

# Toponyms as Evidence of Linguistic Influence on the British Isles

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Tintor, Sven

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Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet

Diplomski studij engleskog i njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Sven Tintor

## **Toponyms as Evidence of Linguistic Influence on the British Isles**

Diplomski rad

Doc. dr. sc. Tanja Gradečak Erdeljić

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## **Abstract**

This diploma paper deals with toponyms, also referred to as place names, which can be found on the British Isles as evidence of different linguistic influences that shaped the English language. The aim of this paper is to give a brief overview of naming patterns and affixes that were used in the processes of naming. The toponyms are presented in five groups that are arranged in a chronological order as the settlements on the Isles occurred. Before the groups are discussed, a short overview of a theoretical part concerning toponymy is provided. The first group consists of Celtic settlers, followed by the Roman invasion, the conceiving of the Old English by the Anglo-Saxons, Viking raids and conquering, and the last group being the Normans. A short overview of the peoples' settlement or colonization is given for every group, as well as place names and their influence on the English language. The last part of this paper consists of an overview of place names in Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

Key words: toponyms, place names, Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, Normans

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## 1. Introduction

The main task of this diploma paper is to give a brief overview of toponyms (place names) found on the British Isles. Toponyms can be considered as markers of different influences that were brought by different settlers or conquerors onto the British Isles, which ultimately shaped the English language. By knowing the origins of various toponyms, changes that occurred in a language become much clearer because we learn what or who may have caused a certain linguistic phenomenon. The first section of this paper is a short theoretical part on toponymy. The main source for place names was the book by John Field *Discovering Place-names* (1994).

The history of the British people is reflected in the toponyms of the land. The oldest place names originate from the period of Celtic settlers, which is the first group that is described in this paper. Celtic languages left very little behind in the sense of linguistic influence, except for a number of place names.

After the settlement of the Celtic people, the Romans came to expand their Empire. They used Latin language, which did not influence the language dramatically in their time, but throughout the next ten centuries many words will be borrowed from Latin. Place name elements the Romans left behind were used to mark former Roman towns.

English language belongs to the Germanic family of languages because of the Germanic tribes that came onto the Isles. They were the Jutes (from Jutland in Denmark), the Saxons (northern Germany) and the Angles (the province Angeln in Schleswig). (Maček, 2007: 4) During the Anglo-Saxon settlement, Old English was formed and with the development of a new language numerous place names emerged.

The Scandinavians were the next people to influence the English language, which is also visible from the large number of place names where they settled. The area in which they settled was called the Danelaw.

Old English developed into Middle English during the colonization by the people that came next on the Isles, the French speaking Normans. The last part of the paper is an overview of place names in Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

## 2. Toponymy

The term *toponymy* comes from the Greek words *topos* ('place') and *onoma* ('name'). Toponymy is a study of place names, their origins, meanings and use of toponyms (place names), which dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By using particular lexemes in place names we are able to identify, denote or indicate different geographical terms such as towns, rivers or mountains as well as their different features. Toponyms are usually divided into two categories: *habitation names* and *feature names*. *Habitation names*, as the term suggests, consist of geographical terms denoting various places inhabited by people, such as villages, towns and homesteads. *Habitation names* date usually from the settlements' inception. On the other hand, *feature names* refer to natural or physical features of various landscapes. *Feature names* are divided into *hydronyms* (water features), *oronyms* (relief features) and places of natural vegetation growth (meadows, glades, groves). The linguistic aspect and aim of toponymy is not only to track the various influences of different cultures on a language but also to understand the evolution (etymology) of place names and the reason why a place bears a certain name. (Toponymy, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

It is in the human nature to be curious and to have the desire to understand their environment. This curiosity also includes the desire to understand the meaning of names. However, understanding a name is not always as simple as to look up the explanation in a dictionary. For example, the separate parts of the names *Bloomsbury* and *Blindcrake* are explained in dictionaries, but the names have nothing to do with them. Bloomsbury has nothing to do with flowers or burying, it is connected to the original meaning of the place name suffix *-bury* which stems from the Old English word *burh* ('fortification, fortified place') and early versions of *Bloomsbury* indicate that it was an estate held by the de Blemund family. More examples of adding a suffix to a family name:

Bassetbury	Basset (family name) + <i>-bury</i>
Jeningsbury	Juvenal (family name) + <i>-bury</i>
Mascallsbury	Marescal (family name) + <i>-bury</i> (Cameron, 1961:114)

Various processes can be encountered in the search for meanings of a certain place name. For example, place names on the British Isles can be compounds consisting of elements from more than one language. *Blencogo* is one of many place name compounds that have elements from two languages. The Norse lexeme *haugr* ('mound') was added to the Celtic base *Belcog* ('cuckoo hill') by people who did not comprehend that *hill* was already imbedded in the original

name. Another example of multiple language compounds is the already mentioned *Blindcrake*. The first part has the same meaning as in *Blencogo*, meaning ‘hill’ or ‘summit’, and the second part comes from the Old Welsh word *creic* (‘crag’, ‘rock’), thus *Blindcrake* means ‘rocky summit’. (Fields, 1994: 5) However, not all meanings of place names are complex in meaning; there are simple ones, the explanation of which can be found in dictionaries. Examples given by Fields (1994:6) include that the meanings of *Southend*, *Northwood*, *Highbridge*, *Newcastle* and *Whiteparish* can be explained by simply looking at the elements contained in these names. More examples of direct meaning in place names are also *Mudford* which means ‘muddy ford’ and *Sandford* which means ‘sandy ford’. *Saltford* was not named because of the salinity of the water or the nature of the soil but because salt was carried across it.

## **2.1. Habitation and feature names**

### **2.1.1. Habitation names**

As it is mentioned earlier, habitation names contain elements like ‘farm’, ‘homestead’, and ‘enclosure’. As settlements grew larger those elements also included ‘village’ or ‘town’. Rye (web: [www.englishplacenames.co.uk](http://www.englishplacenames.co.uk)) mentions some of the common suffixes in habitation names, such as *-ham*, *-tun*, *-by*, *-thorp*. The suffix *-ham* means ‘homestead’, the suffix *-tun* means ‘enclosure’ or even ‘fence’, later it extended its meaning to ‘an enclosure round a homestead’, a ‘farm’ and then ‘village’. The suffix *-by* means ‘homestead’ or ‘farmstead’ and the suffix *-thorp* usually has the meaning of ‘a secondary or outlying farm attached to some other settlement’. Usually names that contain such suffixes have the meaning ‘some form of habitation’. These suffixes will be further discussed in the following chapters.

“Giselham	Gysela + <i>-ham</i>	Gysela’s homestead
Stanton	stan + <i>-tun</i>	Stony farmstead
Colby	Koli + <i>-by</i>	Koli’s farmstead
Westhorpe	vestr + <i>-thorp</i>	Westerly outlying farmstead”

### **2.1.2. Feature names**

Unlike habitation names which indicate that the place is a form of settlement, feature names provide information about the natural features. The reference in feature names extends from a wide variety of flora (alder trees, ash trees, oak trees, beans, corn field, rye, willows etc.) and fauna (horses, wild cats, swans, stags, owls, cuckoos etc.). Included in the nature features are



also a wide selection of references to streams, fords, mounds, hills, valleys, ridges, meadows, woods, clearings, marshes, and islands. Nowadays the original fauna has vanished, the traditional farming system has changed, woods have been cleared, marshes drained, in summary, the natural world has undergone a series of changes. What may have been completely logical and self-evident for the original settlers may come across as confusing nowadays. (Rye, web: [www.englishplacenames.co.uk](http://www.englishplacenames.co.uk))

“Ousden	uf + denu	Owls’ valley
Cromer	crawe + mere	Crows’ pond
Bramford	brom + ford	Broom ford
Thorndon	thorn + dun	Thorn-tree hill”

## 2.2. Toponymic processes

Place names undergo changes over time, because a different folk inhabited a certain area or the original flora and fauna has completely changed. Therefore the original meaning of a place name can be completely lost over time. These processes include: abbreviation, adding, backformation, conflation, convergence, replacement of the parent language, evolution of the parent language.

Table 1. Toponymic processes. Source: Place name origins, Wikipedia

Toponymic process	Definition	Example
Abbreviation	used to simplify the pronunciation of a place name	<i>Cantwaraburh</i> to <i>Canterbury</i> ; <i>Dornwaracaster</i> to <i>Dorchester</i>
Addition of place names elements	this process usually occurs to make a distinction between similar or same place names	<i>Burnham</i> and <i>Burnham-on-Sea</i>
Backformation	“a word formed by subtraction of a real or supposed affix from an already existing longer word (e.g. burgle from burglar)” (Backformation, <i>Merriam-webster</i> )	the river <i>Roch</i> was named after the town through which it runs, namely <i>Rochdale</i>

Conflation	switch in meaning of place name elements	Old English roots <i>don</i> ('hill') and <i>den</i> ('valley') got conflated in place names: <i>Willesden</i> ('stream hill'), <i>Croydon</i> ('crocus valley')
Convergence	shift of place name element phonemes toward more common elements	Abingdon ( <i>Aebbeduna</i> , Aebbe's hill), the suffix <i>-ing/-ingas</i> (the people of)
Loss of meaning due to change of language on an area	in the process of colonization or settlement it often occurs that a language is replaced, that results in a complete change or a slight alternation of a place name	Celtic <i>Eburacum</i> → Anglian <i>Eoforwic</i> → Scandinavian <i>Jórvik</i> → Modern English <i>York</i>
Loss of meaning due to evolution of the parent language	when a meaning of a place name loses its meaning in the current language, the place name shows a tendency to change form	Maethelac (OE <i>maethel</i> 'moot', OE <i>ac</i> 'oak') lost meaning and changed into the place name we have today <i>Matlock</i>

### 3. Foreign influence on English

#### 3.1. The Celts



Figure 1. Historical Map of Celtic Britain and Northern Gaul – 1<sup>st</sup> Century B.C. Source: Emerson Kent. Web.

