

The Mystery of the *bý*-names in Man

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It is almost exactly twenty-four years ago in these days since I first set foot on the Isle of Man to attend a conference in Onchan in 1977. The occasion was especially memorable for being extremely cold. There was snow, it was very windy and draughty, particularly in the Megalithic monuments, and the beds were unaired. It is also memorable to me for a sense of unease that kept turning my thoughts in the direction of Sherlock Holmes. There was a tall, thin, vociferous young man with fiery red hair. I thought to myself at the time that he was an obvious candidate for membership of *The Red-Headed League* but it turned out that he was George Broderick. There was also Margaret Gelling, transformed from her normal equable self into an ice-cold debater in a repeat round of her discussion with Basil Megaw on the question of Norse and Gaelic elements in Manx place-names, a debate in which the contestants might well have been Irene Adler and the great detective. In spite of my at that time very superficial knowledge of Manx place-names, I left the island troubled in my mind about them, probably because of Eleanor Megaw's contribution to the final discussion. She made three very important comments on the *bý*-names. Firstly, she pointed out that, with the exception of Jurby, the primary centres of Norse remains such as burials and crosses and, of course, Tynwald are all in treens with Gaelic names along the west coast, while the settlements along the east coast, with far fewer Norse remains, tend to have names in *-bý*. The treen was a smallish unit of land employed for the fixing of land taxes. Secondly, she noted that six of the eleven treens which had been subdivided into two parts by 1500, for example *Dalby* and *Alia Dalby*, had names in *-bý*. Thirdly, she noted that several of the names in *-bý* had exact parallels in Northern England or Southern Scotland. I was so troubled by these comments that I rashly asked a question and the consequences of this question turned out to be far more serious than I had anticipated. To begin with, it prompted Peter Davey to invite me to make a contribution to the proceedings of the conference. This was a modest contribution indeed but it nonetheless led to my being looked upon as a kind of expert on the place-names of Man.

After the Onchan conference, Eleanor Megaw kindly put at my

disposition a copy of her notes on the names in *-bý* and I was greatly looking forward to discussing these with her on our next encounter. Sadly, Eleanor's untimely death meant that this was never to be and several years passed by before the real significance of the *bý*-names began to dawn upon me. Even though I had noticed in 1977 that there was something peculiar about the names in *-bý*, I had certainly not realised what this was. Sherlock Holmes would have said to me, as he said on so many occasions to the rather obtuse Dr Watson, "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear".

In my contribution to the proceedings of the Onchan conference, expeditiously published in 1978, my only comment on the *bý*-names dealt with the fact that such names are of rare occurrence in all other areas in the British Isles generally assumed to have been settled by Vikings from Norway, with the exception of north-west England and south-west Scotland.¹ I considered that the parallel formations noted by Eleanor Megaw were suggestive but found that they need reflect no more than the fact that Scandinavian-speaking settlers in Man and mainland Britain may have been drawing on the vocabulary for describing settlement units with which they were familiar from their homelands. The rarity of personal names as the specifics of these names in Man I tentatively explained as reflecting the fact that most of the names had been given to old-established and prosperous settlements which, after being taken over by the Vikings, expanded and were later subdivided into two or three parts and eventually embraced several tenements, rather than to settlements resulting from new colonisation or fragmentation of earlier estates. My conclusion was that Man would seem to have been a melting-pot for Vikings of various national origins, most of whom had perhaps had a period of residence in one or more of the other Scandinavian colonies before their arrival in Man.² This statement was probably not too far off the mark but it is clear that I was nowhere near solving the mystery behind the *bý*-names, even though most of the clues to the true solution had been laid before me by Eleanor Megaw.

