

‘I sauh a tour on a toft, tryelyche i-maket’:
on Place-Names in *-toft*, *-tote* and *-tobhta*
from Shetland to the Isle of Man

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For someone recently introduced to the study of place-names of Scandinavian origin in the British Isles, it may well seem that the range of types used for coining new place-names was largely restricted to the habitative elements *bý*, *þorp*, *þveit*, *bólstaðr*, *staðir* and *setr/sætr*. This is of course not true, but research has to a large extent focused on these six place-name types, partly because they all occur in large numbers, and not least because these types have been used with the aim of determining the nationality of the Scandinavian settlers. It would appear that the first three place-name elements, *bý*, *þorp* and *þveit*, tended to be used by Danish settlers, whereas *bólstaðr*, *staðir* and *setr/sætr* instead found favour among Norwegian namers. The aim of determining the nationality of the Scandinavian settlers has certainly loomed large in the discussions over the years, and it is perhaps for this reason that the place-name element *toft*, Old Norse (ON) *topt*, f., has rarely been focused on. Being found in both Denmark and Norway, as well as in large numbers in Sweden, it is certainly not an ideal place-name type on which to construct theories about the nationality of the Scandinavian settlers. This does not mean, however, that *toft* is not an interesting place-name element. Not only is it found throughout Norway, Sweden and Denmark, it also occurs in all areas of Scandinavian Viking-Age colonial activity: Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Scotland, England and Normandy. According to *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, over 1,500 names containing the element *toft* exist or have been known to exist.¹ The same work also states that the number of place-names in Great Britain containing Scandinavian *toft* amounts to about 220, so the name type certainly seems worthy of study.

There are, however, various factors which make *toft* a fairly difficult place-name element to study. Not only is the original denotation of *toft*

¹ *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, xviii (Copenhagen, 1974), 427–31.

uncertain, but *toft* has also become a fully functional appellative not only in English and Scots but also in Gaelic—a point which at times makes it a difficult matter to establish whether a name containing *toft* has in fact been coined by Scandinavian-speaking people or not. Over the next sections, I shall try to present an outline of the occurrence of this place-name element in Scotland and the Isle of Man, as well as to discuss some of the problems relating to the element in general.

In continental Scandinavia it is believed that there are about 800 names containing the element *toft*. About 480 of these are located in Sweden, whereas Norway and Denmark have 127 and 198 *toft*-names respectively. The form of this place-name element varies considerably from country to country in Scandinavia. The Old Danish form was *t_ft*, f., whereas it was also found in the forms *tom(p)t*, f., in Old Swedish and as *topt*, *tompt* and *tupt*, f., in Old Norse. The most common present-day form is *toft* but in Sweden and in parts of Norway the form *tomt* is also current. In the remainder of this article the form *toft* will be used, partly because it is the most common and partly because it is in this form that the place-name element normally appears in the British Isles. By this I am not implying that *toft* in the British Isles is derived solely from Old Danish. The origin may equally well be Old Norse, as Old Norse *pt* is known to change to *ft* from around 1150.²

The Old Scandinavian forms seemingly all presuppose an original Proto-Norse form **tumfti-*, which, although not recorded outside North Germanic, derives from the Indo-European root **dem-* ‘to build, join’.³ *Toft* is therefore possibly related to such words as Greek *dómos*, Latin *domus* ‘house’ and Old Irish *damnain* ‘to tether, tame’.⁴ Although the original meaning of the word is not certain,⁵ the Old Danish appellative *t_ft* is recorded with the meaning ‘a piece of land in a village taken out of the communal land for settlement, etc.’,⁶ whereas Old Norse *topt* meant ‘a site,

² Cf. D. A. Seip, *Norsk språkhistorie til omkring 1370* (Oslo, 1955), p. 173.

³ Cf. *Danmarks stednavne*, vol. 17,2.2 (Copenhagen, 1984), xxxix.

⁴ *Ibid.* and B. Holmberg, *Tomt och toft som appellativ och ortsnamnselement*, *Studier till en svensk ortnamnsatlas*, 4 (Uppsala and Copenhagen, 1946), pp. 316–37.

