered to have been productive over a long time, spanning almost the entire first millennium (Wahlberg 2016, p. 363f). The element ON *heimr*, m., derives from Germanic **haim-*, and the name type is found throughout the Germanic speaking area. In Danish and Swedish name research the place name type is generally only found to belong to the middle centuries of the first millennium (Wahlberg 2016, p. 126). The same seems to be the case for the Norwegian extension, as the name type is generally not found in the Viking Age colonies. No more than a handful of names of this type are found in Shetland and approximately 30 in Iceland.

The distribution of these three place name types is quite interesting, see figure 2. The *ing*-names are by far the numerically smallest, but the distribution map shows that the name type is found throughout the country as far north as Lofoten. Its highest concentrations are in Nordhordaland and in Rogaland in the Stavanger area. Smaller concentrations are found in the stretch Oslofjorden-Mjøsa, as well as in Gol, Sogn and central Trøndelag. This concentration distribution is quite different from the more similarly distributed *vin* and *heimr* place names. However, of these two, ON *vin* seems to group closer together around Voss and in Nord-Trøndelag than ON *heimr*. These three name types, seen together, seem to suggest that the Iron Age settlement areas centred around the Oslofjorden-Mjøsa area, Western Norway as well as central Trøndelag, but were in the process of moving northward from a foothold in the Lofoten area.