My new-found status as authorised partaker in the Manx place-name fray, led to my being invited to talk about the place-name evidence for Scandinavian settlement in the Isle of Man at the Viking Congress that was

¹ G. Fellows Jensen, 'The Manx place-name debate: a view from Copenhagen', in *Man and Environment in the Isle of Man*, edited by P. Davey, BAR British Series 54 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 315–18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 318.

held in Douglas in 1981. I certainly did not feel myself competent to accept this invitation as it stood and begged to be allowed to include north-west England in my title because I was at that time working on Scandinavian place-names in this area. Fortunately my request was granted and when I looked at the place-names in *-by* in Man against the background of names of the same type in England and southern Scotland, the veil began to lift from my eyes so that I could learn to observe and not merely to see.³

I began my discussion of the Manx *by*-names by dismissing Marstrander's suggestion that they might have been linked with Godred Crovan's partition of the island in 1079 in which his own followers were granted large farms in the south of the island, while the native Manxmen were allowed to retain the northern part of Man,⁴ mainly because I found it unlikely that prosperous Norse estates that had been in Norse hands for two centuries would have been subjected to a change of name simply because they had passed into the hands of new lords from the Danelaw in 1079. I was more inclined to accept an earlier date for the coining of the names. There are indications that there was a movement from the north of England to Man in the tenth century. The large silver hoard found in 1894 at Ballaquayle (Douglas) would seem originally to have contained a preponderance of coins from mints in north-west England and to have been deposited about 975.⁵ As already mentioned by Eleanor Megaw in 1977, there were numerous parallels between the Manx names in *-by* and *by*-names in north-west England and north Yorkshire and I suggested in 1981 that it was possible for these names to have been carried over to Man in the late tenth century. I also pointed out, however, that name parallels between Man and England need not necessarily reflect the indebtedness of Man to the Scandinavian colonies in England but that there was also a possibility that some of the names in Wirral in Cheshire and in south-west Lancashire might reflect an immigration from Man. This idea was

³ G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian settlement in the Isle of Man and Northwest England: the place-name evidence', in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man*, edited by C. Fell *et al.* (London, 1983), pp. 37–52.

⁴ C. J. S. Marstrander, 'Det norske landnám på Man', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, 7 (1932), 40–386 (p. 327).

⁵ M. Dolley, 'New light on the 1894 Douglas Hoard', *Journal of the Manx Museum*, 7 (1969), 121–24, (p. 123); J. Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-Age silver hoards of the Isle of Man', in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man*, edited by Fell *et al.*, pp. 53–80 (p. 57).

suggested to me by the presence in Wirral and Lancashire of names such as Irby, pointing to the presence there of Gaelic-speaking people, Denhall (*Danewell* 1184), suggesting that Danes were in a minority in Wirral, and the two Thingwalls, pointing to West Scandinavian or possibly Manx influence on the administration of these areas. The *býs* in Wirral and across the Mersey in Lancashire are geographically isolated from the main concentrations of *býs* in the Danelaw and their presence here is perhaps most easily explained as being the result of immigration from Man, although they may alternatively have been coined by settlers who had come from Cumbria by the direct sea-route, by-passing Man. At this stage in my career, I believed in an anti-clockwise movement across the Pennines into the Carlisle plain and along the coast of Cumbria and across the sea to Man and possibly on from there to Wirral of settlers from the Danelaw who carried with them a place-name-forming vocabulary that included the generic *bý*.⁶

My third visit to Man took place in 1988. It was to attend a symposium on *Language Contact in the British Isles*, and I sensibly confined my attention to a topic on which I was rather more competent to talk, ‘Scandinavian influence on the place-names of England’. On this occasion it was Margaret Gelling who summed up the debate about Manx place-names since 1978.⁷ She found it less likely that the Manx *bý*-names were given to secondary dependent settlements, as suggested as one possibility by me in 1983, than that they are the result of the renaming in Norse speech of ancient settlements, and I must confess that I now heartily agree with her on this point. Margaret Gelling was also unwilling to treat the Manx names in *-bý* with parallels in northern England as evidence for comings and goings between the island and northern England but felt that ‘these coincidences only demonstrate that people who share a great deal of inherited vocabulary, and perhaps an inherited notion of what a settlement should be like, will produce the same place-names in response to similar circumstances without any actual contact between the inhabitants of the

⁶ G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘Anthroponymical specifics in place-names in *-bý* in the British Isles’, *Studia Anthroponymica Scandinavica*, 1 (1983), 45–60 (p. 55).

⁷ M. Gelling. ‘The place-names of the Isle of Man’, in *Language Contact in the British Isles*, edited by P. S. Ureland and G. Broderick, *Linguistische Arbeiten* 238 (Tübingen, 1991), pp. 141–55.

several Dalbys or Rabys'.⁸ There is some justification for this argument but I do not think it is entirely correct to compare, as she does, the parallels in question with the numerous Houghtons and Mortons etc. in England.