⁵ *Danmarks stednavne*, vol. 23 (Copenhagen, 1997), 14.

⁶ B. Jørgensen, *Stednavneordbog* (Copenhagen, 1994), p. 298.

place on which a building may be erected or has been erected'.⁷ As a place-name element in general, *toft* could have settlement denotation or it could refer to fields as well. The latter denotation is especially common in Denmark but is also found in field-names in, for instance, the Danelaw.⁸ In old habitative names, the denotation of *toft* may either have been similar to the connotative content of the appellative, or it may simply have been a more general 'site of a settlement'.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *toft* is an early loan in English, being recorded already in 1001 where it occurs in the phrase: *Healf þæt land æt Suðham, innur and uttur, on tofte and on crofte* ('Half of the land at Southam, including homestead as well as land').⁹ The meaning of *toft* implied here is that of 'a homestead, site of a house and its out-buildings'. Sometimes *toft* may also signify both a settlement site as well as its accompanying land; but sometimes it simply signifies a 'knoll or hillock, especially one suitable for settlement'. An example of the latter meaning is well illustrated by the quotation from Willam Langland's *Piers Plowman* which forms part of the title of this article: *I sauh a tour on a toft, tryelyche i-maket; a deop dale bineothe* ('I saw a tower on a hillock, very well-built; a deep valley below').¹⁰ All the connotations are closely related to each other but the one alluded to in the above quotation is probably to be considered a development of the first meaning. Apart from this latter meaning, the meanings stated by the *Oxford English Dictionary* are very close to the known appellative usage of *toft* in Scandinavia. Part of the reason for the popularity of this word in English may be its frequent occurrence in the expression *toft and croft*, which signifies the entire holding with homestead and attached arable land.

In Scots *toft/taft* usually connotes a 'homestead and its land', i.e. a meaning akin to the second connotation stated by the *Oxford English*

⁷ J. Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, vol. 3 (Kristiania, 1886–96), 712.

⁸ K. Cameron, 'The minor names and field-names in the Holland Division of Lincolnshire', in *The Vikings*, edited by Th. Anderson and K. I. Sandred, (Uppsala, 1978), pp. 81–88; J. Turville-Petre, 'The Tofts of Aylsham Manors', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 42 (1995), 148–59.

⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1989), s.v. *toft*¹.

¹⁰ 'A-text' c.1370, Prologue, l. 14.

Dictionary.¹¹ In Gaelic, where *toft* has been borrowed as *tobhta*, the signification of this word is today ‘the wall of a house’ or ‘the ruins of a house’,¹² a development which is rather far removed from the Scots and English connotations.¹³ This connotation can hardly, however, be considered original if one considers the Gaelic place-names where the generic *tobhta* (in Anglicised Gaelic *tote* or *tota*) is combined with a personal name, such as *Tota Ruairidh Dhuibh* ‘Black Ruairidh’s toft’ or *Tota Maol Moirag* ‘Maol Moirag’s toft’. In such instances *tobhta* can hardly have denoted a ruined house, but would rather have been applied with a denotation similar to that prevalent in Scandinavian. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the present connotation of Gaelic *tobhta* must be a late independent Gaelic development.

In Scandinavia, it is generally believed that *toft* became active as a place-name element in the late Migration Period.¹⁴ This assumption is made mainly on the grounds of the specific material of *toft*-compounds, which, apart from often containing personal names of a relatively early pre-Christian character, does not differ from that of other Viking-Age place-name types. The fact that this place-name type is also found in all areas settled by Scandinavians in the Viking Age also lends credibility to the assumption that *toft* is essentially a Viking-Age place-name type. Localities bearing a name in *-toft* in Scandinavia are typically of a secondary nature, mostly single farms and small groups of farms. Only about one per cent of the parish names in Denmark contain a name in *-toft*. In general, the humble habitative status of this place-name element is carried over into the British Isles and other areas of Scandinavian Viking-Age colonial activity.