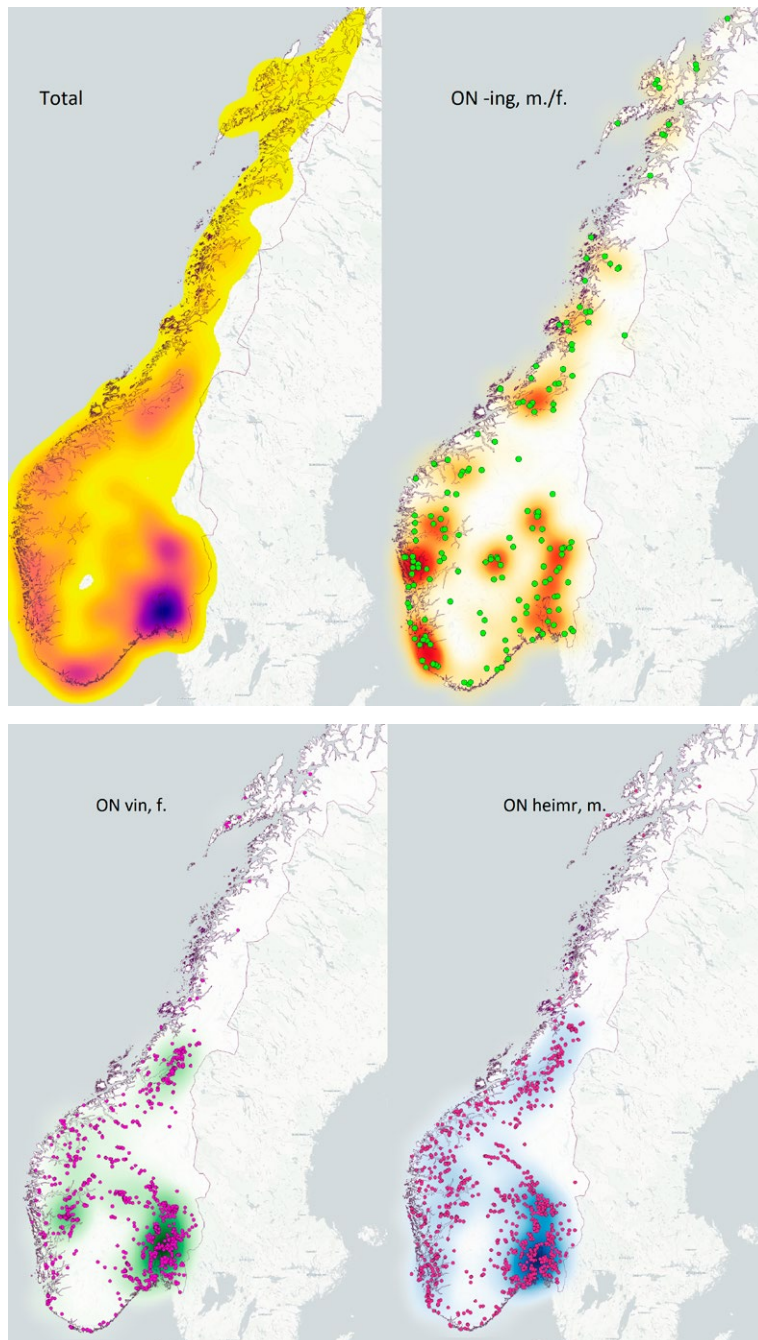


Figure 2. Place-name concentration and density maps of the Iron Age place name types ON -ing, m./f. (171 ex.), ON vin, f. (ca. 950 ex.), and ON heimr, m. (ca. 1,100 ex.). Top left map shows the density of all settlements from Norske Gaardnavne recorded prior to 1730. The darker the colour, the higher the density. Maps © Peder Gammeltoft, Språksamlingane and CartoDB, all CC-BY. Map sizes 3,200 x 1,800 km, north up.

It is important to note that only the place name type *heimr* can be called a settlement name per se. And this is possibly even taking matters too far, as what does the term ‘home’ really cover? The living quarters, the farm itself, or the resource area? Likewise, the other two place name types either designate an area of diffuse extent, as in the case of *-ing*, which only signifies an area where something exists, or as *vin*, which originally designated a landscape feature. At some time, these place name types consolidated into denoting farm settlements akin to today’s situation (see also Grønnesby, this volume). The application of the name at the time of formation was thus not necessarily the same as the historically known farm unit. They may reflect earlier and different settlement structures (cf. Pilø 2005, p. 261-265, Gjerpe 2014, p. 68-69), if settlements at all! However, current archaeology assumes that the landscape started to be structured in the way we know it from c. 600 AD (Grønnesby 2019, p. 285), at which time these place name types had come to designate settlements.

The Viking Age

The Viking Age (AD 800-1050) was a period of expansion in Norway – both internally and externally. In addition to an internal expansion taking available land up for farming (Pilø 2005, p. 249), a substantial part of the population moved to the North Atlantic Area to establish themselves there and seek a means of existence (Kershaw and Røyrvik 2016, Margaryan, A. *et al.* 2020). Wealth became much more dynamic, owing to riches gained from trade, raids and overseas attacks – and finally Christianity encroached on existing belief systems and took over as the dominant religion at the end of the period. These elements also form part of the dating of the place name types of this period (Christensen and Sørensen 1972, p. 195-201). The fact that a place name type occurs in significant numbers in the North Atlantic area can help us determine that the type was active in the Viking Age. If a place name type is infrequent or absent, it is an indication that it either pre-dates or post-dates the Viking Age. In addition, if a place name type is frequently compounded with what appears to be low-status personal names – a possible sign of sudden changes in wealth – this may also help to date a place name type to the Viking Age, particularly the latter part (cf. Dalberg and Sørensen 1979, p. 155-156, although see Sawyer 1988, p. 168ff, for an alternative interpretation). In addition, if a place name is compounded with a word pertaining to Christianity or a Christian personal name, it likely post-dates the Viking Age (Christensen and Sørensen 1972, p. 186-188).

Compared to the Iron Age, there seem to be two general tendencies, which are illustrated in both figures 3 and 4. The one tendency, consolidation, as illustrated by the place name types ON *bjǫrlbær*, m. (Fig. 3) and ON *staðir*, m. (fig 4.) is hardly surprising. It is one where the existing areas of concentration (the Oslofjorden-Mjøsa area, Western Norway and central Trøndelag) are further built up and settlement also extends into surrounding areas. With ON *staðir*, m., we also see an extension into Nordland and particularly into the Lofoten islands, signalling that Old Norse culture seems to spread further northwards during this period. The other tendency we see, is best termed ‘specialisation’ through new areas of concentrations emerging, as illustrated by ON *land*, n. (Fig. 3) and ON *bólstaðr*, m. (Fig. 4). These distribution concentrations occur in areas where there was seemingly only modest activity in the Iron Age, according to the mapping of Iron Age place name types. In addition, the concentrations are often also found in areas where the overall place name concentrations are not high. Thus, we seem to be dealing with an overrepresentation of certain place name elements in particularly delimited areas. This might signal sustenance specialisation in certain

areas or, alternatively, localised naming traditions. Place names with the suffix ON *land*, n., occur mainly in South Norway, with the greatest concentration on the southern tip between Kristiansand and Flekkefjord and extending west from there through Rogaland to southern Nordhordaland. Proximate to this distribution area, are again more modest concentrations, mainly in Ytre Sogn, Telemark and the Oslofjorden area. Otherwise, the distribution of *land*-suffixed names in the rest of the country is quite modest.