In August 1991 I spent a very pleasant week familiarising myself with Man, during which Margaret Gelling kindly drove me round to look at the Scandinavian place-names, giving me an opportunity to photograph the signposts and to look at the crosses in peace and quiet without having to peer around eager runologists and art historians to get even a glimpse of the stones. Gradually, I also made myself more familiar with the place-name material, as I ploughed my way through the manuscripts of the first five volumes of George Broderick's monumental work *Placenames of the Isle of Man*.⁹ Most important of all, however, the editorial meetings with George Broderick and Bob Thomson have taught me much about the linguistic effect of Manx Gaelic influence on place-names of Scandinavian origin. The mystery only seemed to deepen, however, as I looked at the differing fates of the names in *-by*.

Ignoring names such as *Clett Elby* and *Starvey*, which have indeed been explained as Scandinavian names in *-by* by Marstrander¹⁰ but for which the recorded forms are too late on which to base a firm interpretation, and reckoning names that are borne by both a treen and one of its quarterlands, for example *Rygby* and *Regaby* or by two neighbouring treens, for example *Gresby* and *Alia Gresby*, as one name, we come to a total of twenty-six names in *-by* in Man. No fewer than fifteen of these names have exact parallels in either North-West England or North Yorkshire. The fifteen names are two Colbys, two Crosbys, Dalby, Jurby, Kirby, two Rabys, Regaby, Scholaby, Soulby, Surby and two Sulbys. There are several possible explanations for the presence of these names in Man. The distribution of names in *-by* over the British Isles is in general outline a reliable indication of the spread of Danish or Danelaw influence. It was in the last quarter of the ninth century that an organised settlement of Danes took place in eastern England. To begin with the Danes took over existing English settlements, sometimes without interfering with their names, sometimes replacing the English names with secondary names such as Kirkby 'church village' or Derby 'village with a deer-park'. At the end of

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁹ G. Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, 5 vols (Tübingen, 1994–2000).

¹⁰ Marstrander, 'Det norske landnám på Man', 92 and 217.

the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth the large English estates began to be split up into small, independent, agricultural units, many of which received names consisting of the tenant's personal name and the element *-by*, such as Grimsby (*Grím*). Other Danes, however, moved out across the Pennines, particularly along the Eden valley. Having reached Carlisle, some of the Danes moved northwards into eastern Dumfriesshire and others southwards into the coastal plain of Cumberland. From there it seems likely that some made their way across the Irish Sea to Man. This anti-clockwise movement can be traced in a trail of settlement names in *-by*. Eventually it is possible that there was a movement back across the sea from Man to Wirral and south-west Lancashire. It is impossible to date this penetration of Danish settlement across the Pennines at all closely but the presence of pagan Viking burials along the routes followed by settlers entering Cumbria from the Danelaw and in the coastal plain of Cumberland has been interpreted as an indication that the settlement in the north-west must have begun comparatively early.¹¹ The re-occupation of northern Cumbria by the Strathclyde Britons at some date before 927 and the fact that English rule had been restored over Cheshire and southern Lancashire by 934 imply that most of the Scandinavian place-names in these areas must have been coined before these dates at least and the same must apply to the names in Man, if the *by*-names in Lancashire and Cheshire were in fact coined by settlers from Man.

The next documented immigration to Man from England is that of the English administrators who were brought in after the island had been granted by the English king, Henry IV, to Sir John Stanley in 1405. Michael Dolley has pointed out that over 500 surnames of an essentially non-Gaelic nature are recorded in Manx sources and that most of these are in fact English place-names functioning as surnames.¹² To judge from the surnames, about two-thirds of the immigrants in the period down to 1540 came from Lancashire. This is natural enough, since this is where most of the Stanley estates were situated and the Stanleys would presumably have looked first to their tenantry when making appointments to the insular administration.

¹¹ D. M. Wilson, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 396–99.

¹² M. Dolley, 'Toponymic surnames and the pattern of pre-1830 English immigration into the Isle of Man', *Nomina*, 7 (1983), 47–64.

