Norn in Shetland

John Stewart

Shetland, like Faroe, has its Norðuroyar, the Nort Isles of Yell, Unst, and Fetlar, separated in that order from the Mainland. This, the chief island, forms by far the greater bulk of the land mass of Shetland. Its shape may well have been likened to a »hilt« in warlike times; in more prosaic days it resembles nothing so much as a wrench or screw spanner with open jaws. Equally spaced along the east side of the Mainland are Whalsa and Bressa, while on the west are Papa Stur, Burra, Trondra, and isolated Fula. Halfway between Shetland and Orkney is Fair Isle, Friðarey of the Sagas. These are the inhabited isles. Smaller islets have had at times from one to half-a-dozen families, living grimly and dangerously in closer proximity to fishing grounds when oars were the means of propulsion. Only one is inhabited now.

The nearest neighbour is Orkney, 22 English sea-miles due south from Shetland's extremity to Fair Isle and a farther 24 to North Ronaldsay, the far north limit of Orkney. Faroe is 176 miles west-north-west and Bergen in Norway 180 miles east. This is the geographical setting which has influenced Shetland's history.

For 2500 years Shetland was Britain's extremity, the last land which could be found without losing sight of othet land, and there is ample evidence of occupation from well

into the second millennium before the birth of Christ. The various peoples and cultures who made their way from Britain or Ireland followed the general British pattern; some, like the builders of brochs or towers in Roman times, were relatively highly advanced. But the Norse invasion and exploration, which initiated present-day Shetland, Faroe and Iceland alike, was a reversal in Shetland of all previous race movements.

About 1150 years ago, then, Shetland was colonised from Norway, and the result of that change will be felt, with lessening effect, for many more generations. For the Norse settlement was so overwhelming that all trace of the previous inhabitants was lost. Except for ordinary trade, the evidence seems to indicate that no Scot set foot in Shetland until after 1379, when the islands were restored[1]) to the Earl of Orkney, having been under the control of Norway since the battle of Florevaag in 1194. Duke Hákon, who became king of Norway in 1299, had control over Shetland and Faroe from 1273, administration being carried on from the ancient capital of Skallowa in Shetland.

In the 13th and 14th centuries such names of officials as have survived are Norse. In the 15th century Scots had begun to infiltrate, relatives of the earl or factors of the bishop, but others had still native names. After the mortgage of Shetland to Scotland in 1469 and the transfer of the bishopric of Orkney from the see of Trondhjem to St Andrews in Scotland in 1472, a Scots archdeacon and Scots clerics replaced native clergy; and the earliest immigrants are the relatives of these and of the Sinclair earls. They were the first to introduce the Lowland Scottish language.

The time lag between Orkney and Shetland is considerable. Norse manuscripts end in Orkney in 1426, but occur in Shetland as late as 1608, a difference of 181 years. In

[1]) The Earl's position in Shetland is uncertain. Shetland was reunited to Orkney only in 1469 under the Scottish Crown, and had many of her own laws until 1611.

1439 the Orkney lawman writes his evidence in Scots; this language does not appear in a Shetland document until 1525, in a isolated paper about church matters. Orkney was close to Scotland, and had in St Magnus' Cathedral the centre from which clerics spread over both groups of islands, both before and after the Reformation of 1560. Kirkwall was made a Scots burgh in 1486 and became a gateway for Scots incomers. Orkney's trade was mainly with Scotland; Shetland looked to Hamburg, Bremen, and Norway. Orkney had many Scots settlers; Shetland had few, and then usually secondhand Scots of the second or third insular generation, almost islesmen in fact.

One difference had come over the Shetlanders which has led to some false assumptions. The last (and only Scots) Foud or governor in Shetland was Laurence Bruce of Cultmalindie, whose exactions caused an official enquiry in 1577. At that time 141 out of 759 udallers who complained against him had acquired surnames after the Scots fashion. The remaining 618 had surnames ending in -son, or were simply referred to by their farm, for example, Ola a Hamar, as is indeed normal spoken practice in country districts in Shetland to this day. The -son names were not family surnames, but changed with each generation, for example, John Manson might have a son called Nicol Johnson, whose son in turn became John Nicolson. This type of naming lasted until the beginning of the 19th century, and one or two people in 1910 registering for their first Old Age Pension found that they had been baptized in this way. When these patronymics became fixed surnames, the corresponding »daughter« termination for a woman went out of use.