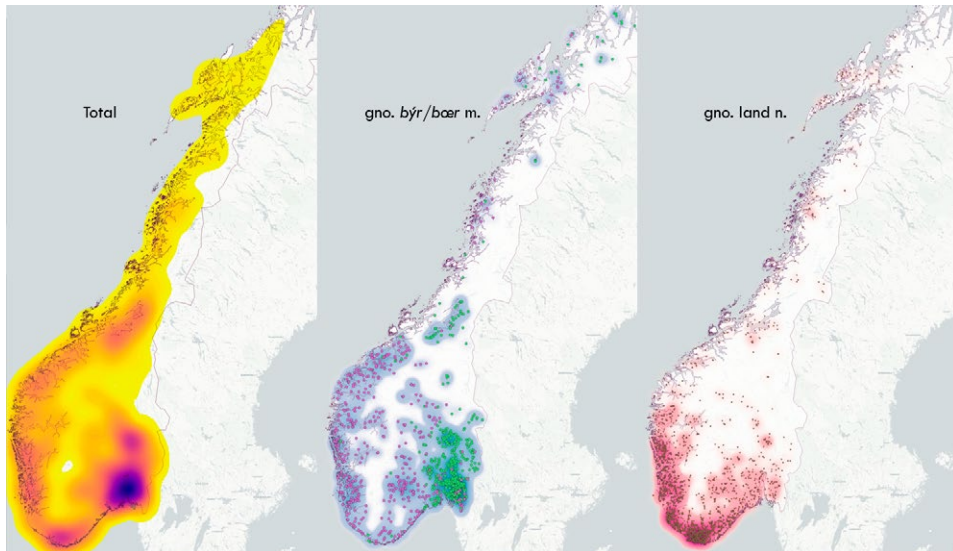


Figure 3. Place name concentration and density maps of the Viking-Age place name types ON *býr/bøer*, m. (ca. 1,200 ex.), and ON *land*, n. (ca. 2,100 ex.). Left map shows the density of all settlements from Norske Gaardnavne recorded prior to 1730. The darker the colour, the higher the density. Maps © Peder Gammeltoft, Språksamlingane and CartoDB, all CC-BY. Map sizes 3,200 x 1,800 km, north up.

ON *bólstaðr* (and Old Swedish *bólstaper*), m., has a typically central Scandinavian distribution concentration. The name type is generally found in a narrow distribution area stretching from southern Finland, across central Sweden and Norway to Scotland and Iceland in the west (Gammeltoft 2001, p. 15). It is also the only ON place name type which occurs more commonly in the Viking Age colonies in Scotland and Iceland than in Norway. In the North Atlantic area, *bólstaðr*-names outnumber examples in Norway by a factor 2½:1 (Gammeltoft 2001, p. 222, 232f and 249).

It is tempting to see the Norwegian distribution of ON *bólstaðr*, m., with its main concentration in Møre og Romsdal and Sogn og Fjordane as the originator of the strong popularity of the name type in the North Atlantic area. This may be partially true, although factors such as status and possibly type of sustenance of the name type could equally well play a role in its popularity in Viking-Age Old Norse communities outside of Norway.

As in the rest of Scandinavia, ON *býrlbær*, m. (Jørgensen 1994, p. 50, Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 113f., Dam 2015, p. 68f, Wahlberg 2016, p. 55.), ON *land*, n. (Jørgensen 1994, p. 172f., Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 281, Wahlberg 2016, p. 194), and ON *staðir*, m. (Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 421ff.), are all considered to have a long period of

productivity from the (late) Iron Age to, especially in the case of the first two, well into the Middle Ages. In Denmark and Sweden, however, *staðir*-names are generally reckoned to have ceased to be productive already in the late Iron Age (Dam 2015, p. 50, Wahlberg 2016, p. 299), because the place name type is not found in Scandinavian place names in the Danelaw. Danish archaeological find concentrations also suggest that the majority of place names of this type must have been in existence already at the beginning of the Viking Age. Norwegian *staðir*-names, however, are seemingly mainly of Viking Age in type, as is the name type found in relatively significant numbers in the Scottish Isles and in Iceland (Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 421).