I should like to illustrate some of the problems involved in the assessment of the recorded evidence in the light of our knowledge of immigration into Man by reference to the forms recorded for Manx place-names in *-bý*. I shall begin with Jurby. The name is identical in origin with the English name Derby. While the original form **djúra-bý* developed in Man via *Dureby* 1091 to Jurby, in England it developed via *Deoraby* c.1050 to Derby. The name may refer to the presence of a deer-park at the settlement. The Stanley administrators would not seem to have recognised the ultimate identity of the name Jurby with Derby, which shows a late thirteenth-century or fourteenth-century development in the pronunciation of *er* + consonant to /a:/ in Standard English, for they registered the treen- and parish-name as *Jourby*.¹³ Their failure to recognise the name would presumably mainly have been because the palatal *d* of the Scandinavian form had already been assibilated in Manx. This development may be compared with that seen in the name of the Hebridean island of Jura (**djúra-ey* ‘deer island’). If the parish-name had not happened to be recorded in the Calendar of Patent Rolls as *Dureby* in 1291, its true origin might never have been recognised. Sir Thomas Stanley was rewarded for his support of Henry VII in the Wars of the Roses by being granted the title Earl of Derby. When the second Earl of Derby visited the island in 1507 to put an end to a ‘public tumult’, he landed at Ronaldsway and it was on this occasion that the port of Derbyhaven received the name it still holds and in which Derby is pronounced as in Standard English.¹⁴

It is unfortunately rare for the names of the Manx treens to be recorded in written sources before the first quarter of the sixteenth century, when they were recorded in the so-called Setting Books. Even smaller units of land such as the quarterlands were often not recorded in written sources before the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The only two *bý*-names which may have been recorded in the period when the island was still under Norse rule are the now-lost *Brottby*, which was probably located somewhat north of Peel,¹⁵ and *Kyrkbye* in the Bishop’s Barony.¹⁶ Both these names are

¹³ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, II, 205 and 245.

¹⁴ R. H. Kinvig, *The Isle of Man. A Social, Cultural and Political History* (Liverpool, 1975), p. 97.

¹⁵ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, I, 213.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 110.

recorded in a sixteenth-century copy of a forged Papal Bull that purports to be from 1231 but which Basil Megaw suggests was probably fabricated in the generation or so after 1360.¹⁷ We cannot be sure what the specific of *Brotby* actually was. Marstrander suggests Scand *brot* n. ‘broken land, shallow place in a stream’,¹⁸ while Broderick, following Kneen,¹⁹ seems to think that the word is equivalent to *brattr* ‘steep’.²⁰ The name Kirby, whose specific is the Scandinavian word for ‘church’, *kirkja*, has at least forty-seven parallels in England but there are no parallels to *Brotby*.

There are two other *bý*-names that are recorded before 1500 but after the end of the Viking period in Man. They are both found in a description of the Abbeyland bounds that has been dated to c.1280 by Basil Megaw.²¹ The form *Totmanbu* would seem to reflect an original **Toftamannabý* ‘settlement of the toft-holders’, perhaps some kind of collectively owned settlement in which the inhabitants each held his own individual plot of land or *toft*.²² It survives as Tosaby in the parish of Malew and has no known parallels. The other name recorded in the 1280 description of the bounds is that of Sulby in the parish of Kirk Christ Lezayre and the form it takes in the bounds is *Sulaby*.²³ The specific is probably Scand *súla* f. ‘cleft, fork’, referring to a fork in the Sulby River. The name is an exact parallel to two names in Cumberland and Westmorland respectively²⁴ but the English names have undergone the normal English development to Soulby. I was initially particularly worried about the name Sulby in Lezayre, since Kneen had recorded for it a form *Soulby* from 1515,²⁵ although its modern form is *Sulby* as would be expected in Man. Broderick, however, has demonstrated that the 1515 form *Soulby* really belongs to the treen known as *Le Soulby* in the parish of Jurby.²⁶ This name is a parallel formation to Sulby in Lezayre.

¹⁷ B. Megaw, ‘Norseman and native in the Kingdom of the Isles’, in *Man and Environment in the Isle of Man*, edited by Davey, pp. 265–314 (p. 295).

¹⁸ Marstrander, ‘Det norske landnám på Man’, 218.