In a list of 816 wills made between 1611 and 1648 the proportion of surnames had increased to 362, though the number of separate family names had not increased. By far the greater number of these people were not Scots incomers, but Shetlanders on the mother's side.

A change from the 16th to the 17th century which is

observable in these two documents is this. In the earlier there are 496 names of the Magnus a Brek type to only 122 of the »son names. Among the wills the farm name is not much used. There certainly was a change in emphasis in naming, but the territorial name is widely used in speech to this day. Perhaps wills were official documents, and in any case the place of residence is given with each entry. Occasionally a person may have a surname, a »son name, and a farm name, thus making trebly sure.

Of the Scots surnames Sinclair, the earldom name, came first, followed by Smith and Sutherland. But Magnusson or Manson, Olason, Johnson, Nicolson, Thomasson, Anderson, Williamson and Erasmusson, in that order, accounted for over half the surnames in Shetland in the early 17th century.

In the next generation these names would change. In the forenames Magnus again had an overwhelming lead, John being next. James (ninth in popularity in 1577) was third, Andrew fourth, Ola, Nicol and Thomas had moved down, William and Erasmus were as before, but the latter as a forename had already begun to decline to practical extinction, though the process was to take nearly 300 years. Ola and Nicol have shared the same fate.

Of women's names Marion (Merran) was twice as common as any other. Then came Katherine (Ketrin), Margaret, Agnes, Bryde (Bretta), Christian (Kirsten) and Ingagarth, all widely used Scandinavian names.

The Norse forenames underwent a quick change with the Scots clergy, who refused to baptise in »heathen« names. Ola, Nicol, and Magnus survived as saint's names, Rasmus (Rasmi) through the scholar Erasmus. Hákon was transformed to Hector and Hercules (colloquially Hakki or Hekki), apparently not regarded as heathen, and rarely found to this day. Ási was changed to the Biblical Hosea, though still verbally Ossi, and originated a surname Hoseason. Sigurðr became George, and George is sometimes still

called Sjurdi. Sæmundr exists as Simon, (Seemin verbally). Thorvaldr became Tervil and was in use until recently. Geirhildr became Grizel or Grace, and its diminutive Geirsi replaced all three in speech. Áslaug became Ursula, spoken as Osla.

Between 1577 and 1648 one sees the English naming making inroads. Forenames with a frequency of 30 to 15 were Laurence, Henry, David, Robert, and Malcolm (a Sinclair name). Occuring 11 to 5 times were Peter, Edward, Christian (the much-later Christina), Janet, Barbara, Arthur, George, Isobel, Elspeth, Helen, Patrick, Alexander, Bessie and Donald. Of the older names the only ones comparing in frequency were Christopher (14), Matho, Sinnevo, Walter, Antonius, Bartilmo, Gregorius, Simon, Stephen, Garthrow (Geirthruðr), Jacob, Sigurd, Benedick and Botulf or Bothwell (Bótólfr).

Other Norse names still surviving were Bondi, Bruni, Boun (Bjorn) and Berni, Beriald, Daniel, Eric, Erling, Erlend, Finn, Garth, Guthrum, Gavill (Gíafvaldr), Guneild (Gunhilda), Halbard (Halvarðr), Halden (Haldingr), Harald, Helga, Inga, Ivar, Ketill, Klaus, Kolbein, Knod (Knǫttr), Kurt, Martin, Magdalen, Michael, Orm, Poll, Rull (Rólfr), Swan (Svanr), Swein, Skow (Skógr), Torvald, Torquele, Turberrie (Thorbergr) and Turbenn (Thorbeinir). Less apparently Norse were Adam, Anna, Clara, Daniel, Gabriel, Matches (Mathías), Martin, Michael, Philippus, Salomon (Solmundr), Silvester, Sara, and Vincentius. Bastian, Jerome (existing until recently as Jarm), Leonard, and Melchior may be entirely Hanseatic. Uryell is uncertain, and Gelis may be Gils or Gísl. These could be supplemented many times over from place-names.