The Celts were a member of the early Indo-European people who spread all over Europe from the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Evidence of their habitation can be found from the British Isles and northern Spain all the way to the east to Transylvania and the coasts of the Black Sea. (Celt, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) There were numerous tribes on the British Isles, of whom today only languages and place names remain. Nowadays the languages survive in the modern Celtic speakers of Ireland (*Eire*), Scotland (*Alba*), Wales (*Cymru*), the Isle of Man (*Mannin Ellan Vannin*), Brittany (*Breizh*) and Cornwall (*Kernow*). Gaelic is spoken in Ireland (western parts of Ireland) and Scotland (northwestern parts of Scotland), Cymraeg is the name of

the Welsh language, Breton is spoken in Brittany and recently Cornish and Manx are in the process of revitalization because they have died out. (Steinberg, 2001). Strang (1970: 405) states in her categorization of Indo-European languages that Celtic is a close relative to the Italic and further divides the Celtic languages on Continental and Insular:

-“Particularly close to the Italic is the Celtic, dividing into Continental, represented by Gaulish, which died out in the 6c A.D. (i.e., gave way to the descendant of Latin), and Insular, of the Cumbric (Cornish, Welsh, Breton) and Goidelic (Irish, Gaelic, Manx) branches”.

Table 2. The Celtic family. Source: Steinberg (2001: 392)

Insular		Continental
Brythonic	Goidelic	
Welsh	Irish (= Irish Gaelic)	
Breton	Scots Gaelic	
(Cornish)	(Manx)	Gaulish (extinct)

These languages are spoken very rarely and are at the brink of extinction because English has imposed itself as the official language. Numerous family names in Britain are also of Celtic origin. “Many family names in Britain are Celtic, such as Lloyd, Owen, McMillan, McIntosh, O’Connor, Kennedy, and so are the first names, Fiona, Gwendolyn, Eileen, Kenneth, Brian, Ian, and many others” (Maček, 2007: 3). Many place names have their roots in the Celtic language as well. When discussing the Celts it should be clear that they were not a unified folk but many different tribes, as can be seen from their various place names.

Table 3. The Names of the Celtic nations (and related terms) in the various surviving Celtic languages. Source: Celtic nations. Wikipedia

(English)	Irish (Gaeilge)	Scottish (Gàidhlig)	Manx (Gaelg)	Welsh (Cymraeg)	Cornish (Kernowek)	Breton (Brezhoneg)
Ireland	Éire	Éirinn	Nerin	Iwerddon	Iwerdhon	Iwerzhon
Scotland	Albain	Alba	Nalbin	yr Alban	Alban	Alban/Skos
Mann Isle of Man	Manainn Oileán Mhanann	Manainn Eilean Mhanainn	Mannin Ellan Vannin	Manaw Ynys Manaw	Manow Enys Vanow	Manav Enez Vanav
Wales	an Bhreatain Bheag	a' Chuimrigh	Bretyn	Cymru	Kembra	Kembre
Cornwall	an Chorn	a' Chòrn	y Chorn	Cernyw	Kernow	Kernev
Brittany	an Bhriotáin	a'Bhreatainn Bheag	y Vritaán	Llydaw	Breten Vian	Breizh
Great Britain	an Bhreatain Mhór	Breatainn Mhòr	Bretyn Vooar	Prydain Fawr	Breten Veur	Breizh Veur
Celtic nations	náisiúin Cheilteacha	nàiseanan Ceilteach	ashoonyn Celtiagh	gwledydd Celtaidd	broyow Keltek	broioù Keltiek
Celtic languages	teangacha Ceilteacha	cànain/teang an Cheilteach	chengaghy n Celtiagh	ieithoedd Celtaidd	yethow Keltek	yezhoù Keltiek

### 3.1.1. Celtic place names

The Celtic languages had little impact on the English language itself, because Old English came into existence with the Anglo-Saxons. However, numerous Celtic place names and place name elements can be found on the British Isles. “The major impact of the Celtic language on English has been through the names of places and rivers.” (Blake, 1996: 55) Few English borrowings are actually Celtic (e.g. *bannoc* ‘a piece of a cake or loaf’, *dunn* ‘grey, dun’, *brocc* ‘badger’). Place

name elements have been often used as common words, such as *torr* ‘rocky peak’, *cumb* ‘valley’, *funta* ‘fountain’, *carr* ‘rock’, *lūh* ‘lake’. (Strang, 1970: 391)

#### 3.1.1.1. Celtic place names: regions and counties

Some regions and counties were already named before the settlement of the Romans. Fields (1994: 7-8) examples include: *Kantion* which was the ancient name of *Kent* and it has the meaning ‘land on the rim or edge’. *Devon* and *Cornwall* have been named after tribes. *Devon* was named after the *Dumnonii*, they are known to the Saxons as *Deofnas*, which means something like ‘deep ones’, because they were known for mining tin. *Cornwall* comes from the tribe *Cornovii* (‘promontory folk’) and to that base the Old English word *wealas* (‘(Celtic-speaking) foreigners’) was added. The names of the Northumbrian kingdoms are further examples of Celtic place names, such as *Deira* (Welsh *deifr*, ‘waters’) and *Bernicia* (from the tribal name *Brigantes*). *Cumbria* includes *Cumberland* which means ‘land of the Cymry’, and Cymry were Celtic people that inhabited north-west England.

#### 3.1.1.2. Celtic place names: towns

Besides counties and regions with elements of Celtic origin in their names, there are also numerous towns, street names, markets etc. with such elements in their names. Towns like *Bodmin* has the meaning ‘dwelling of the sanctuary’, *Penzance* ‘holy headland’, *Mevagissy* ‘(church of) St Mew and St Ida’. Sometimes names were given in dedication of a Saint, e.g. dedication to St. Peran, *Perranporth* is ‘St Peran’s port’, *Perranarworthal* means ‘St Perran in the marsh’, *Perranzabuloue* ‘St Perran in the sand’ (here the affix is the Latin *in sabulo*). The Celtic term for ‘court, chief residence’ can be found in the following toponyms; *Liskeard* ‘court of Carud’ which is similar to *Liscard* (the second element is the Old Welsh word *carrec* ‘rock’), *Liss* ‘high court’, *Lizard* ‘high stronghold’ and *Lesnewth* ‘new hall’. Not only towns in England, but also towns in Wales, Scotland and Ireland have at least one Celtic element, e.g. *Cardiff* (‘fort on the river’), *Aberystwith* (‘mouth of the river Ystwith’), *Llanddeilo* (‘St Teilo’), *Aberdeen* (‘river mouth’), *Glasgow* (‘green hollow’), *Inverness* (‘mouth of the Ness’), *Belfast* (‘ford at the sandbank’), *Tyrone* (‘land of Owen’), *Limerick* (‘barren spot’) etc. (Maček, 2007: 3) The various different linguistic influences in a particular geographical area may be seen by tracing the development of a certain place name. This is visible in the next example.

“The origin of York is much more ancient; the Celtic name, *Eburacum*, possibly meaning ‘yew grove’, was adapted by Anglian settlers to *Eoforwic*, an intelligible Old English term meaning ‘boar farm’; in due course Scandinavians further modified the English name to *Jórvik*. By the thirteenth century the last form had become *Yeork* and soon developed into the name as we now have it. This Celtic name is outstanding in the way its formation concisely records the history of early England.” (Field, 1994: 9)

#### 3.1.1.3. The prefix *tre-*

The prefix *tre-* has the meaning ‘farm, village’, it is derived from the Welsh *tref*, *tre* which is related to the Cornish *trev*. Some affixes are regionally bound, which is not the case with the prefix *tre-*. *Treales* in Lancashire and *Treflys* in Gwynedd mean ‘homestead of the court’. *Tremaine* in Cornwall, *Tremain* in Dyfed and *Triermain* in Cumbria have the meaning ‘farm of the stone’. Other examples are *Trematon* (has the Old English suffix *-tūn*), *Tregony*, *Tregavethan*, *Trehawke*, *Trehunsey*, *Trekinnard*, *Treneglos* ‘village with the church’, *Tranent* ‘village of the streams’, *Trenowth* ‘new farm’. Although *tre-* has mostly the meaning ‘farm, village’, it can be misleading, e.g. *Truro* its first element is not *tre-* but the Cornish *tri* ‘three’, another example is *Trelleck* ‘three stones’. (Field, 1994: 13)

#### 3.1.1.4. Celtic feature names

Many feature names have a Celtic origin. (Field, 1994: 50) A lot of rivers have simply the meaning ‘water or stream’, e.g. like *Avon*, *Esk*, *Usk*, *Wiske*, *Exe*, *Axe*, *Dore*, *Wear*, *Ouse*, *Wey*, *Derwent* (*clear water*). Many hills in England also have a Celtic origin, e.g. *Malvern* means ‘bare hill’, *Bredon* ‘hill’. An interesting name is *Pendle Hill*, it comes from the Celtic word *penno* which means ‘summit’, the Old English word *hyll* was added to the Celtic word, they added up the name *Pendle* and after the meaning of both elements was lost yet another *hill* was added resulting in *Pendle Hill*. Another word for mountain is found in *Mynde*, *Longmynd* and *Mendip*. *Chiltern Hills* Celtic origin means ‘high places’.