Very little research has been done exclusively on this place-name element in the British Isles. In fact, the only relatively detailed study I have been able to find is one carried out in 1946 by the Swedish linguist Bengt Holmberg, who, in his work *Tomt och toft som appellativ och*

¹¹ *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, edited by M. Robinson (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 697.

¹² Cf. M. Oftedal, ‘The Gaelic of Leurbost, Isle of Lewis’, in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap. Supplement, vol. 4* (Oslo, 1956), 105.

¹³ M. MacIennan, *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language. Gaelic—English, English—Gaelic* (Edinburgh, 1928 (reprinted 1995)), p. 343.

¹⁴ *Danmarks stednavne*, vol. 17,2.2 (Copenhagen, 1984), xxxix–xl.

ortsnamnselement, lists 162 names containing *toft* in England, four in Man and forty-eight in Scotland.¹⁵ His findings are, particularly as far as the Scottish material is concerned, based on old and general works such as James Johnston's *Place Names of Scotland* from 1934 and Jakob Jakobsen's *The Place Names of Shetland* from 1936.¹⁶ Furthermore, he does not address any of the inherent problems of the material in his possession. One of the most problematic issues concerning Holmberg's study of names in *toft* in Scotland and Man is the fact that he considers more or less all the names containing *toft* or the derived Gaelic *tota* to be examples of Scandinavian naming. He thus lists names such as (Holmberg's examples): Kolbenstaft, Ecclestoft and Tota maoil Moraig as examples of one and the same naming practice, when they are in reality the result of three different ones—Scandinavian, English and Gaelic—but all utilising an element of ultimately the same origin. Of the three, only Colbinstoft (*Culbinstoft* 1577 SheDoc2 (237)) in Shetland can be said to be of Scandinavian origin by reason of the specific containing the typical Scandinavian personal name *Kolbeinn*, m. Eccles Tofts (*Toftis* RSS 1532 (II, 1395)) in Eccles, Berwickshire is instead an original English simplex *toft*-name with a typical plural marker. The name forms part of a fairly large Borders group of English *toft*-names, all in the simplex form Tofts. For this reason the parish name Eccles has been prefixed to Tofts in recent centuries to help distinguish it from the many similar names in Tofts in the region. Holmberg also considered a typically Gaelic construction such as Tota Maol Moirag to be of Scandinavian origin, although it is constructed with the normal Gaelic word order with the generic placed before the specific. Even the specific is typically Gaelic, being the personal name *Maol Moraig* 'devotee of Moraig'. The resulting impression of Bengt Holmberg's list of Scottish and Manx *toft*-names is that of a messy list of very different place-name entities, both structurally as well as linguistically.

To remedy this and to put focus on the research into Scandinavian *toft* as a place-name generic in the British Isles, I have attempted to construct my own list of place-names in Scotland and the Isle of Man which are, or probably are, of Norse origin. My sources for this list have primarily been

¹⁵ Holmberg, *Tomt och toft som appellativ och ortsnamnselement*, pp. 232–35.

¹⁶ J. Johnston, *Place Names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1934 (1st edn 1892)); J. Jakobsen, *The Place Names of Shetland* (London and Copenhagen, 1936).

The Ordnance Survey Gazetteer of Great Britain,¹⁷ the most readily available printed sources, particularly *Retours*, *RMS* and *RSS*,¹⁸ as well as some scholarly place-name works such as Hugh Marwick's *Orkney Farm-Names*.¹⁹ This relatively superficial research has so far uncovered in excess of 150 names—three times the numbers of Holmberg's list—and I am fairly confident that this number can be increased considerably. Naturally, not all of the names found are of relevance here, as a large number of these are post-Norse Gaelic, Scots and English formations.

There is, for example, a concentration of later English and Scots names of the type *Eccles Tofts* starting in the Borders and extending up into Perthshire. Virtually all of these are original simplex names in Tofts, featuring a Scots/English plural ending in *-s*. On the whole, these names should not be considered to have been bestowed by a Scandinavian-speaking people. Instead they should rather be seen as having

¹⁷ *The Ordnance Survey Gazetteer of Great Britain*, (London, 1990).