Renaming a Norse people does not make them Scottish, nor was there any immigration extensive enough to materially influence their racial make-up. Indeed it is doubtful if at any time, apart from Lerwick and Scalloway and the Scots families who gradually secured nearly all the land,

there could have been more than 2 or 3 per cent of in-comers in any one generation, and, life being harder in Shetland, many of these found their way back to Scotland. But anyone making assumptions about Shetland from fore-names might have a totally wrong impression. They were the first to go. The language held for three centuries from the Scots mortgage. The place-names are now fighting their losing battle five centuries later. And, even after two world wars, with the exception of Lerwick, the Norseness of the islands is being little altered. Where it is, it is not by Scots and English immigration, but by Shetland emigration, for the population in a century has declined disastrously from 32000 to 18000.

To see how the language fared one can best quote contem-poraries. The vehicles of entry of Lowland Scots and English were (1) Scots ministers and landowners and their servants (in all parishes), (2) traders from Orkney and Scotland (in Dunrossness, the south parish, south-facing parts of the »Westside«, and scattered harbours), (3) settlers in Scallo-way and, after 1652, soldiers and settlers in Lerwick, and (4) Shetland seamen in whalers, merchant-ships, and the navy in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the present century one might add the two world wars. Here are some contem-porary records.

1. James Key, minister of Dunrossness, 1680.

"The inhabitants of the South Parish are (for the most part) strangers from Scotland and Orkney, whose language, habit, manners and dispositions are almost the same with the Scottish. Their language is the same with the Scottish, yet all the natives can speak the Gothick or Norwegian tongue ... by reason of their commerce with the Hollander they promptly speak Low Dutch.

"The inhabitants of the North Parish (of Dunrossness) are, very few excepted, natives of the place ... All the inhabitants of this parish can speak the Gothic or Nor-wegian language, and seldom speak other among them-

selves, yet all of them speak the Scots tongue more promptly and more properly than generally they do in Scotland".

2. Rev. John Brand (1701), a visiting church organiser, who saw only the south of Shetland and Lerwick.

"English is the common language among them, yet many of the people speak Norse or corrupt Danish, especially such as live in the more northern isles, yea so ordinary it is in some places that it is the first language their children speak. Several here also speak good Dutch, even servants, though they have never been out of the country, because of the many Dutch ships which do frequent their ports. And there are some who have something of all these three languages, English, Dutch and Norse. The Norse hath continued ever since the Norwegians had these isles in possession. And in Orkney (as hath been said) it is not quite extinct, though there be by far more of it in Zetland, which many do commonly use".

"It is observable that the names of the descendants of the old inhabitants differ from the names of others now numerous among them, for these only have a name without a surname, save what is taken from their father's name, and by adding son or daughter thereunto, exemp. gra., Agnes Magnus Daughter, her own name is Agnes, her father's is Magnus, to which Daughter is added, which is the whole denomination or designation under which a woman goes, so Marion Peters Daughter, Laurence Johns Son etc., which they say is yet the Danish way of expressing and distinguishing names. And for further clearing, if there be two men or women of the same name, they use also to design them by the places where they ordinarily reside, as Agnes Magnus Daughter in Trevister, so that she may be discriminated from another woman of the same name living in another place.

3. Sir Robert Sibbald (1711). (A compilation from various Shetland informants).

"The natives are known from the incomers by their want

of surnames, having only patronymic names. Many of them are descended from the Norwegians and speak a Norse tongue corrupted (they call Norn) among themselves, which is now much worn out.

"The incomers (whose residence in these isles is not above a few centuries of years) ... speak the Scots language as well as the Norse".

4. Thomas Gifford of Busta (1733). Steward and Justiciar Depute of Shetland.

"The ancient language spoken by the inhabitants of Zetland was that of the Norwegians called Norn, and continued to be that only spoken by the natives till of late, and many of them speak it to this day among themselves, but the language now spoken here is English, which they pronounce with a very good accent, and many, especially about Lerwick, speak Dutch very well, having had frequent occasion to converse with the Dutch people".