Table 4. Brief overview of Celtic place name elements. Source: Sharples (2010)

place name element	meaning	example
aber-	mouth of a river	Aberdovey, Aberdour
baile-	farmstead	Ballygomartin
beinn (ben)	hill	Ben Nevis, Bengore
cair-	fortified town	Carlisle
penn-	hill or hill top	Penrhyn, Penn
tre- (tref- in Welsh)	farm, village	Tremaine, Tregaron

### 3.2. The Romans

The Romans first tried to invade Britain under the commandment of Julius Caesar in 55 and 54 BC. It was more of a reconnaissance mission than a full out invasion. The invasion on Britain did not take place for another century. In AD 43 Emperor Claudius started the real invasion and conquered the Celtic Britain. The 40,000 Romans under the command of Aulus Plautius started the invasion from Kent. Aulus Plautius became the first governor of the British province. Some historians claim that London was founded in that time, although its history is somewhat vague. (United Kingdom, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

“The meaning of the name of London, *Londinium* in the Latin records, is as obscure as the origins of the settlement, which may well have been pre-Celtic.” (Field, 1994: 10)

“London chief city and capital of England, L. Londinium (c.115), often explained as ‘place belonging to a man named Londinos’, a supposed Celtic personal name meaning ‘the wild one’, but this etymology is rejected in an emphatic footnote in Jackson 1953 (p. 308), and we have as yet nothing to put in its place“ (London, *Online etymology dictionary*)

The invasion ended in AD 84 at Moray Firth in Scotland. The Roman rule lasted for the next three centuries until they had to retreat back to Rome and defend against Germanic hordes. At that time the Saxons had already been raiding and plundering the east coast of Roman Britain. The Romans appointed a military commander to organize their defenses, whose name was, in Latin, “*Comes litoris Saxonici*, meaning ‘Count of the Saxon Shore’.” (Freeborne, 1992: 7)



After the Romans left, the Romano-Britons requested help from the Angles. About these events we learn from the historian Venerable Bede in his *History of the English Church and People*.

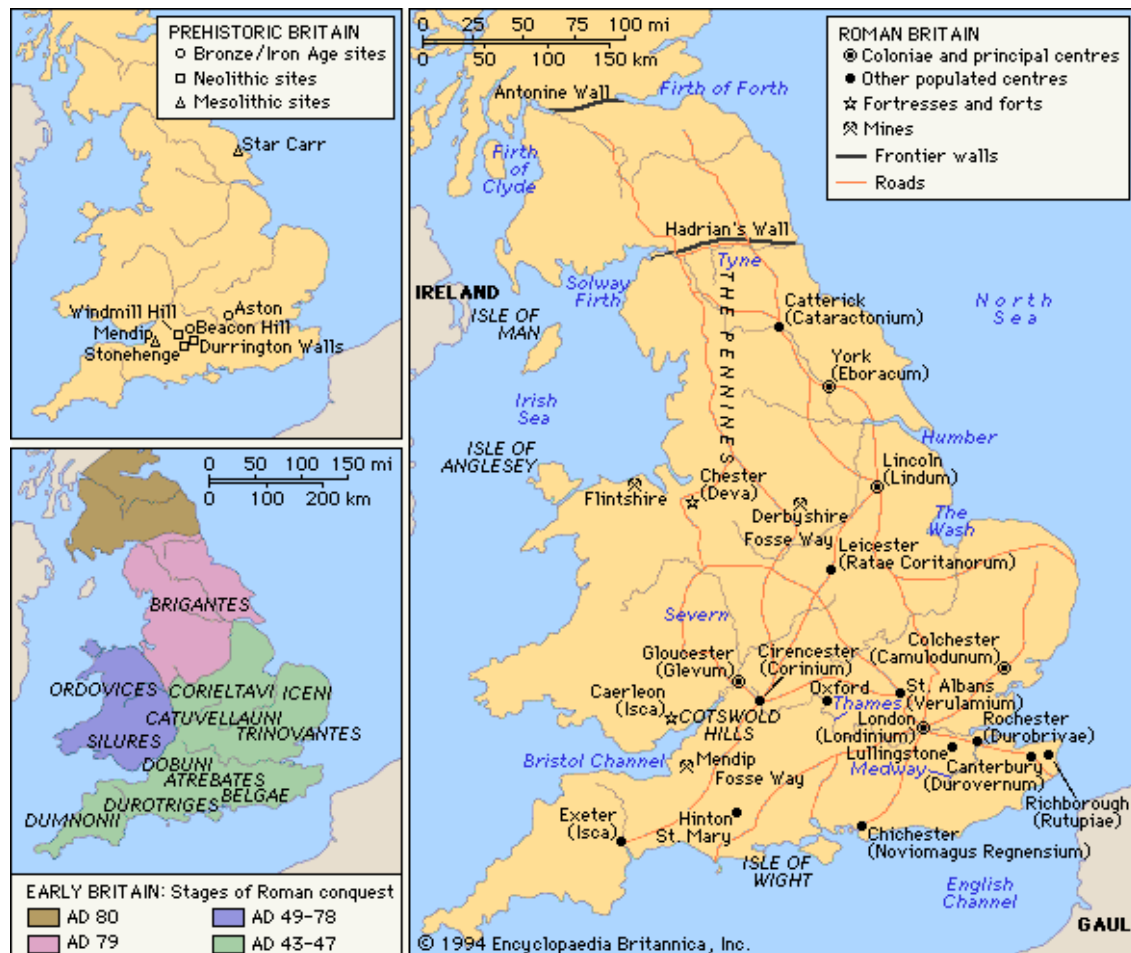


Figure 2. Roman Britain. Source: Treasure-Seekers. Web.

### 3.2.1. Roman place names

The Romans did not influence the English language extensively, nor did they leave behind a notable amount of place names except towns that were founded during their rule (*London*, *Manchester*, *York*). Their legacy mainly consists of a network of roads, fortifications (Hadrian's Wall in northern England), and some forms of sanitation and sewage systems. The endings – *chester*, –*caster*, –*cester* which stem from the Latin word *castrum*, meaning ‘military camp’ (*Colchester*), and the ending –*coln* which stems from the Latin word *colonia*, meaning ‘settlement’ (*Lincoln*) were added to already existing Celtic place names. Although these endings were not used by the Romans for naming purposes, except for one place in Cumberland (*Castra Exploatorum*, ‘camp or fort of the scouts’), it was used by the Anglo-Saxons to mark former Roman towns.

The majority of place names fits the pattern of the Celtic root with an ending that denotes it was a former Roman town which is seen in the examples given by Fields (1994: 11-12), e.g. *Gloucester* (*Glevum*, ‘bright place’), *Brancaaster* (*Branodunum*, ‘fort of the crow’), *Manchester* (*Mamucio*, ‘breast-shaped hill’), *Doncaster* (*Danum*, ‘fast-flowin river’), *Dorchester* (*Durnovaria*, ‘pebbly place’). In some place names their first part contains the name of a tribe, e.g. *Lanchester* (*Longovicium*, ‘place of the Longovices’, ‘‘shipfighters’’), *Worcester* (*Wigora*) and *Leicester* (*Ligora*). Some place names with the ending –*caester* have an obscure element *venta* that is often interpreted as ‘market’, but that meaning is uncertain. Some examples of the element *venta* being used in place names are *Winchester* (*Venta Belgarum*), *Caister St Edmunds* (*Venta Icenorum*) and *Caerwent* (*Venta Silurum*). To think that all places that end in –*ceaster* have been former Roman towns can be misleading, e.g. *Grantchester* (‘settlers on the Granta’).

Table 5. Brief overview of Roman place name elements. Source: Sharples (2010)

place name element	meaning	example
-ceaster (-chester, -caster)	a Roman station or walled town in Old English	Manchester, Winchester and Cirencester
colonia (-coln)	a settlement	Lincoln
pons- (pont-)	a bridge	Pontefract
portus (-port)	a harbour	Portsmouth
-strata (Strat-, -street)	a Roman road	Chester-Le-Street

### 3.2.2. Latin influence on English

The influence of Latin on English may be divided into three periods, namely (1) the period of continental borrowing, (2) the period of Celtic transmission and (3) the period of Christianizing of Britain (as shown in table 6.). The first period lasted from first to fifth century AD, the second period ended with the Roman occupation and the third period lasted from the seventh to the tenth century AD.

Table 6. Latin influence on English. Source: Duncan. Web.