¹⁸ The following sources have been used: ChronMan = *Chronica Regum Mannie & Insularum—Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*, transcribed and translated with an introduction by G. Broderick (Isle of Man, 1996); HSRO = *Lord Henry Sinclair's 1492 Rental of Orkney*, edited by W. P. L. Thomson (Kirkwall, 1996); OR = Orkney Rentals in the period 1500–1739 and 1794, unpublished manuscripts in the Orkney County Library, Kirkwall (source-forms as found in Marwick, 1952); *Retours* = *Inquisitionum ad Capellam Domini Regis Retornatarum quae in publicis archivis Scotiae adhuc servantur. Abbreviato*. Printed by command of his majesty King George III, (1811–16), 3 vols; *RMS* = *Register of the Great Seal: Registrum Magni Sigilli Regnum Scotorum*, edited by J. M. Thomson and others (Edinburgh, 1882–1914); *RSS* = *Register of the Privy Seal: Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regnum Scotorum*, edited by M. Livingstone and others (Edinburgh, 1908–) vol. 1–; *SheDoc* = *Shetland Documents, 1580–1611*, edited by J. H. Ballantyne and B. Smith (Lerwick, 1994); *SheDoc2* = *Shetland Documents, 1195–1579*, edited by J. H. Ballantyne and B. Smith (Lerwick, 1999).

¹⁹ The following works have been consulted: G. Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, 5 vols (Tübingen, 1994–2000); C. J. S. Marstrander, 'Det Norske landnåm på Man', in *Norsk tidsskrift for sprogvidenskap*, vol. 6 (Oslo, 1932), 40–356; H. Marwick, *Orkney Farm-Names*, (Kirkwall, 1952); H. Marwick, *The Place-Names of Birsay*, edited by W. F. H. Nicolaisen (Aberdeen, 1970); J. Stewart, *Shetland Place-Names* (Lerwick, 1987); D. J. Waugh, 'The Place-Names of Six Parishes in Caithness, Scotland' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1985).

been named by Scots/English-speaking people speaking a language influenced by Scandinavian, as suggested by Sarah Grey Thomason and Terence Kaufman in a study of the Scandinavian influence on English.²⁰ A fair share of genuine Gaelic constructions in *tobhta*, *tota*, or *tote*, such as Tota nan Druidhean ‘the toft of the sorcerers’ (NG5158) in Skye, the Lewis place-names Tota Faide ‘the longer toft’ (NB3123), Tota Ruairidh Dhuibh ‘Black Ruairidh’s toft’ (NB3911) and the already mentioned Tota Maol Moirag ‘Maol Moirag’s toft’ (NB0830), testify to the popularity of this element in Gaelic, too. Considering that *toft* still forms part of the lexicon of English, Scots and Gaelic, it is perhaps not so surprising to find so many names utilising this element.

As interesting as it may be from a historical linguistic point of view that Scandinavian *toft* has entered into all the languages with which Scandinavian came into contact in England and Scotland, it complicates the study of the original Scandinavian place-name element itself considerably. However, by careful analysis of all the aforementioned 150 individual names in *-toft*, I have been able to pick out fifty-nine names which originate, or most likely originate, from Scandinavian. To this can be added an additional sixteen place-names which may originate from Scandinavian, but which cannot be distinguished from cognate onomastic constructions in Gaelic or Scots. The tally of names I have found so far that originate from, or possibly originate from, Scandinavian *toft* thereby numbers no less than seventy-five (please see the Appendix for a full list of names).

The distribution of names in *-toft* (see fig. 1) is fairly typical of that of other habitative place-names of Scandinavian origin. The name-type is found in a belt stretching from Shetland in the north to the Isle of Man in the south, but the distribution of the names is far from even. By far the greatest concentrations of names are situated in Orkney and Shetland, whereas an even scatter of names can be found in Caithness, the Outer Hebrides and Skye. South of Ardnamurchan the number of names ebbs out, and only a few examples have so far been located in the area stretching from Coll to the Isle of Man.