5. George Low, an Orkney minister (1774).

On Foula. "The Norse language is much worn out here, yet there are some who know a few words of it; it was the language of the last age, but will be entirely lost by the next.

"None of them can write their ancient language, and but very few speak it, the best phrases are all gone, and nothing remains but a few names of things and two or three remnants of songs which one old man can repeat and that but indistinctly.

"Norn proverbs I could find none, nor is it possible to get translations, as it is entirely confined to the lower class of people, who cannot be supposed to have a thorough knowledge either of one language or the other."

6. Rev. Patrick Barclay, minister of Aithsting and Sandsling (1792).

"The language spoken is a mixture of Norwegian, Dutch and English; but all the inhabitants now understand pure English, though they could speak among themselves so as an Englishman could not understand them".

7. Arthur Edmondston, doctor in Unst (1809).

"Zetland has been united to Scotland above three hundred years; and pure Norse or Norwegian is now unknown in it. It has long been wearing out; and the change appears to have begun in the southern extremity, and to have been gradually extended to the northern parts of the country. The island of Unst was its last abode, and not more than thirty years ago several individuals there could speak it fluently. It was preserved, too, for a considerable length of time, in Foula, but at present there is scarcely a single person who can repeat even a few words of it.

"The present language of the islands is certainly English; but good English, although well understood, is rarely spoken. I do not mean this observation to apply to the accent merely, but to the employment of words, and the construction and idiom of the English tongue. The common dialect is a mixture of Norwegian, Scotch, Dutch and English. There are many words peculiar to Zetland, and persons versant in the phraseology of the different parishes would find no difficulty in maintaining a conversation which would be altogether unintelligible to an Englishman, or even to a native of the low parts of Scotland."

8. Christian Ployen, Amtmand in Faroe (1839).

"The language in Shetland is now exclusively English, but mixed with many words of Norse origin, and which I would not have easily understood if I had not known the Faroese tongue. It is on the whole only a poor sort of English the Shetlanders speak, and they are certainly more difficult to understand by a native of England than by a Dane who speaks English. The dialect is moreover different, and in some parts of the country was very difficult to understand. It is not only the foreign words that make the Shetland tongue difficult to make out, there is besides a peculiar accent, a rising and falling of the voice, which is by no means unpleasant, and which the Faroese also employ when they talk their own dialect".

It is quite possible seventy years after Dr. Jakobsen's memorable study for older fluent country speakers to carry on a conversation not entirely comprehensible to their own teenagers or to many in their own capital, Lerwick. Still less completely would such talk be understood in Orkney, it would be partly incomprehensible to Scots speakers, and almost entirely so to Englishmen. But such speakers would have had to learn their words before the First World War. I have been given eight test words in an island fifteen miles from my birthplace. Four I recognised, two others when explained had variants in my own island, the remaining two were familiar to a neighbour who had had the advantage of living with grandparents born in the 1830's. But the differences in pronunciation were as great as those in any of the major Scandinavian tongues.

Low (1774), who knew no Norse, copied down Hildinakvadet in English orthography from the recitation of a Shetlander. He writes – "This man (William Henry, a farmer in Guttorm in Foula) has the most knowledge of any I found: he spoke of three kinds of poetry used in Norn and repeated or sung by the old men, the ballad (or romance, I suppose); the vysie or vyse, now commonly sung to dancers, and the simple song. By the account he gave of the matter the first seems to have been valued here chiefly for its subject, and was commonly repeated in winter by the fireside; the second seems to have been used in public meetings, now only sung to the dance, and the third at both.

"Most or all of their tales are relative to the history of Norway; they seen to know little of the rest of Europe but by names; Norwegian transactions they have at their fingers' ends".

Edmondston (1809) says, "The Norse ballads, which a few of the Zetlanders were in the habit of repeating about thirty years ago, although not generally understood, were admired for their softness of expression and smoothness of versification".

William Archibald (1774) minister of Unst, says, "There is one species of dance which seems peculiar to themselves, in which they do not proceed from one end of the floor to the other in a figure, nor is it after the manner of a Scotch reel; but a dozen or so form themselves into a circle, and taking each other by the hand, perform a sort of circular dance, one of the company all the while singing a Norn visick. This was formerly their only dance, but has now almost given entire way to the reel«.