Period	Vocabulary	
The period of continental borrowing (first – fifth century AD)	Military	camp (Lat. <i>campus</i> ) ‘battle’, pil (Lat. <i>pilum</i> ) ‘javelin’, straet (Lat. <i>strata</i> ) ‘road’, mil (Lat. <i>milia</i> ) ‘mile’
	Trade	ceap (Lat. <i>caupo</i> ) ‘bargain’, pund (Lat. <i>pondo</i> ) ‘pound’, win (Lat. <i>vinum</i> ) ‘wine’, mynet (Lat. <i>moneta</i> ) ‘mint, coin’
	Domestic life	cuppe (Lat. <i>cuppa</i> ) cup, disc (Lat. <i>discus</i> ) ‘dish’, pyle (Lat. <i>pulvinus</i> ) ‘pillow’, cycene (Lat. <i>coquina</i> ) ‘kitchen’, linen (Lat. <i>linum</i> ) ‘linen’, gimm (Lat. <i>gemma</i> ) ‘gem’
	Food	ciese (Lat. <i>caseus</i> ) ‘cheese’, butere (Lat. <i>butyrum</i> ) ‘butter’, pipor (Lat. <i>piper</i> ) ‘pepper’, senep (Lat. <i>sinapi</i> ) ‘mustard’, circes (Lat. <i>cerasus</i> ) ‘cherry’
	Other	mul ‘mule’, pipe ‘pipe’, cirice ‘church’
The period of Celtic transmission (during Roman occupation)	Elements of place names	ceaster (Lat. <i>castra</i> ‘walled encampment’), e.g. Dorchester, Winchester; wic (Lat. <i>vicum</i> ) ‘village’, e.g. Greenwich

The period of Christianization (seventh – tenth century AD)	Religion	abbot, alms, altar, angel, anthem, candle, collect, creed, deacon, demon, disciple, hymn, martyr, mass, nun, offer, organ, palm, pope, priest, prime, prophet, psalm, relic, rule, Sabbath, temple, tunic
	Domestic life	cap, sock, silk, purple, chest, sack
	Foods	lentil, pear, oyster, lobster, mussel, millet
	Plants	coriander, cucumber, fennel, ginger, periwinkle, pine, aloes, balsam, cedar, cypress, fig, savory, plant
	Education	school, master, Latin, verse, meter, circe, history, paper, title, grammatical, accent, brief
	Other	fever, cancer, paralysis, plaster, place, sponge, elephant, scorpion, camel, tiger, giant, talent

### 3.3. The Anglo-Saxons

After the Romans completely left Britain to defend Rome, they left the Romano-British people defenseless. The Romano-British leader Vortigern invited the Angles brothers Hengist and Horsa to help defend the country. But the Angles saw Britain as it was – defenseless and an opportunity for settlement. The Germanic tribes took advantage of the current situation on the isles and the process of colonization began. As it is already mentioned, Germanic tribes (Angles, Saxons and Jutes) came from the north of Europe, the Picts and Scots were battling in the north of the land, and the Britons had to migrate westwards to Wales and Cornwall. At the battle of Baddon Hill the Britons succeeded in stopping the advance of the Germanic conquerors, and were the separated by an earthwork barrier, known as Offa's Dike (Welsh, *Clawdd Offa*). (Maček, 2007: 4) The Saxons settled in the south and southwest of the island (Sussex, Wessex), the Angles settled up the river Thames and formed the Mercian kingdom, the Jutes settled in Kent and the Isle of Wight. Around AD 600, there were five main kingdoms on the English territory; Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Kent and Anglia.

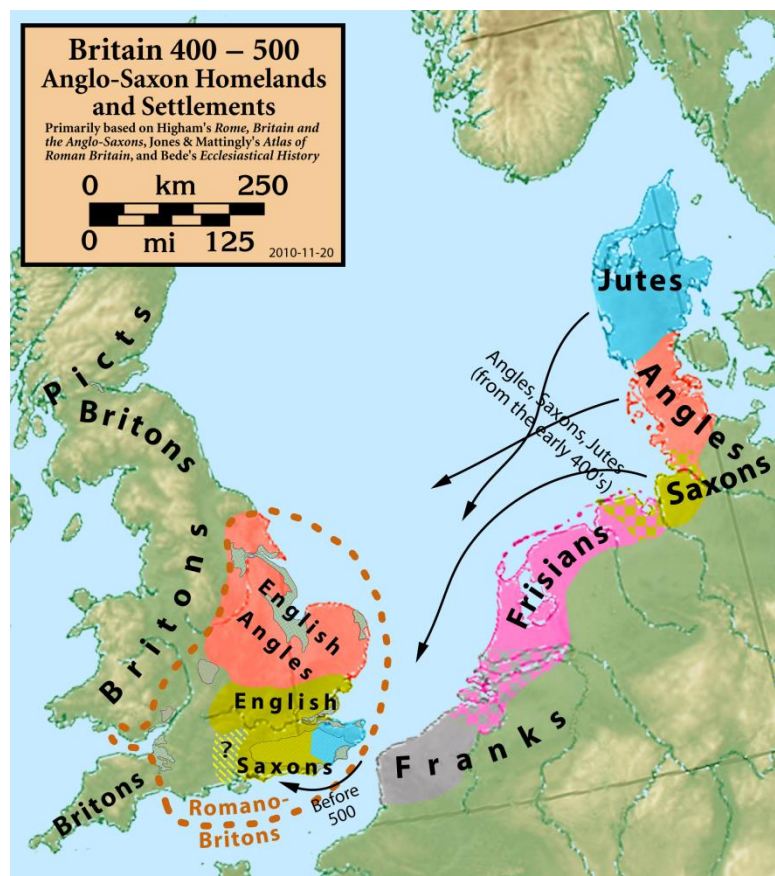


Figure 3. Anglo-Saxon Homelands and Settlements. Source: *An Online Encyclopedia of British History*.

These events were not only recorded by the monk Venereable Bede in his *History of the English Church and People*, but also in the place names of Britain. Bede's book is very valuable because of its contents, which shed light on the events of that age.

“In the year of our Lord 449, Martian became emperor with Valentinian, the forty-sixth in succession from Augustus, ruling for seven years. In his time the Angles or Saxons came to Britain at the invitation of King Vortigern in three long-ships, and were granted lands in the eastern part of the island on condition that they protected the country: nevertheless their real intention was to subdue it. They engaged the enemy advancing from the north, and having defeated them, sent back news of their success to their homeland, adding that the country was fertile and the Britons cowardly. Whereupon a larger fleet quickly came over with a great body of warriors, which, when joined to the original forces, constituted an invincible army. These also received from the Britons grants of land where they could settle among them on condition that they maintained the peace and security of the island against all enemies in return for regular pay.

These newcomers were from the three most formidable races of Germany, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. From the Jutes descended the people of Kent and the Isle of Wight and those in the province of the West Saxons opposite the Isle of Wight who are called Jutes to this day. From the Saxons - that is, the country now known as the land of Old Saxons - came the East, South and West Saxons. And from the Angles - that is, the country known as Angulus, which lies between the provinces of the Jutes and Saxons and is said to remain unpopulated to this day - are descended the East and Middle Angles, the Mercians, all the Northumbrian stock (that is, those peoples living north of the river Humber) and the other English peoples. Their first chieftains are said to have been the brothers Hengist and Horsa”

“It was not long before such hordes of these alien peoples crowded into the island that the natives had invited them began to live in terror. ... They began by demanding a greater supply of provisions; then, seeking to provoke a quarrel, threatened that unless larger supplies were forthcoming, they would terminate the treaty and ravage the whole island. ... These heathen conquerors devastated the surrounding cities and countryside, extended the conflagration from the eastern to the western shores without opposition, and established a stranglehold over nearly all the doomed island. A few wretched survivors captured in the hills were butchered wholesale, and others, desperate with hunger, came

out and surrendered to the enemy for food, although they were doomed to lifelong slavery even if they escaped instant massacre. Some fled overseas in their misery: others, clinging to their homeland, eked out a wretched and fearful existence among the mountains, forests and crags, ever on the alert for danger. (Bede - A History of the English Church and People, translated by Leo Sherley-Price, 1955)

### *3.3.1. Anglo-Saxon place names*

As they were moving to the north and west, the new settlers created new settlements and with them new place names, or changed the names of already inhabited places. There are more Celtic based names in Wales and Scotland than in England, due to the retreat of the Celtic tribes before the Germanic conquerors into the mentioned areas. Also, after this wave of settlers we first encounter the name England. “The Angles, who occupied the Midlands and the North, provided a name for the entire county: England is ‘land of the Angles’.” (Field, 1994 :14)

The Angles gave names like *Englefield* (‘open country’), *Englebourne* (‘stream of the Angles’) and *Inglewood* (‘wood of the Angles’) and the Saxons named their new settlements *Saxton* (‘estate of the Saxon’), *Saxham* (‘village of the saxons’), *Saxondale* (‘valley of the Saxons’) and *Seisdon* (‘hill of the Saxons’).

#### 3.3.1.1. The suffix –ingas

The suffix –ingas has the meaning ‘followers of’. The toponyms *Yalding* (‘followers of Ealda’), *Hastings* (‘followers of Hæsta’), *Reading* (‘followers of Rēada’) and *Poynings* (‘followers of Pūna’) have the meaning ‘followers of a pagan god’, whereas the toponyms *Worthing* (‘followers of Worth’), *Lancing* (‘followers of Wlanc’), *Angmering* (‘followers of Angenmæ̃r’) and *Goring* (‘followers of Gāra’) have the meaning ‘family members or followers of a certain family’. Related to the meaning of followership words *hearg* and *wēoh* or *wīg*, although they are not ending in the –ingas suffix, can be included here because they have the meaning ‘pagan shrine, temple’ and they can be found in different toponyms throughout England. The word *hearg* is imbedded in the place names *Harrow*, *Peper Harrow* and *Arrowfield* and the word *wēoh* or *wīg* can be found in place names like *Weedon*, *Winwood* and *Wye*.