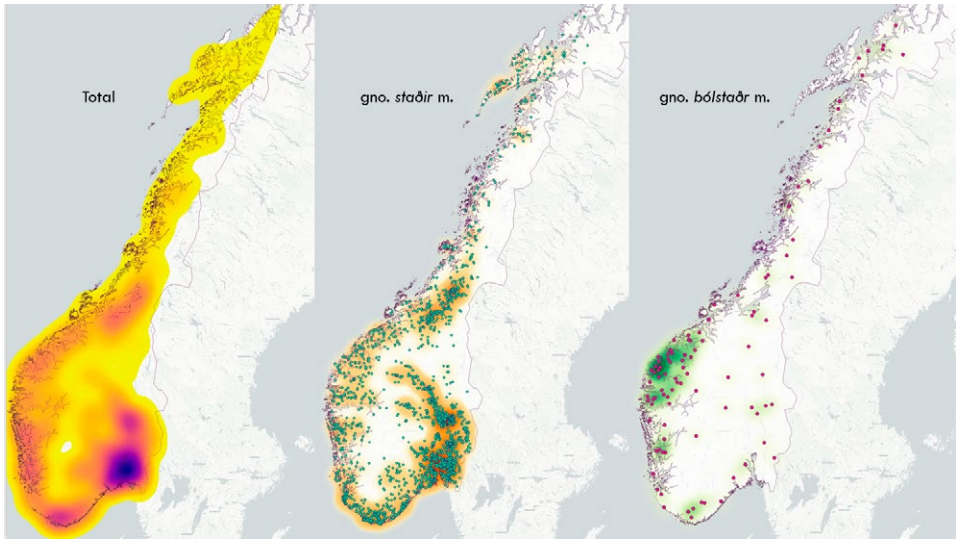


Figure 4. Place-name concentration and density maps of the Viking-Age place name types ON *staðir*, m. (ca. 2,500 ex.), and ON *bólstaðr*, m. (ca. 100). Left map shows the density of all settlements from Norske Gaardnavne recorded prior to 1730. The darker the colour, the higher the density. Maps © Peder Gammeltoft, Språksamlingane and CartoDB, all CC-BY. Map sizes 3,200 x 1,800 km, north up.

Late Viking Age and the Middle Ages

The tendency seen in the place name types ON *land*, n. and ON *bólstaðr*, m. for regional concentration distributions, is continued with place name types having a period of productivity that seemingly belongs to the late Viking Age and the Middle Ages, namely shieling-type place names in ON *setr*, n. and *sætr*, n. (Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 387ff. and 389ff.), as well as place name types indicating clearing of land to make way for farming, such as ON *þveit*, f., and ON *ruð*, m. (Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 466f. and 370f.). In Sweden, the cognate *säter*, is generally not considered to be very old (Wahlberg 2016, p. 319), and the name type is entirely absent in Denmark. However, cognates of ON *þveit*, f., and ON *ruð*, m., occur in large numbers in Denmark and are also relatively frequent in Sweden (Jørgensen 1994, p. 307, Dam 2015, p. 134 and 139, Wahlberg 2016, p. 268). Neither of the place name types can be assigned exclusively to either the Viking Age or the Middle Ages, but seem to be productive in both periods, with the possible exception of ON *ruð*, m., being slightly later than the other place name types.