After the transfer of the Bishopric in 1472 most of the clergy were Scots, and to their congregations the Catholic Latin service and the Lowland Scottish service after the Reformation in 1560 would have been equally incomprehensible Probably in Shetland the Roman service gradually merged into the Protestant forms over a long period. The native minister Magnus Manson of Unst earned his surname of Norsk by going to Bergen to learn the Norwegian order of service. His will is dated 1632. The act for the establishment of parish schools, passed by the Scottish parliament in 1696, remained a dead letter in Shetland, which had no school at all until the second quarter of the 18th century, and then under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S. P. C. K.). In 1789 there were only two parish schools in Shetland, and it was the threat by the S. P. C. K. to withdraw all money grants which led to the establishment of nine parochial schools by 1820. Lerwick had 700 people in 1701 and 903 in 1791, but no school. The ancient capital Scalloway had then 31 inhabited houses, and its school in Tingwall was vacant. But by the 18th century there were a number of people in each parish who had acquired some ability in reading the English Bible of 1611. There were travelling teachers, lodged by their hosts and employers, infirm men who taught in their own houses, and for the Scots incomers, sisters and daughters of the ministry, and, in Lerwick, tutors. In Yell in 1790, with no schools, we read, "Most

people can read pretty well, and many write". The anxiety to read the English Bible in the 18th century must have hastened the collapse of the Norn, just as the Scottish Education Act of 1872 is changing both Norn and Scotch into a localised form of Standard English.

But this English of school, reading and commerce has not yet ousted the spoken dialect, which differs from any other form of Scots in construction and idiom, accent and intonation, vowel sound and vocabulary. When Shetland was mapped the modified vowels and liquid consonants defied English spelling, and nothing is more amusing than to hear an Englishman or Scotsman attempt a Shetland place-name. But the wheel is now going full circle, the older place names are being lost, and Shetlanders in using the others to strangers adapt their pronunciation to the map.

But Faroese, especially younger Faroese, are probably more interested in Jakob Jakobsen. Two books, "Greinir og Ritgerðir", published in Tórshavn in 1959, and "Old Shetland Dialect and Place Names of Shetland", printed in Lerwick in 1897 and 1926, give the more accessible parts of that great and remarkable scholar's life-work. The fuller works on Shetland, "Etymologisk Ordbok over de Norrøne Sprog på Shetland," published in London in 1928 and 1932 as "An Etymological Dictionary of the Norn Language in Shetland" and "Shetlandsøernes Stednavne", appearing in 1901 in the Danish "Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie", published again in London in 1936 as "The Place Names of Shetland" are available for the most part in big libraries only. I count myself fortunate in possessing both.

I have often heard the men of my father's generation speak of Jakobsen. In 1893, in his thirtieth year, he came to Shetland and travelled far and wide, collecting all he could find of the ancient language of the islands. His gifts of good-fellowship and abundant interest in everything he saw and heard aroused like feeling in those he met. The

Shetlanders were proud to meet him. It was a two-way traffic. He could tell them the meanings of their places, words they used daily (and no part of all the world was so intensively named as Shetland), but did not know the meaning of. They could give him their age-old words, whose meanings they knew well-enough, fondly imagining that they, in their Scots context, were a Norse language, their Norn. They might, and probably did in Lerwick especially, convey them to him by trying to "*knap*", that is, to speak English. It is a tribute to Jakobsen's very great ability as a linguist that his command of English, no very useful preparation for knowledge of such a highly-idiomatic and phonetically and linguistically varied mixture of Scots and Norse as is found in the various islands of Shetland, enabled him to produce works of such great and lasting value.

It must have been labour under difficulty, which only exceptional enthusiasm could surmount. Shetland weather and Shetland roads of the time were no better than Faroese. To accommodate a guest must have been a matter of trepidation for some of those who made him welcome, fear that they could not cater for the stranger in a way that he might expect to be provided for, not lack of hospitality. On his part, the continual travel back and forth, the lack of privacy for taking notes and consolidating daily work, the monotony of ceaseless and often fruitless interview, must have demanded an iron constitution and limitless patience. But such was his gift of making friends that, although his stay in any one part of Shetland was necessarily short, the men of my father's generation regarded Jakob Jakobsen, as they affectionately called him (giving him his full name instead of the mere surname or the more distant Mr. Jakobsen) as one of themselves, a man good to meet and stimulating to know.