### 3.3.1.2. The suffixes *-ham* and *-hamm*

“Even if you know that *ham* is probably derived from the Old English word meaning ‘homestead’, you wouldn’t necessarily be able to say for certain that Langham, for example, meant ‘something plus homestead’. This is because the Old English *hamm* (water meadow or enclosure) also comes out as ‘ham’ in modern place names. Only by looking at early forms can you distinguish between the two, and even then it is not always possible. In this particular case, Langham could mean either ‘long river meadow/enclosure’ or ‘long homestead’. Until the early spelling of the name is known (and by ‘early’ I mean at least the twelfth century or before), it is not possible to see which Celtic, Latin, Old English, Old Norse, or even Old French elements might form the name. Place name scholars have to hunt through a variety of historical documents in order to record early spellings.” (Rye, web: [www.englishplacenames.co.uk](http://www.englishplacenames.co.uk))

As it is already mentioned, the place name element *-ham* (‘village’) originates in Old English, so does *-hamm* (‘land in a river band, water meadow’). So without proper information we cannot deduce meanings of certain toponyms. The main problem lies in the modern spelling, the double *m* in *-hamm* has been dropped and is now spelled as *-ham* in toponyms and therefore the safest way to finding out a meaning of a place name is to search for the earliest written form. *Evesham* and *Chippenham* are place names that have the ending *-ham*, but they both lie in river bends, hence *-hamm* is the proper ending considering the meaning. The other parts in these place names are personal names *Eof* and *Cippa*. Further examples of the spelling *-ham* but actually having the meaning *-hamm* are: *Farnham* (‘fern-covered water-meadow’), *Topsham* (‘Toppa’s water-meadow’), *Burnham* (‘water-meadow by the stream’).

Towns in different counties can have the same name. The mentioned *Burnham* belongs to the county Somerset and lies on the river Brue. But the *Burnham* from Buckinghamshire has the ending *-ham* also in meaning and spelling, the meaning of Burnham is ‘village by a stream’. To distinguish towns that have the same name sometimes the ending *-on-sea* is added. Today the Somerset Burnham is known as *Burnham-on-Sea*. Although these two towns have different meanings they have the same spelling. It can occur that two towns have the same meaning as well as the same spelling. E.g. *Shoreham* in the county Kent and *Shoreham* in West Sussex have the same meaning ‘village by the rock or steep slope’; to differentiate these two the ending *-on-sea* was added to the West Sussex Shoreham, making its name to *Shoreham-on-sea*.



There is a great deal of place names that have the ending *-ham*. E.g. *Aldenham* ('old village'), *Newnham* ('new village'), *Northam* ('north village'), *Southam* ('south village'), *Eastham* ('east village'), *Westerham* ('more westerly village'), *Egham* ('Ecga's village'), *Streatham* ('village on the Roman road'), *Grafham* ('village by a grove'), *Greatham* and *Greetham* share the same meaning 'village on gravel'. Numerous personal names in combination with *-ham* can be found in many place names as well, e.g. *Garboldisham*, *Saxmundham*, *Offham*, *Pagham*, *Fakenham*, *Dagenha*, *Meopham* and *Babraham* (first element is a woman's name *Beadburg*).

Blindly following the meaning of parts in names can result in faulty interpretations. As it is already seen, the suffix *-ham* has the meaning of 'village' or 'homestead'. And by taking a name like *Oakham*, we might be tempted to say it has the meaning 'oak village' that would be false. In one of earlier versions *Oakham* was found to be *Ocham* (1067), which has nothing to do with oak trees. *Oakham* and *Ockham* are connected to personal names, thus denoting 'estates or villages of men called Occa or Oca'. Such an interpretation may be linked to 'folk etymology'. Bauer (2006: 314) defines 'folk etymology' as "a process of reanalysis. Speakers of a language, expecting their words to be partly motivated, find in them elements which they perceive as motivating the word, even where these elements have no historical presence". It is common in loan words (e.g. hamburger).

### 3.3.1.3. The suffixes *-ingham*, *-hām-stede*, *-hām-tūn*, *-tūn*

Another suffix (*-ingham*) from that period is the combination of *-ingas* and *-ham/-hamm*. The difference between *-ham* and *-hamm* in this combination is also important. For example, we have *Nottingham* 'village of Snot's people', (the 's' has been lost due to Norman influence) which has the suffix *-ham* and on the other *Buckingham* and *Birlingham* have the suffix *-hamm* 'land in a river bend occupied by Bucca's people' and 'water-meadow belonging to Byrle's people'. The early spelling of Buckingham is *Buccinghamme* and of Birlingham is *Byrlinghamme* which is also verification of its meaning.

Two groups of toponyms with the suffix *-ingham* may be distinguished. There is no apparent difference between them in modern spelling, however the difference may be seen when the original spelling is taken into consideration. The first group consists of place names like *Birmingham* ('village of the people of Beorma'), *Billingham* ('village of the people of Bill'), *Atcham*(*Attingham*) ('village of the people of Eata'), *Ovingham* ('village of the people of Ofa'), *Altrincham* ('village of the people of Aldhere'). The second group consists of place names such

as *Everingham* ('village of the followers of Eofor'), *Gillingham* ('village of the followers of Gylla'), *Empingham* ('village of the followers of Empa'), *Framlingham* ('village of the followers of Framela'), *Walsingham* ('village of the followers of Wals') and *Cottingham* ('village of the followers of Cott').

The suffix *hām-stede* occurs in many names, e.g. *Hampstead*, *Hamstead* and *Hempstead* ('homestead, farm'). Usually compounds like those mentioned are prefixed with a name of a tree or a plant, e.g. *Ashampstead*, *Nettlestead*, *Nuthampstead*, and *Wheathampstead*. Not only trees and plants can be found in these compounds, the place name *Berkhamstead* has the meaning 'homestead on a hill' and *Easthampstead* (early form *Yethamstede* 1176) means 'homestead by a gate', namely the gate to Windsor Forest.

The suffix *-tūn* can stand alone, but it is not uncommon to find it as a derivative of the *-ham/-hamm* suffixes, e.g. *Littlehampton* ('small home farm') or *Northampton* ('north home farm'). *Hampton*, *Hampton Bishop*, *Hampton Wafer* and *Hampton Lucy* come from the *-hamm-tun* combination and all of them have the meaning 'village in or by riverside meadow-land'.

#### 3.3.1.4. The suffix -tun

This suffix is the most common of all Old English suffixes; it is never used alone and is mainly used as a second element. A possibility where it occurs as a first element might be in the place name *Tonbridge*, although it may be possible that the first element is a personal name, Tunna. The suffix *-tun* comes in various combinations, in combination with geographical directions, in combination with climatic seasons, or churches, mills (in these place names confusion may arise because of the same element which has another meaning 'in the middle'), products, personal names, natural features, animals and plants.

Table 7. Examples of place names containing the suffix *-tun*. Source: Field (1994:21-22)

	Place name	Meaning/explanation
geographical directions	Norton, Sutton, Weston and Easton, Aston or Eston	'north, south, west and east'
climatic season	Somerton, Winterton	They had seasonal qualities
churches	Chirton, Cheriton, Cherington	distinguished from other villages for having a church

mills	Millington, Milton	had mills
in the middle	Milton Bryan, Milton Abbas, Milton Keynes, Milton Malsor	geographical placement
products	Butterton, Honiton, Honington	produced butter and honey
personal names	Edgbaston, Osmaston, Darlaston, Kinvaston  Kniveton, Knayton, Kneeton  Bryanston  Cripstone  Flamston	Ecgbald, Osmund, Deorlaf, Cynewald  female name Cengifu  Brian de Insula  Henry Cryspyn (1356)  Walter Flambard (1202)
natural features	Brockton, Brotton, Broughton  Wootton, Wotton  Marston, Merston	brooks  woods  marshes
animals	Calverton, Oxton, Lambton, Shepton, Foxton	
plants and trees	Ryton, Appleton, Elmtun,  Accrington  Mappleton	'accorn farm'  'maple-tree farm'

### 3.3.1.5. The suffix -ford

Place names ending in *-ford* are usually of historical importance. *Stamford* ‘stone or stony ford’, *Stamford Bridge* (originally was *Sandford*), *Stratford* ‘ford crossed by a Roman road’, *Wallingford* ‘people of Wealh’, *Stafford* ‘ford by a landing place’, *Oxford* ‘ford for oxen’, *Bedford* ‘Bēda’s ford’, *Hertford* ‘stag ford’, *Hereford* ‘army ford’, *Guildford* ‘ford by a landing place’.