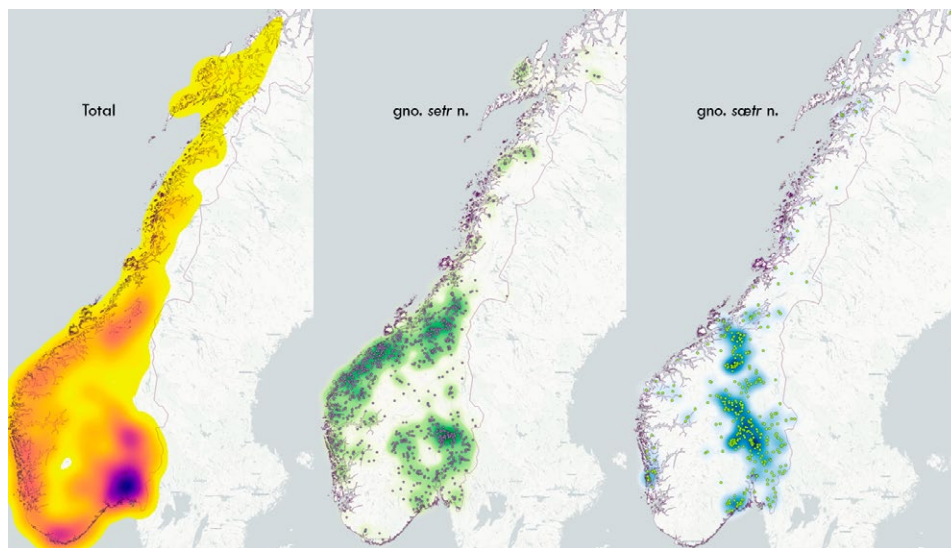


Figure 5. Place-name concentration and density maps of place name types of the late Viking-Age and early Middle Ages, ON *setr*, n. (ca. 1,200 ex.), and ON *sætr*, n. (ca. 420). Left map shows the density of all settlements from Norske Gaardnavne recorded prior to 1730. The darker the colour, the higher the density. Maps © Peder Gammeltoft, Språksamlingane and CartoDB, all CC-BY. Map sizes 3,200 x 1,800 km., north up.

Distribution wise, ON *setr* and *sætr*, n., seem to be almost complementary. The main distribution concentrations of ON *setr* are found in Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal, Trøndelag, as well as the Mjøsa area. Lighter concentrations are found in Numedalen, Hallingdalen, Romerike and Glåmdalen areas in the southeast and in the Saltfjorden area in Nordland and in Vesterålen. The distribution of ON *sætr*, on the other hand, is much more limited, with the highest concentrations on the eastern side of Mjøsa, Randsfjorden, Valdres and Gudbrandsdalen, and in the border regions between Møre og Romsdal and Trøndelag. There are two probable reasons for this almost complementary distribution. It is either the result of two different kinds of transhumance or shieling activities, resulting from differences in topography, or it might owe to dialectal differences and local preferences. When studying the distribution more closely in areas where the two name types occur side by side, it seems that ON *setr* tends to be placed in more marginal areas than those ending in ON *setr*. Thus, the distribution patterns are more likely to be due to differences in the type of transhumance (Rygh 1898, p. 73, Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997, p. 387 and 389).

Like ON *land*, n., place names in *-pveit* are also mainly found in south Norway. However, the greatest concentrations are from central Hordaland to central Rogaland, as well as either side of the Oslofjorden. The place name type ON *ruð*, m., is almost exclusively – and in very high numbers – limited to the Oslofjorden area and its hinterland, including Glåmdalen and the Mjøsa area. Occurrences outside this area are few and far between. Both name types, *pveit* and *ruð*, are close to Danish and Swedish concentrations and, as one possible interpretation of distribution, may represent a Kattegat-Skagerrak onomastic interference region (cf. Dam 2015, p. 135 and 140). However, it is also likely that the clearing of woodland and scrubs was more viable in the generally more fertile areas of southern Norway.