¹⁹ J. J. Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man* (Douglas, 1925), p. 333.

²⁰ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, I, 213.

²¹ Megaw, ‘Norseman and native’, p. 271.

²² Marstrander, ‘Det norske landnám på Man’, 139.

²³ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, III, 468.

²⁴ G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, Navne-studier 25 (Copenhagen, 1985), p. 38.

²⁵ Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man*, p. 545.

²⁶ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, II, 251.

The problem is to explain the anglicized form it takes. Did English administrators come upon this name in a form such as *Sulby*, recognise that it was identical in origin with the English Soulbys and change its form to correspond with these, or was the name simply introduced by the administrators on analogy with the English names, perhaps in replacement of a completely unrelated name? The Soulby in Cumberland has a form *Souleby* as early as 1279 and that in Westmorland occurs as *Soulebi* from some time in the thirteenth century. Another parallel to Sulby in Lezayre is an Abbey Quarterland in Onchan which is not recorded until 1713 and always in the form *Sulby*.²⁷ The modification of the pronunciation in the two names which were not influenced by English and survive as Sulby may reflect the shortening which occurs in Manx surnames.

Regaby [regebi] in Andreas, an original **hrygg-by* ‘ridge village’, is recorded as *Rygby* in 1515, probably under the influence of the form taken by the name Ribby in Lancashire (*Rigbi* 1086),²⁸ but it is the three-syllabled Manx form that survives.²⁹ The insertion of the medial vowel in Regaby is a Manx feature to avoid the consonant cluster. The treen-name Dalby in Patrick is identical with two Dalbys in the North Riding of Yorkshire³⁰ and spellings such as *Dawby* 1708 and the most widespread modern pronunciation [do:bi] reflect English influence.³¹ It should be noted, however, that there is a spelling *Dellebe* from 1570, showing that the name had been subjected to adaptation to Manx pronunciation and this was the pronunciation employed by speakers of Manx. The treen-name Slegaby in Onchan has a spelling *Slekby* 1511, perhaps because the English administrators recognized that its first element was *slakki* ‘slope’³² and that it is in fact identical with the treen-name *Slekby* in Jurby, all of whose recorded forms retain the spelling with *-k*.³³ The developments of **slak(ka)by* to *Slekby* and then *Slegaby* [ˈsleʔebi] are what would be expected in a Manx environment, with replacement of *a* by *e*, voicing of /k/

²⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 418.

²⁸ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, p. 25.

²⁹ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, III, 160.

³⁰ G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire*, Navnestudier 11 (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 25.

³¹ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, I, 95.

³² *Ibid.*, IV, 416.

³³ *Ibid.*, II, 268–69.

to /g/, and insertion of a medial vowel. There is no need to be sceptical about these developments as I am reported by Broderick as being in the case of Slekby. The treen-name *Surby* in Rushen is recorded in 1511 as *Saureby*, a spelling showing its origin to be identical with that of several Sowerbys in North-West England,³⁴ but it is the Manx development to *Surby* that survives.³⁵ The shortening of the vowel may be a result of the shortening in surnames in Man. In the treen-name *Scholaby* in Rushen, the 1511 spelling *Scaleby* seems to show that the name is identical with *Scaleby* in Cumberland, whose specific is explained as being Scandinavian *skáli* m. ‘shieling-hut’,³⁶ while the later spellings *Scaldeby* 1643 and *Scoalaby* 1840³⁷ may seem to throw some doubt on this explanation, although it is possible that the *Scholaby*-type spellings reflect the normal English development of long *a* to long *o* in southern Lancashire, where place-names containing Scandinavian *skáli* have forms in *Schole*-.

There are three treens by the name of *Raby*. A double treen *Raby* and *Alia Raby* is found in the parish of Lonan and in the same parish there is a quarterland called *Raby* in the treen of Colby. All three places have more or less the same range of recorded forms, with *Raby* being the earliest form recorded for all of them and the quarterland having a later form *Reaby* 1728.³⁸ I am not sure whether the quarterland name can be considered the same name as that of the double treen but it seems certain to me that all the names have the same etymology, namely **rá-by* ‘boundary-mark farm’. There is also a treen with the same etymology in the parish of Patrick and this contains two quarterlands, *Raby Beg* and *Raby Mooar*. All three places are first recorded as *Raby* and have later forms such as *Rheaby*, *Reaby* and *Reabie*.³⁹ The Rabys in Man have exact parallels in north-west England, *Raby* in Wirral, *Raby* in Cumberland and *Roby* in Lancashire.⁴⁰ The Manx names have developed in the same way as those in Wirral and Cumberland, while *Roby* in Lancashire shows the typical South Lancashire development of _ to _.