Even if one were competent to do, there is no need to rehearse to Faroese readers the qualifications and ability of

Jakobsen in the Norse languages, nor his great work for Faroese. And although in Shetland he was breaking new ground, it is probably true that no one else could have done for the Norn what he accomplished. But even the Bible has its commentaries, and if what follows may seem unduly critical, it must not be regarded as in any way lacking in appreciation of Jakobsen's great work.

He himself tells us that when he set out for Shetland in 1793 his knowledge of the Shetland dialect was confined to Edmondston's Glossary (which includes Orkney words) and "Shetland Fireside Iales" (in a mixed Scotch—South Shetland dialect). He makes a very full acknowledgment of his helpers, serious students themselves, but lacking the Old Norse knowledge just as Jakobsen himself lacked the Scots. Three he gives special mention to; John Irvine, Laurence Williamson, and William Ratter. Irvine spoke Danish and Norwegian fluently, and had studied Aasen's dictionary. Williamson had met Vigfusson, possessed Cleasby and Vigfusson's dictionary, had invented his own phonetic alphabet, and made extensive lists of rarer words. Ratter, a younger man, was an enthusiastic helper then and later. With the aid of a manuscript supplement by Principal Barclay of Glasgow University, Jakobsen had a considerable basis for his future studies. In the English version of his dictionary he makes full acknowledgment of his helpers.

Very few Shetlanders know Jakobsen's books. They are expensive and hard to obtain. Shetland education includes French, Latin and Greek, but nothing about their own beginnings, and if it did there are no teachers. A Shetlander is accustomed to English orthography, which is quite illogical to Scandinavians. His word "peerie" looks quite strange to him as "piri". With place-names the situation is even more confused. No Englishman or Scotsman can pronounce a Shetland place-name without being detected. The spellings on the map, written by Englishmen in a languge which lacks all modified vowels, are often

pronounced in the English fashion, for example, Lerwick for Lerek or Leruk (it was once Löruk), Whalsay for Hwalsa, Bressay for Bressa, etc. When a Shetlander sees a place-name written in Norse, he naturally mispronounces it in English, although the Norse word is ready on his tongue.

Jakobsen's phonetics on which he bases his etymology, are too strict. They are suitable for a pure language like Norwegian, Faroese or Icelandic, but Shetland has come under three influences, Norse, Scots, and English. On occasion he gives phonetic value to an individual idiosyncrasy or a mere mispronunciation. It was easy for his informants to confuse quite unrelated Scots, English and Norse words, and still easier to confuse their endings. An example picked at random is the Old Norse word gaupn; the hollowed hand, which is given in twenty-five different phonetic spellings, complicated by three differently-spelt Scotch words. Jakobsen's explanation is convincing here, but it is phonetics run riot, Shetland abounds with malapropisms, that is, words mispronounced. I have come across such blatant examples as "chocolate" for sjá-klett and "cinnamon" for the personal genitive Simunar.

Some of Jakobsen's "Norse" words will be found in the Scottish National Dictionary (now publishing), not as exclusive Shetland words. Northern English, from which Lowland Scots sprang, came so much under Danish and Norwegian influence that Scots has a larger proportion of northern words than English. Jakobsen, quite rightly, includes everything he can recognise as Norse. After all, who is to say whether a Shetland place-name element is Old Norse "hús" or Scots "hoose".