### 3.3.1.6. The suffix -wīc

The suffix *-wīc* has the meaning ‘dwelling, farm, dairy-farm, industrial building’, other forms of this suffix are *-wich* or *-wick*. *Warwick* means ‘dwellings near a weir’, *Ipswich* ‘Gip’s port’, *Norwich* ‘northern port’. The suffix *-wīc* also appears in one of Southampton’s early name forms *Homwic*. In *Greenwich* and *Sandwich* the first part alludes to natural attributes ‘green’ and ‘sandy’. In *Woolwich* the first part carries the information of the cargo ‘wool’ that was carried across it. Directions and location can be also included in place names, e.g. *Northwich*, *Southwich*, *Westwick*, *Middlewich* and *Netherwich*. As already mentioned, ‘industrial building or dairy farm’ are also meanings of *-wīc*, e.g. that of cheesemaking is imbedded in *Cheswick*, *Chiswick* and *Keswick*. *Colwich* and *Colwick* were places where charcoal was produced. Some places got their names according to different occupations such as priest or smith (*Prestwich/Prestwick*, *Smetwich*). Other names were given by describing a place using trees or plants, e.g. *Ashwick*, *Hazelwick*, *Appletreewick*, *Redwick* (‘reed’), *Benwick* (‘beans’) and *Slaughterwicks* (skah-treow, ‘sloe-tree’).

Table 8. Brief overview of Anglo-Saxon place name elements. Source: Sharples (2010)

place name element	meaning	example
-burna (-borne)	a brook, stream	Otterbourne
-burh (-burg)	a fortified place, castle	Tewkesbury
-broc	a brook or stream	Drybrook
-brycg	a bridge	Bristol
-cumb (coombe)	a deep valley	Ilfracombe
-cot	a cottage	Didcot
-den	a valley	Micheldean

-dun	a hill or down	Swindon
-feld	open space later a field	Sheffield
-for	a river ford	Hereford
-halh	a nook, corner of land	Shifnal
-ham	a homestead	Northam
-hamm	an enclosure, water-meadow	Passenham
-hrycg	a ridge	Lindridge
-hyrst	a wooded hill	Midhurst
-hyll	a hill	Sedgehill
-ingas (-ing)	the people of ...	Hastings, Pickering
-leah (-ley)	a woodland clearing	Hatherley
mer (-mere)	a lake	Ringmer
-mutha	a river mouth or estuary	Lynmouth, Barmouth
-stede	a place, site of a building	Hampstead
-tun	an enclosure, farmstead, estate	Castleton
-wella	a spring or stream	Hartwell
-wic	Romano-British settlement	Ipswich, Harwich
-wick	produce (of a farm, particularly dairy)	Giggleswick
-worth	an enclosure, homestead	Knebworth

### 3.3.2. Characteristics of Old English

The Anglo-Saxons brought with them their culture and their language which had already been in contact with Latin even before they settled in England. Some of the characteristics of Old English were that nouns had genders (masculine, feminine and neuter), unlike in modern English, numbers could have been singular or plural and there were four cases (nominative, accusative, dative and genitive). Verbs ending in *-an* were in the infinitive, the present tense had markers for number and person, in the weak past tense *-de* was added and the strong past tense was marked by an vowel change. There were two types of adjectives: weak and strong. The difference was in the determiner, if there was a determiner, the weak ending was added to the adjective, while in the other case with no determiner the strong endings were used. The adjectives were in agreement (case, gender and number) with nouns they described. The comparative ending was *-ra*, and superlative endings were *-ost*, *-ist*, *-est* and *-m*. Adverbs were formed by adding *-e* or *-lic* to the adjective. The word order was subject - verb - object, but it did vary in a few instances:

1. "When an object is a pronoun, it often precedes the verb;
2. When a sentence begins with an adverb, the subject often follows the verb;
3. The verb often comes at the end of a subordinate clause." (History of English, Fennel, Web.)

### 3.4. The Vikings

After the Anglo-Saxons have settled and constructed the English language (Old English), another linguistic and conquering force came knocking on the doors of the British Isles, it was the Scandinavians or Vikings. The Age of the Vikings started sometime in the first half of the eighth century with smaller raids and plundering of monasteries. “In its entry for 793 the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records the first major Viking raid...” (Blake, 1996:75) The Vikings were excellent navigators and sailors, they were actually plunderers more than settlers or conquerors. Their colonization of the British Isles is recorded in the language itself as well as in the place names. During their raids the Vikings noticed the milder climate and better land for cultivation, so they saw no reason to return home and decided to settle. England was separated into seven kingdoms (Kent, Essex, Sussex, Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria) which often fought for domination which is also called the *Heptarchy*. (Odenstedt 2000: 52) This was the reason the Vikings had no trouble in conquering England. The Vikings were referred to as Danes. They conquered the north and east counties with ease, until they were stopped by the Wessex king Alfred in 878, the Viking leader Guthrum reached an agreement, called the Treaty of Wedmore. As it is already mentioned, the northern and eastern counties already belonged to the Vikings and now a southern border was created, that border is known as the *Danelaw*. (Blake, 1996:78)

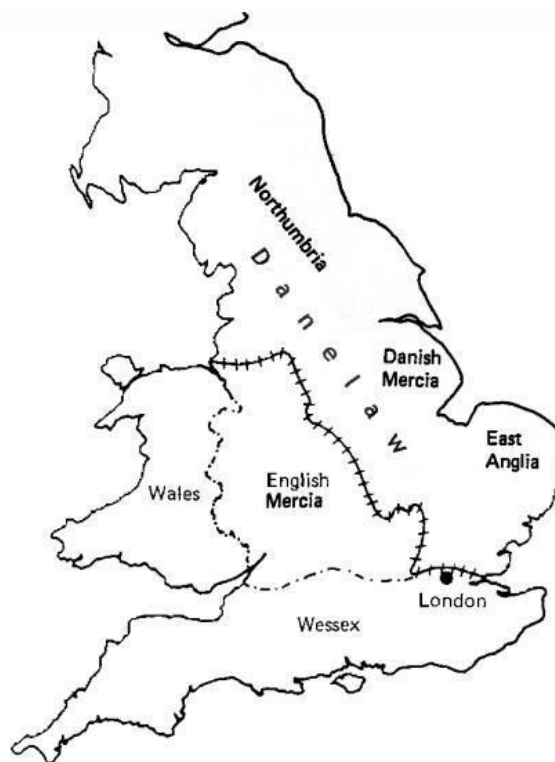


Figure 4. The Danelaw. Source: Barber 1993: 129

Danish law and custom were followed in the Danelaw area. Although the Vikings were usually referred to as Danes, there was a large number of Norwegians and Swedes among them. The Danes settled in East Midlands and East Anglia, whereas the Norwegians settled in the north mainly Yorkshire, on the Isle of Man and on Ireland. (Clark, 1992: 471) The new settlers did not usually inhabit already existing places, they founded new settlements.

### 3.4.1. Viking place names

The difference between the Viking settlers and the Anglo-Saxons settlers is the duration of their settlement period. The Anglo-Saxons had time to expand all over England, especially considering the past when the country was practically defenseless. The Vikings expansion was stopped by the Anglo-Saxons and a southern border, the Danelaw, was created. The number of place names west of the border is practically non-existent, which is clearly visible from the following map.

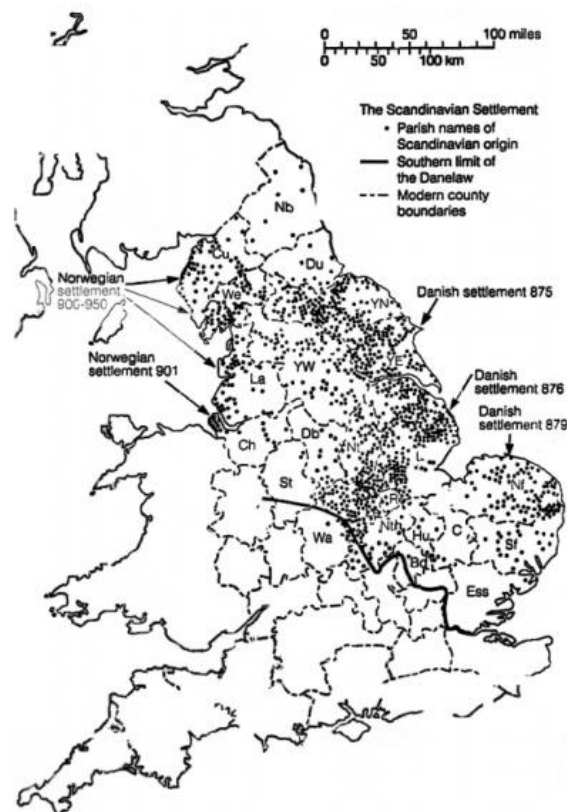


Figure 5. Place names of Scandinavian origin: Loyn (1994:83)



The most common Viking place name elements according to Loyn (1994: 85) are the suffixes *-by* (Grimsby), *-beck* (Tossbeck), *-ness* (Furness), *-scale*, *-sough*, *-thwait*, *-thorpe* (Scunthorpe) and *-toft* (Lowestoft). From the mentioned suffixes, the suffixes *-by* and *-thorp* are the most common ones, it is estimated there are over 600 *-by* names and they are mainly found in the “Danish“-areas. (Baugh, 1993, 96) There is a large number of hybrid names in which one element is Scandinavian and the other English. These names are known as Grimston hybrids (Grim is a Scandinavian name and *-tūn* is an already discussed Anglo-Saxon element). Townend (2002: 48) gives three possible options concerning place names where there is contact between speakers of two different languages:

1. The speakers of the incoming language may use the names they encounter without changing them;
2. The incomers may coin their own names, unrelated to the existing ones;
3. The incomers may adapt the names they encounter, to suit their own speech habits.

In terms of the Anglo-Scandinavian relationship, all three options were probably in use, but the third option appears to be the most common one.