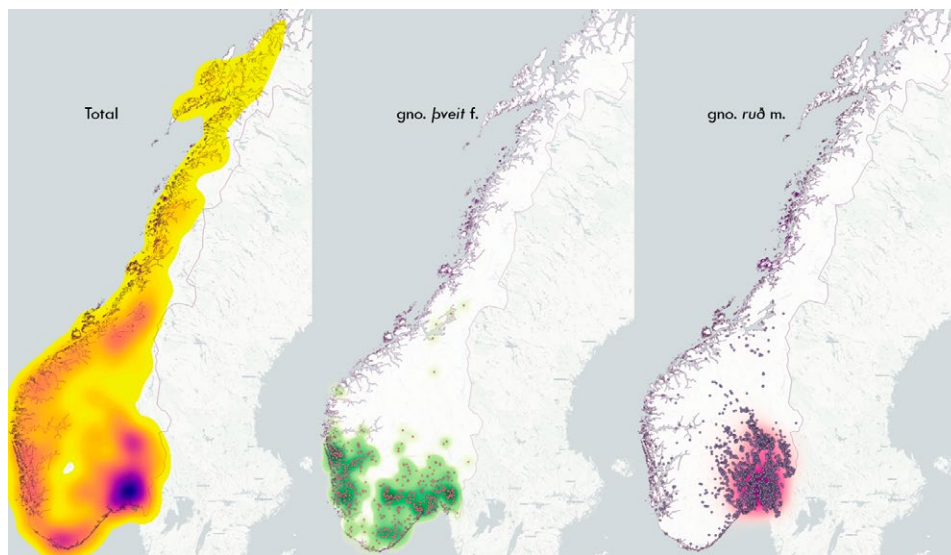


Figure 6. Place-name concentration and density maps of place name types of the late Viking-Age and Middle Ages, ON þveit, f. (ca. 660), and ON ruð, m. (ca. 3,500). Left map shows the density of all settlements from Norske Gaardnavne recorded prior to 1730. The darker the colour, the higher the density. Maps © Peder Gammeltoft, Språksamlingane and CartoDB, all CC-BY. Map sizes 3,200 x 1,800 km., north up.

Rounding off

I hope this brief visualisation of a few place name types indicates the potential in the new digital *Norske Gaardnavne* and the benefits of distribution maps to show period-specific distributions of settlement names and distributions of typologically similar place name types. Distribution maps enable the reader to gain a quick overview of where certain place name types are found and even when certain areas became populated or experienced major transformations in settlement organisation. The distribution maps from the new digital *Norske Gaardnavne* are not merely suitable for national overviews. As they are assigned coordinates, it is also possible to use place name types in regional and local studies. And by assigning them periodisation, it is possible to establish a relative chronology for settlement development at a local level as well. It would be interesting to compare these distributions with georeferenced archaeological data to assess whether these materials support or contradict each other.

This article has highlighted that Norwegian place name types have widely differing distributions. I have not gone deeply into why this is so because of limitations on the length of the article. Now *Norske Gaardnavne* in its new format allows for new kinds of research to be conducted and for a greater coordination between, for instance, archaeological find distributions and place name types. The new digital *Norske Gaardnavne* was launched in the autumn 2021 together with other place name resources in a new place name portal, <https://toponymi.spraksamlingane.no>.

However, for place name research as an independent discipline, it is now time to investigate more thoroughly why some name types are more typical of certain areas than others. Another thing that has been hinted at is trying to see place name distributions in relation to

neighbouring countries as well as in relation to their research traditions. The dating of the various place name types varies considerably between the Scandinavian countries – why is this? No one has ever really delved into this interesting and traditional research problem. With improved digital availability of place name services, it is now time to look beyond national borders and internal research traditions and start to approach the bigger picture. Distribution maps as shown here can bring new insights to place name research. We have the opportunity now to see things more clearly.

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Placing Place Names in Norwegian Archaeology

This collection of papers serves to illustrate how place names have a continued relevance to archaeology both in Norway and beyond.

The interdisciplinary use of place name studies and archeology have long traditions in Norway and Scandinavia. However, the prerequisites for this type of research have changed in recent decades with decreased resources in onomastic departments while archaeology develops rapidly through new methods in surveying, natural sciences, metal detection and excavations. Where do we stand today and how can we improve and renew our views on toponymy and of the methodological challenges we face when combining linguistic and material remains?

The various papers in the book emphasise how place names can provide unique insights into past people's perceptions of land and sense of place, providing access to emic categories otherwise unavailable to archaeologists. Names work as active elements in ongoing discourses about the landscape, and there can be intimate connections between places, names, populations and identities. Toponymy may reflect or evoke emotions on both individual and collective levels.

Through a range of perspectives, this collection of papers explores the status and perspectives of interdisciplinary research in a Norwegian context, focusing on the methodologies of interdisciplinary studies, research environments and prehistoric as well as historical periods.



ISBN: 978-82-8436-006-5