³⁴ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, p. 40.

³⁵ Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man*, p. 56.

³⁶ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, p. 39.

³⁷ Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man*, p. 52.

³⁸ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, IV, pp. 218 and 345.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 152–53.

⁴⁰ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, p. 38.

In the parish of Lonan Colby occurs as the name of a double treen, *Colby* and *Alia Colby* 1507 and of a quarterland *Colby* 1631 in *Alia Colby*,⁴¹ while there is also a double treen *Colby* and *Alia Colby* 1511 in the parish of Arbory.⁴² Given the recorded pronunciation of the quarterland as [kBlbi], Broderick has explained the specific of the name as a Scandinavian by-name *Kollr* ‘the baldheaded one’, although in the absence of other Manx *býs* containing personal names as specifics, I would prefer to treat the specific as the related topographical appellative *kollr* ‘rounded top of hill’, as postulated for a parallel formation *Colby* [kBubi] in Westmorland.⁴³

Crosby Beg and *Crosby More* 1515 form a double treen in the parish of Bride and *Crosby* 1666 is a quarterland in Crosby More treen.⁴⁴ There is also a village called Crosby (*Crossby* 1617) in the parish of Marown.⁴⁵ The specific is the Gaelic loanword in Scandinavian *kross* ‘cross as a religious symbol’. The names have no fewer than six parallels in north-west England.⁴⁶ Broderick has noted that Crosby in Marown stands at a cross-roads and that the specific might here refer to this feature. If the name is an early formation, however, I think it is more likely to refer to a cross that was set up here.

Grenby is the name of a treen in the parish of Bride (*Grenby* 1515) and there are two quarterlands in this treen, *Grenaby* (*Greeneby*, *Grenaby* 1704) and *Grenaby Beg* (*Greneby-beg* 1785).⁴⁷ There is also a farm near Ballafurt in the parish of Santan that is known as *Greenabye* 1665.⁴⁸ Note that the glide vowel between the specific and the generic is not found in the earliest forms and must have developed in Manx mouths.

Gresby is the name of a double treen in the parish of Braddan (*Gresby* and *Alia gresby* 1507).⁴⁹ Broderick quotes both Kneen’s suggestion⁵⁰ that the specific is the appellative *gres* ‘grass’ and Marstrander’s proposal that it

⁴¹ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, IV, 218 and 274–75.

⁴² Marstrander, ‘Det norske landnám på Man’, 255.

⁴³ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, III, 229.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, V, 190.

⁴⁶ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, p. 28.

⁴⁷ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, III, 242–43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, V, 261.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 104.

⁵⁰ Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man*, p. 187.

might be the Scandinavian personal name *Greipr*.⁵¹ The reason why Marstrander made this suggestion is undoubtedly that there is a Norwegian place-name *Gresby* in Hedmark which has an early form *Græipsby* 1344 that suggests that the specific is *Greipr*.⁵² This personal name is not of common occurrence, however, and there seems no reason to reckon with its presence in the Manx name, when the specific can be satisfactorily explained on the basis of the recorded forms as the appellative *gres*.

Trolby is the name of a treen in the parish of Marown (*Trolby* 1507), which contains a quarterland Trollaby (*Trolby* 1704, *Trolleby* 1744).⁵³ Broderick explains the specific as either the Scandinavian by-name *Trolli* or the genitive plural of the appellative *troll* ‘troll’. The evidence for the existence of the by-name is very uncertain and it seem more reasonable to interpret the place-name in the same way as the Norwegian place-name *Trollebøen* (*Trollebøe* 1566) as a derogatory name containing the element ‘troll’ or just possibly containing a river-name **Trolla*, which is borne in Norway by a number of dangerous or torrential rivers and which may have been applied to Trollaby River, which forms the boundary between the parishes of Marown and Braddan.⁵⁴

The last treen-name in *-bý* to be discussed is Cragby in the parish of Andreas (*Cragby* 1515). The specific would seem to be the Gaelic word *craig* ‘rock’, probably referring to the large granite rock that stood in the neighbourhood until it was removed in about 1900.⁵⁵ The question is whether the name was coined by Scandinavian-speakers employing a Gaelic loanword or by English administrators at a much later date.