The fifty-nine place-names I have located with a generic in *toft* which definitely, or most probably, originate from Scandinavian, constitute the group of black dots in fig. 1. Of these, forty are compound formations that

²⁰ S. G. Thomason and T. Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (Berkeley, c.1988), p. 287.

contain specifics of a fairly wide variety, from nouns, adjectives and adverbs, to personal names, by-names and place-names. About half the specifics characterise the situation of the locality in relation to another locality, be it named or unnamed, or the characterisation of the locality is given in terms of what may be found in the locality. For instance, the name of Skenstoft in Orkney (*Skennistoft* 1612 OR) has apparently been named so because of its situation near a now lost place-name **Skeiðarnaust* ‘the skeið boat house’.²¹ In the same way, the specific of Eistotair, ON *eiðr*, m., ‘a promontory’, describes the situation of the locality on or near such a feature. In the Shetland name Stoft (*Scutoft* [vel *Stutoft*] 1642 Retours (O&S, 33)), the specific, ON *stuf*, m., ‘a stump’, on the other hand, reveals that the namer must have considered the existence of a stump of sorts on the locality as a major distinguishing feature. In the same way, the three Howatofts in Orkney (*Howatoft* 1626 Charter) must each have been endowed with several mounds, as the specific in all three instances is *hauga*, the genitive plural of ON *haugr*, m., ‘a mound’. In a few cases, such as in Auratote, South Uist, and probably also Evertaft, Orkney, where the specific appears to be the Old Norse comparative adjective *øfri*, ‘upper’, the situation of the locality is merely stated to be the ‘upper’ as compared to another locality.

In a couple of names the reference is seemingly to the local flora and fauna. For example, there are no less than four Greentofts in Orkney and Shetland, as well as one Grenitote in North Uist. The specific is, certainly in two instances, ON *grænn*, adv., ‘green’, but owing to the lack of early source forms, some of these examples may instead be late Insular Scots constructions.²² Under all circumstances, ‘green’ must be taken to refer to the local vegetation. The Orkney place-name Hannatoft (*Hannatoft* 1615 RMS (VII, 1312)) seems, on the other hand, to have been characterised by the presence of roosters, considering that ON *hani*, m., ‘a rooster’, is a likely origin of the specific. Similarly, the now lost *Trollatofthar* (*trollatofthar* (c.1280) ChronMan (f.53r.)) in Kirk Malew, Isle of Man, could well have been thought to have been haunted by trolls, as its specific is possibly the plural form of ON *troll*, n., ‘troll’. However, since both appellatives can have been used to coin by-names, the possibility remains that the specific relates instead to the ownership of the localities by the persons *Hani*, m., and *Trolli*, m., respectively. That this possibility has to be taken seriously is

²¹ Marwick, *Orkney Farm-Names*, p. 58.

²² Cf. Marwick, *The Place-Names of Birsay*, edited by Nicolaisen, pp. 63 and 68.

reflected in the fact that about a quarter of the compounded *toft*-names contain by-names or personal names.

One striking feature concerning the by-names and personal names that occur as specifics in the Scottish and Manx *toft*-material is the general lack of Christian personal names. Instead the stock of personal names is entirely made up of material of Norse origin. A few names are original dithematic names such as *Ásmundr*, m., in Asmundertoftes, Man (*Asmunder toftas* ca. 1154 Chart. Godred II), *Kolbeinn*, m., in Colbinstoft (*Culbinstoft* 1577 SheDoc2 (237)), Fetlar, Shetland, and probably the feminine *Þordís*, f., in Thurdistoft (*Thurdistoft* 1549 RSS (IV, 0333)) in Caithness. Other *toft*-names contain monothematic names, such as probably *Ketill*, m., in Kettletoft, Orkney, and *Selir*, m., in Seilastotar in Lewis. Often, however, the personal names are hypocoristic forms like *Fróði*, m., *Siggi*, m., and *Sveinki*, m., which occur in the names Frotoft (*Frowtoft* 1500 OR), Siggatoft and Sweinkatoft, the first of which is situated in Orkney whereas the remaining two are from Fetlar in Shetland.