#### 3.4.1.1. The Suffix *-by*

The original meaning of the suffix *-by* was ‘farmstead’ and, as was the case with the Anglo-Saxon suffix *-ham*, many of these places grew into villages and towns. As a part of their settlement, the Vikings renamed a lot of places. To the suffix *-by* often an Old English word was added, e.g. *Utterby* has the first part *uterrai* which means ‘outer, more remote’. Further examples of *-by* ending place names include: *Selby* ‘village with willows’, *Linby* ‘village with lime trees’, *Thrimby* ‘thorn-bush village’. Some common names in the Danelaw are *Kirkby* or *Kirby* ‘village with a church’ and *Crosby* ‘village with cross’. *Coningsby* was owned by a king and *Whenby* was owned by women. The ending *-by* is often added to personal names, e.g. Scandinavian names: *Brumby*, *Ormsby*, *Barkby*, *Stainsby*, *Bleasby*, *Humby* (also found in Scotland), *Corby*, *Oadby*; Irish names: *Duggleby* and *Lackenby*; English names: *Ellerby* and *Gutterby*.

#### 3.4.1.2. The suffix *-thorpe*

Another common Scandinavian suffix in The Danelaw is *-thorpe*. It appears in various forms such as *-thorp*, *-throp* or *-trop*. It has the meaning ‘secondary settlement’ and usually follows the

name of the parent village, e.g. *Barby Thorpe*, *Tattershall Thorpe*, *Scotton Thorpe*. In names that use geographical directions, the direction usually indicates the position of the daughter village, e.g. *Easthorpe* and *Westhorpe* are east and west from *Southwell*. Names with Old English first elements are also not uncommon, e.g. *Newthorpe*, *Woodthorpe*, *Milnthorpe*, *Kingthorpe* and *Bishopthorpe*. This suffix is also usually used with Old Norse personal names, e.g. *Alethorpe*, *Caythorpe*, *Grimethorpe*, *Kettlethorpe* and *Sibthorpe*. The Vikings often gave names based on personal names wherever they settled.

Table 9. Overview of some place names originating from Scandinavian personal names. Source: The Vikings in Normandy, Web

Scandinavian personal name element	Scandinavian place name examples	English place name example	Norman place name example
Agi	Agerup (Denmark)	Oakthorpe (Leics), Othorpe (Leics)	Acqueville (Manche, Calvados)
Api	Aptrup (Denmark)	Apethrope (Northants)	Apperville (Seine-Mar., Eure, Manche)
Björn	Bjarnarhöfn (Iceland), Bjarnarnes (Iceland)	Barmston (East Riding, Durham)	Bierville (Seine-Mar.)
Bolli	Bollerup (Denmark)	Bulby (Lincs)	Bolleville (Seine-Mar.), Bouleville (Eure)
Gunni	Gunnersby (Norway), Gundtoft (Denmark)	Gunby (Lincs), Gunthorpe (Northants, Lincs, Norfolk, Rutlandshire), Gunton (Suffolk, Norfolk)	Gonneville (Calvados x 3, Seine-Mar. x 2)
Helgi	Helgatóftir (Iceland), Helgatofta (Sweden), Helgastad (Norway), Helgastaðir (Iceland)	Hellaby (West Yks), Helhoughton (Norfolk)	Heuqueville (Seine-Mar., Eure), Heugeville-sur-Sienne (Manche), Helleville (Manche)

Klakkr	Klaksker (Iceland), Klakkeyjar (Iceland)	Claxton (Co. Durham, Norfolk, North Yks), Clawson (Leices)	Clatot (Seine-Mar.), Claville (Eure, Seine- Mar.), Clasville (Seine-Mar.)
Saxi	Saksborg (Denmark), Saksdal (Denmark), Saksholm (Denmark), Saksegårde (Denmark), Sakstrup (Denmark), Sakskaer (Denmark)	Saxby (Leics, Lincs), Saxthorpe (Norfolk)	Sassetot (Seine-Mar. x 2), Sasseville (Seine-Mar.), Saussedale (Seine- Mar.), Saussetour (Manche), Sauxmesnil (Manche)
Valr	Valshamar (Iceland), Valsted (Denmark), Valby (Denmark)	Walesby (Lincs, Notts)	Vauville (Calvados, Manche), Vannecrocq (Eure)

Table 10. Brief overview of Scandinavian place name elements. Source: Sharples (2010)

place name element	meaning	example
-bekkr (beck)	a farmstead or settlement, then a village	Caldbeck
-by	a farmstead or settlement, then a village	Whitby
-dalr	a dale, valley	Patterdale
-ey	an island	Orkney
-fjall	an island	Orkney
-fjorthr	fjord=sea inlet	Strangford
-gathr (-garth)	a yard, open space	Aysgarth
-gil	a ravine	Garrigill
-holmr (-holm)	flat ground by a river	Durham
-kirkja	a church (Scots kirk)	Ormskirk
-nes	promontory, headland	Skegness
-thorp	an outlying farmstead	Milnthorpe

-thveit (-thwaite)	a meadow	Haverthwaite
-toft	a site of a house and outbuildings, a plot of land, a homestead	Lowestoft
-vithr	a wood	Skipwith

### 3.4.2. Influence of Scandinavian on English

During the Viking settlement on the Isles the language was Old English, which has roots in the Germanic family, as well as the language of the Vikings the Old Norse. These two languages were similar in their basic structure. The English and the Scandinavians could understand each other due to similarities in their vocabularies. “Some of them were pronounced differently, but were nevertheless recognizable. Old Norse for example did not have a palatalized consonant where West Saxon did. So many words with a *sk* are Old Norse, like *skirt* (ON *skyrta*) and those with a *sh* like *shirt* (OE *sceorte*) are English. This also goes for pairs like *g* and *y* as in *gate* (ON) - *Yates* (OE).” (Maček, 2007) The Scandinavian vocabulary was being used in every area of the language; most words of Scandinavian origin in English are concrete everyday words.

Table 11. Examples of English words with Scandinavian origin. Source: English words of Old Norse origin, Wikipedia

NOUNS	birth, bulk, egg, husband, law, leg, root, score, skin, skull, trust, wing and window
ADJECTIVES	awkward, flat, happy, ill, loose, low, odd, sly, ugly, weak and wrong
VERBS	to cast, clip, crawl, call, die, glitter, give, scare, sprint, take and want
PRONOUNS	both, same, they and their

According to Odenstedt (2000: 87) there are certain ways of deciding whether a word is a Scandinavian loan:

1. Germanic /sk/ became /ʃ/ (sh) in all positions. This change occurred later in Scandinavia, and therefore words like shall, shoulder and shirt are native English words whereas skin, sky and skirt are Scandinavian words.
2. In early Old English the Germanic /g/ before front vowels became /j/, and /k/ became /t/. In Old Norse /g/ and /k/ remained. Thus, child, choose and yields are all native words, while give, gift, kid and kindle are Scandinavian.
3. Date of first appearance. For instance, the Old English word for 'take' was *niman*, but in late Old English *tacan* is found. The Old Norse word was *taka*, which shows that it must have been borrowed from the Scandinavians. In the same way, the word for 'law' was originally *æ* but a later recording is *lagu*, which comes from Old Norse.

One other way to differentiate whether a word is native to English or Scandinavian is to look at the meaning of a word. For example, the word *bloom* can be derived from Old English *bloma* ('ingot of iron') or the Scandinavian *blom* ('flower or bloom'), but when we look at the meaning it becomes clear that it was derived from the Scandinavian. This is also the case with the word *gift*, the Old English meaning is 'price of a wife' whereas the Old Norse meaning is 'gift or present'. (Baugh, 1993: 95)

### **3.5. The Normans**

The Vikings did not only settle upon the British Isles, they also conquered a part of northern France, which they named Normandy 'land of the Northmen'. The Norman Conquest was a final act in a complicated drama that had begun years earlier, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, last king of the Anglo-Saxon royal line. (Norman Conquest, Encyclopædia Britannica) Edward not leaving heirs to the throne behind tossed England's possible new successors into bloody disputes. The possible successors were Harold Godwinson (Edward's brother-in-law), William (Duke of Normandy, blood relative of the late king Edward) and Harald Hardrada (King of Norway). Harold Godwinson had support from his peers and was made king the same day as Edward's burial. As a response to his coronation, both William and the King of Norway invaded England. Harald Hardrada was first to invade England and was victorious at the Battle of Fulford. After his victory he collected tribute from the locals and was ambushed and killed by Harold Godwinson, who rushed north towards Hastings to defend against William after the ambush. At the Battle of Hastings (1066) William the Conqueror defeated Harold, and after that

was crowned King of England. After the victory Normans following William invaded England, their language was not Norse anymore but a dialect of French (Fields 1994: 28), e.g. the name of King Cnut became Canute, following these changes similar happened to place names. *Tutbury* (original meaning was ‘Stut’s fortress’) and *Nottingham* (*Snotingaham*) lost their initial *s* sound.