The last two *bý*-names to be discussed are not recorded until the eighteenth century. They are both borne by Abbey Quarterlands. *Balleby* 1704 in the parish of Patrick is, like Cragby, a hybrid name but it is a hybrid of a different kind. It is a Manx formation in which Manx *Balla-* ‘farm’ has been prefixed to a Scandinavian place-name **Elby*, probably to distinguish it from the original **Elby*, which may have been a **Hala-bý* ‘farm on the tail’, referring to the deep-water cliff known in Manx as *Niarbyl* ‘the tail’, or the

⁵¹ Marstrander, ‘Det norske landnåm på Man’, 187.

⁵² T. Schmidt, *Norske gårdsnavn på -by og -bø med personnavnforledd*, 2 vols (Oslo, 2000), I, 193.

⁵³ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, V, 223.

⁵⁴ Schmidt, *Norske gårdsnavn*, I, 431–34.

⁵⁵ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, III, 93.

specific of this older name may rather have been Scand *hellir* ‘rocky cavern’ or *hjaltr* ‘flat shelf’.⁵⁶ Strenaby (*Streneby* 1724) is in the parish of Onchan. The specific has been explained as a Scandinavian adjective *strendr* ‘angular, edged’, referring to its shape,⁵⁷ or the Scandinavian appellative *strönd* f. ‘edge, border’ because the farm borders on land which is not Abbeyland.⁵⁸

A few of the names may instinctively be felt to point to Norway as their place of origin, for example Brottby and Trollaby, while others such as Jurby and Surby seem to point to Denmark. For all the names, however, I am inclined to see inspiration for their coining nearer at hand, across the Irish Sea in north-west England, although whether this took place in the Viking period or the Stanley period can in most cases not be determined with certainty.

It would seem to me that the only one of the Manx names in *-bý* that can be proved on linguistic grounds to have been originally coined by Viking settlers is Jurby, while the two names recorded in the forged Papal Bull of 1231, Brottby and Kirkby probably date from this early period and the two names recorded in the description of the Abbeyland bounds almost certainly do. I am inclined to believe that many of the other names in *-bý* also date from before the establishment of English rule in Man, although most of them may well be analogical formations bestowed upon settlements in Man by men who formed part of an anti-clockwise wave of settlement ultimately issuing from the Danelaw and which possibly continued back across the Irish Sea to Wirral and southern Lancashire. The possibility should not be ignored, however, that some of these names were coined, again as analogical formations, by English administrators in the fifteenth century. These administrators would certainly seem to have been responsible for the forms taken by some of the names in the written sources and hence also for the modern pronunciations of the names.

It is the Manx names in *-bý* with obvious parallels in England that immediately make the thoughts of the unobservant observer fly to the Vikings but there are other traps awaiting the unwary etymologist. One of the great tourist attractions in Man is its highest mountain, Snaefell, whose name with its close resemblance to that of Snæfell in Iceland, which is about

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 48–49.

⁵⁷ Marstrander, ‘Det norske landnåm på Man’, 177.

⁵⁸ Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, IV, 418.

three times as high, has a magnetic effect on all visitors from Scandinavia. The name is indeed probably of Norse origin, although its present form is a comparatively modern antiquarianising one with its first record dating to 1733.⁵⁹ The earliest recorded forms, however, *Snawble* 1586 and *Snafeld* 1595, point to Old English *sn_w* ‘snow’ and *feld* ‘field’ respectively as elements in the name and it is only the Manx form of the name, *Sniaul*, the normal development of Old Scandinavian **snæ-fjall*, that really shows that this is a Scandinavian name. It is simply not enough to see a signpost. It is necessary to consult Broderick’s *Placenames of the Isle of Man* and observe all the details recorded there before one can find the correct solution and say with studied casualness, “Elementary, my dear Watson”.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 464.