In addition to the forty compound names, there are nineteen simplex names which I consider to be of Scandinavian origin, or at least there is nothing in the source forms or present form of these names that speaks against such an origin. In a few cases, traces of the old plural form *toptir/toftir* are still reflected in a few Orcadian names such as *Tifter* and *Tufter* in Papa Westray and Westray, respectively. To this may also be added a few names in *Tofta* which appear to feature a secondary *-al-æ* plural, a form which is paralleled in Denmark, where this has become the standard plural form in old habitative *toft*-names, as in the names *Tofte* (*Toffte* 1440), *Nebbelunde Sogn*, *Maribo Amt* (Lolland), *Horsetofte* (*Horsetophtha* 1370–1400), *Sneslev Sogn*, *Sorø Amt* (Southwest Sjælland), *Vedtofte* (*Wettoffthæ* 1429), *Vedtofte Sogn*, *Odense Amt* (Funen).²³ The *-er* and *-a* plural endings are probably of Norse origin but they may, theoretically speaking, equally well have been coined throughout the period in which such plural markers were in use in the local Norn dialects. In most cases, however, the simplex singular *Toft* or *Taft* prevails in the Scottish material.

Since *toft* has also been borrowed into Scots and Gaelic, both as an appellative as well as a place-name element, I have chosen to list some

²³ J. K. Sørensen, *Danske bebyggelsesnavne på -sted*, *Navnestudier* 1 (Copenhagen, 1958), pp. 154–64.

sixteen simplex names as being of uncertain origin. Nine of these are simplex names in Tobhta, Tota and Tote, all located in the Hebrides or along the West Coast of Scotland. To single these out from the more certain *toft*-names, they have been marked with white dots in fig. 1. Because of the linguistic situation, it is impossible to tell whether these are original Gaelic or Scandinavian names. Even the origin of a relatively well-recorded name such as Tote (*Totua* 1596 RMS (VI, 453)) in Snizort, Skye, cannot be established. However, since Tote is flanked by localities bearing names of Scandinavian origin, such as Borve (< ON *borg*, f. ‘a fortification’), Carboist and Skeabost (both with a generic in ON *bólstaðr*, m. ‘a secondary settlement’), the likelihood of this name also being of Norse origin is certainly present, but owing to the late date of recording it could equally well be of Gaelic origin.

Similarly, some simplex names have modern forms with a Scots *-s* plural marker. In some instances such forms are recent additions or replacements of original Norse plural forms, such as in Tafts, Westray, Orkney, whose source forms (*Tofta* 1492 HRSO, p. 61) unequivocally show that the names are original Scandinavian simplex *toft*-names in the secondary *-a* plural form. In the cases where no such origin can be established, a Scandinavian origin is, naturally, tentative, and wherever such names do occur they have been marked by a black and white dot in fig. 1. The transfer of a Scots plural form to an original Scandinavian name is relatively easily facilitated by the occurrence of *toft* as a loanword in both Scots and English and by the fact that most Scots/ English-language place-names in *toft* are simplex plural forms. That the Scots plural *-s* may even replace an existing Scandinavian plural not only says something about the bilingualism of the name users, it also shows that the Scots/English plural form is often felt to be the more ‘correct’ plural marker. And when this is the case, a Scots or English plural marker may be transferred to any name in *toft* regardless of origin and original form.

One final point I wish to comment on concerns the issue of dating the Scottish and Manx place-names in *toft*. This point is not as straightforward as one might assume. Considering the fact that none of the specifics in the *toft* place-name material contains any reference to Christianity, it may be argued that this place-name type is relatively early and particularly productive before the introduction of Christianity around the year 1000 AD. On the other hand, the generally secondary nature of the place-name type does not allow for *toft* to be among the very earliest layers of naming.