Jakobsen was too late for the Norn and too early for comparative place-name material. Only the Introduction and a few volumes of "Norske Gaardnavne" had been published, with "Gamle Personnavne" and "Norske Fjordnavne". His attempts to relate stream names in Shetland

to those in Norway, carried out as they were after his field work, look very much like special pleading. His Celtic names most certainly are. He had the impression, quite common in his day, that a people speaking a language akin to Welsh had built the brochs ("Pictish towers"), and that a Gaelic-speaking race with their priests had met the Norse. He cites some 45 place-names from these languages as evidence. It is quite true that many Norse words found their way into Gaelic, and also that a few Gaelic words, *erg*, for example and others connected with agriculture, were adopted by the Norse, but these are common to Norway, Faroe, and Iceland as well. A word like *"pund"* came to Shetland in the 17th Century through Scots, as did *"toor (tur)"*. *Kalef* is *Kaldakleif*, *Ken* is *kenni*, *Dublin* is *dopel*, *Birrier* is *berg-jaðarr*, *Mamaskerry* is form *malmr*. In fact, except for a few words common to all, the whole Shetland Celtic names may be written off.

It is to Norway we must look for old names. There is nothing archaeological, historical, or otherwise to suggest that Shetland was settled before 800. The first viking voyages were south via the North Sea and English Channel to Wales and Ireland, those from 820 were evidently north about Britain. Orkney may have suffered before Shetland, and according to Dicuil the vikings were in Faroe by 825. Flóki sailed to Iceland via Shetland; his daughter Geirhild's farm is to-day Girlsta. The first stream of emigrants came from Norway by way of Orkney and the Western Isles, later we have a double stream from Ireland, the Scottish Isles, Orkney and Norway converging on Iceland by way of Shetland and Faroe.

In Shetland we have no farm names with *-vin* as ending, and the only three *heim* names are Sulem, Kaldheim, and Digeren, all common in Norway. Most of the Shetland farm names follow the Norwegian and Icelandic pattern, and in the same frequency. *Bólstaðr* does not occur in Faroe, but is more common in Shetland, Orkney and the

Scottish Isles than in Norway itself. *Staðir*, overwhelmingly common in Iceland, is absent in Faroe, but common in Shetland and parts of Orkney. It is prefixed by the owner's name. *Setr* is very numerous in Shetland, not so in Orkney, and absent in Faroe and Iceland. It is a small farm on land not taken up by the first settlers. These differences have significance, but only when names are studied en masse. Speculations about single names like Ljóðhus and Hjaltland are interesting, but have no scientific value.

What has happened to the Norn in Shetland in the seventy years since 1893? Curiously enough, very little as far as place-names are concerned. One wonders if Jakobsen had further unpublished lists. But they will slump disastrously when the generation born before 1914 has gone. The chief factors are depopulation and abandonment of croft cultivation. The dictionary has many words not used now, but could be largely supplemented. But the work of Jakobsen must remain the Bible of those who follow his study. It is particularly gratifying to a Shetlander and a graduate of Aberdeen University that his photograph is one of a select few that hang in a prominent place in the University Library. No one was more of a scholar or deserves it more.

ÚRTAK

Hetlandsbyggingin verður sett til neolitisku tíðina, 1500 ár ella meir fyri føðing Krists. Norðmanna-búsetingin var ein umbroyting av undanfarnum fólka-flytingum og so djúptøkin, at landið heilt varð nýbygt. Skotsk ávirkan kom afturumaftur aftan á 1379, tá Hetland varð handað hinum skotsku Orknoyggja-jøllunum, og serstakliga aftan á 1472, tá biskupsdømið fyri Orknoyggjarnar varð flutt úr Tróndheimi til St. Andrews í Skotlandi. Skyldfólk hjá jøllunum og prestunum komu fyrst við lágskotska tungumálinum. Nakað um somu tíð er ein týðandi broyting av persónnøvnunum, í fyrstuni eftir norskum lag og síðani móti skotskum nøvnum. Hetta er sýnt í nakran mun.

Síðani verður sagt frá samtíðar frágreiðingum av málbroytingunum

frá 1680 til 1839, viðmerkingarnar hjá Christian Ployen, amtmanni, frá hesum síðsta ári eru uppií.

Ein hámeting av Jakob Jakobsen verður givin úr sjónarmiðinum hjá einum hetlendingi.

At kalla øll staðanøvnini, sum Jakob Jakobsen skrivaði upp fyri 70 árum síðani, verða enn vanliga nýtt. Nógv orð úr talaðum máli eru horvin, men nógv onnur av norrønum uppruna, sum ikki eru skrásett, hoyrast stundum.

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