### 3.5.1. Norman place names

As part of the Norman conquest and their settling in England was the renaming of place names they found ugly or unpronounceable, or if the elements were distasteful to them (Field 1994: 28), e.g. the Anglo-Saxon place name *Fulepit* ‘filthy hill’ was polished up so it became *Beaumont* ‘fair hill’. The Normans often used prefixes such as *Beau-* and *Bel-* (‘fair or fine’) in their naming patterns. e.g. *Beaulieu* ‘fair place’, *Belvoir* ‘fine view’, *Beamish* ‘fine mansion’, *Belper*, *Bearpark* and *Beaurepair* mean ‘fair retreat’. Although the *Beau-* element is mainly used in Norman place names, it is not an imperative that such place names are of Norman origin, e.g. *Beausale* means ‘Bēaw’s nook of land’, *Beaufield* ‘Bēaw’s open land’ and *Beauworth* ‘bee enclosure’. Other place names of Norman or rather French origin are actually imitations of identical names found in France: *Richmond* ‘rich hill’, *Grosmont* ‘big mountain’, *Charterhouse on Mendip* stems from *Chartreuse* the original Carthusian monastery.

The French definite article (m. *le*, f. *la*, pl. *les*) is often used as an English place name element. E.g. *Hamble-le-Rice* ‘Hamble in the brushwood’ or *Chapel-en-le-Frith* ‘chapel in the woodland’, *-le-Street* has the meaning ‘on the Roman road’, and can be found in place names like *Wharram-le-Street*, *Appleton-le-Street*, *Chester-le-Street*. The Normans also added family names which resulted in unique place names, e.g. *Leighton Buzzard*, *Eaton Constantine*, *Eaton Bray*, *Sydenham Damerel*, *Stansted Mountfitchet*, *Ashby de la Zouch* and *Upton Scudmore*.

### 3.5.2. Influences of the Normans

As Blake (1996:34) states, the Conquest has influenced every aspect of the language, sounds, syntax, spelling and vocabulary. Not only the language was affected, after the conquest England’s society has changed, although the Norman lords were few in number they held all positions of power. As mentioned before, they gave up the language of their forefathers and spoke French; this resulted in French becoming the language of the court, the government, the church, the army and the law. The middle class was usually bilingual. The biggest group, the lower class, spoke English. Later in history the number of monolingual speakers will be the reason that English takes over in all aspects of the language. The French impact on the English

language is not only seen in place names, but also in everyday vocabulary. “By 1400 there were some 10,000 French words in English and 75 % of them are still in use.” (Maček, 2007: 30-31)

Table 12. Examples of English words with Norman origin. Source: Maček, 2007: 30-31

Government and administration	assembly, authority, chancellor, council, country, court, crown, exchequer, government, nation, office, parliament, people, power, servant
Titles, ranks, forms of address	baron, count, countess, duke, duchess, feudal, manor, marquis, noble, peer, prince, viscount; sir, madam, mister, master, sovereign, mistress
Military terms	aid, armour, arms, army, battle, captain, company, defeat, escape, force, lieutenant, navy, regiment, sergeant, siege, soldier, troops, vessel, victory
Church and religion	abbey, altar, Bible, baptism, cell, chapel, charity, chaste, clergy, divine, grace, honour, glory, lesson, miracle, paradise, parish, pray, religion, rule, saint, save, sermon, tempt, vice, virgin, virtue
Law and jurisdiction	accuse, attorney, case, cause, condemn, court, crime, damage, defendant, false, felony, guilt, heir, injury, interest, judge, jury, just, justice, marriage, money, penalty, plead, poor, poverty, prove, rent, robber, session, traitor
House, furniture, architecture	arch, castle, cellar, chimney, column, couch, curtain, cushion, lamp, mansion, palace, pillar, porch, table, wardrobe
Art and entertainment	art, beauty, colour, design, figure, image, ornament, paint, chase, card, dance, dice, leisure, pleasure, sport, tournament
Garments, meals	boot, coat, collar, costume, dress, fur, garment, gown, jewel, robe, dinner, supper

## 4. Place names in Ireland, Scotland and Wales

### 4.1. Place names in Ireland

In the Irish language Ireland is also called Eire. The name *Ireland* comes from an attempt to anglicize the early name, resulting in the meaning ‘land of Eire’. (Fields, 1994: 40) Ireland was in a favorable position regarding conquerors that came to Britain from the continental part of Europe. They were not affected much by the constant waves of new settlers, except the Scandinavians. This is noticeable when going through place names that can be found in Ireland. Two often found place name elements *dun* ‘fortress’ and *baile* ‘farm, village, town’. For example, *Dundrum* means ‘fort on the long hill’, *Downpatrick* ‘St Patrick’s fortress’, *Donegal* ‘fortress of the foreigners’ and the capital of Ireland *Belfast* means ‘ford at the sandbank’. Examples of place names with the element *baile* are: *Ballymena* ‘middle town’, *Ballycastle* ‘town by the castle’ and *Ballymoney* ‘town by a shrubbery’. *Waterford* ‘inlet of the wether’ and *Wexford* ‘sea-washed inlet’ are of Scandinavian origin as well as *Wicklow* ‘Viking’s meadow’ and *Arklow* ‘Arnkel’s meadow’.

### 4.2. Place names in Scotland

The ancient name of Scotland is *Caledonia* ‘(land of the) battle cry’, it got the name after a Celtic tribe. Although *Scotia* was actually in the earliest records the name of Ireland. The Scots migrated to the northern part of Britain and with them their name migrated as well. (Fields, 1994: 43) The ancient name is preserved in *Dunkeld* ‘fort of the Caledonians’ and the mountain name *Sciehallion*, in Gaelic *Sid Chailleann* which means ‘Caledonians fairy hill’. In Scotland Celtic, English and Scandinavian place names can be found. *Dunnet Head* and *Thurso* have a common element, which seems impossible at first sight. *Dunnet Head* comes from Celtic *Tarvodunum* ‘bull fort’ and *Thurso* comes from the Celtic *Tarvodubron* meaning ‘bull water’. *Tarvodubron* became translated into Old Norse as *Thjorsá* as the name of the Scandinavian god Thor was frequently used it became *Thorsá* meaning ‘Thor’s river’. In *Lossiemouth* the English word *mouth* is added to a Gaelic river-name meaning ‘river of Herbs’. The Brythonic element *Aber-* ‘river mouth’ is also found commonly in Scotland, e.g. *Aberdeen*, *Arbroath*.



### 4.3. Place names in Wales

Wales does not have such a complex compilation of place names like England. The Anglo-Saxons settlers came onto the Island from the north and east, so the Celtic tribes moved west, where they were left alone. When the Scandinavians came they were stopped before they could reach Wales. But that does not mean there are no place names of such origins, there are only fewer of them. The name Wales stems from the Old English word *Wealas* meaning ‘Celtic-speaking strangers, foreigners’, this element can be found in a number of place names, e.g. *Walton* or *Walworth*. The Celtic place name element *Aber* meaning ‘river mouth’, is often used in Welsh toponymy but it is not restricted to Wales. The second element in *Aber* names is the name of a river, e.g. *Aberystwyth* ‘mouth of the river Ystwyth’, *Abergele* ‘mouth of the Gele’, *Aberaeron* ‘name of the Celtic battle goddess’. The Romans left their mark in names like *Caerllion* which means ‘fort of the legions’- it has the Welsh element *llion* which means Latin *legionum* ‘of the legions’. From the English origin there are also names such as *Flint* ‘hard rock’ and *Radnor* ‘red hillside’. *Newtown*, *Middletown* and *Newport* are also evidently of English origin. There are also Scandinavian place names. *Swansea* can be mistaken for a name of English origin but it is actually of Scandinavian origin meaning ‘Sveinn’s island’ another example of such deceptive names is *Milford Haven* ‘sandy inlet’ which stems from the Old Norse *melr* ‘sandbank’ and *-fjorthr* ‘fjord’, but it lost its meaning and was changed to *-ford* that is when *Haven* was added. The first part of *Haverfordwest* means ‘ford used by goats’ the second part west was added in 1409 for distinguishing purposes from *Hereford*. (Fields, 1994: 35) The most interesting name in Wales “*Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwylllantysiliogogoch* (lan-vire-pool-guin-gith-go-ger-u-queern-drob-ooth-clandus-ilio-gogo-goch) which means something like ‘St Mary’s Church in the Hollow of the White Hazel near a Rapid Whirlpool and the Church of St. Tysilio near the Red Cave’.” (Source: <http://iguide.travel>)

## 5. Conclusion

This paper presents how the English language was shaped by a combination of various influences. The various influences can be tracked by analyzing the different place names that can be found on the British Isles. Even though today's place names might appear completely different or in many cases even illogical, in the past they were used to express natural features, habitation forms, followers of a god or a particular family, etc. Place names change as does the language itself, because it is a living entity that evolves and takes on different shapes and forms.

There are also place names that withstand time and external forces. Celtic place names are a perfect example of how place names can stand as monuments in the passage of time. Nowadays it is easier to determine where former Roman towns had been stationed. Without the influence of the Germanic Anglo-Saxons, there might have never been an English language as we know it today. We can safely say that every culture mentioned in this paper participated in the formation of the modern English language.

Place names are also indicators of how certain tribes have migrated. By looking at Celtic place names it is apparent that they fled westwards to escape the new conquerors, and by looking at Scandinavian place names it becomes clear where their conquest had come to an end and where they had settled. The unique place names given by the Normans are evidence not only of their influence on the language but also of their personality as a folk. The Celtic tribes had different names for the same places, which tells us they were tribes with similarities as well as differences. The networks of roads and positions of Roman towns indicate their organization capabilities. The place names of the Anglo-Saxon also give away that they were not unified but they all formed their own kingdoms. Much information is imbedded in place names. By thoroughly analyzing them different pieces of the puzzle that is the English language come together.

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