Furthermore, some examples of the so-called ‘inversion compounds’, such as Totronald (*Totorannald* 1528 RMS (III, 0712)) in Coll (NM1656) and the Caithness examples Toftcarl (ND3446) and Toftgunn (ND2742)—where the specific consists of a Scandinavian personal name, e.g. *Rögnvaldr*, m., *Karl*, m., and *Gunni*, m.—seem to suggest that at least a few of these names could have been coined during a period of language change, or at least considerable bilingualism. It is not known exactly when Scandinavian was ousted in favour of Gaelic in Caithness and the Hebrides, but the shift is hardly likely to have taken place much earlier than the twelfth century or so. This certainly seems to be the case for Caithness, which remained in Norse hands until 1197–1202 when the Orkney earls were ousted from Ross, Sutherland and Caithness. Therefore, it is probably safest to say that *toft* was probably at its most productive during the tenth and eleventh centuries but still an active place-name element well into the post-Norse period.

As the above outline has, hopefully, been able to show, the study of place-names in Scandinavian *toft* in Britain deserves more focus than has hitherto been given to this area of onomastic research. It is my hope that this article has helped to provide an insight into a complex place-name type. Within the limits of the article, I have chosen only to present a brief account of the generic *toft* and to discuss a few of the problems associated with the research into this place-name type. Because of the introductory nature of this article, I have no hopes that it will stand out like *a tour on a toft*, but it is my hope that you, reader, have found it *tryeliche i-maket!*

Appendix. Scottish and Manx place-names which contain, or possibly contain, the generic Scand. *toft/topt*, f.

(i) Place-names which originate, or most probably originate, from Scand. *toft/topt*, f.

Asmundertoftes †, Kirk Maughold, Isle of Man

Auratote, South Uist, Inverness-shire, NF7820

Carlyng's Toft †, St. Ola, Orkney

Crantit, St. Ola, Orkney, HY4409

Colbinstoft, Fetlar, Shetland, HU6193

Cuivatotar, Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB3855

Daltote, Knapdale, Argyllshire, NR7583

***Eistotair** (Mullach Eistotair), Great Bernera, Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB1339

Evertaft, Westray, Orkney, HY4551

Frotoft, Rousay, Orkney, HY4027

Greentoft, Dunrossness, Shetland, HU3915

Greentoft, Birsay, Orkney, HY2525

Greentoft, Eday, Orkney, HY5529

Greentoft, Deerness, Orkney, HY5607

Grenitote, North Uist, Inverness-shire, NF8275

Hannatoft, Shapinsay, Orkney, HY5016

Hollowtofts †, Thurso, Caithness

Howatoft, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, HY7652

Howatoft †, Rousay, Orkney

Howatoft, South Ronaldsay, Orkney, ND4691

Kettletoft, Sanday, Orkney, HY6538

Kirkatafts, Linga, Yell, Shetland, HU5598

North Toft, Egilsay, Orkney, HY4630

Odalstoft, Delting, Shetland, HU4268

Ostoft, Shapinsay, Orkney, HY4916

Quilatotar, Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB5554

Seilastotar, Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB5460

Siggataft, Fetlar, Shetland, HU6590

Skailtoft †, Holm, Orkney

Skenstoft, Shapinsay, Orkney, HY5119

Solitote, Trotternish, Skye, Inverness-shire, NG4374

Sortat, Bower, Caithness, ND2863

Spragatup, Unst, Shetland, HP6413

Stanetoft, Wick, Caithness

***Steinatotair** (Airigh S.), Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB3736

***Steinatotair** (Tom S.), Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB5160

Stonetoft, Fetlar, Shetland, HU6690

Stotoft, Unst, Shetland, HP6308

Sweinkatofts, Fetlar, Shetland, HU6390

***Taft** (House of Taft), Unst, Shetland, HP6201

Taft, Fetlar, Shetland, HU6690

Taft, Whalsay, Shetland, HU5764

Taften, Northmaven, Shetland, HU3573

Tafts, Westray, Orkney, HY4941

Thurdistoft, Orlig, Caithness, ND2067

Tifter, Papa Westray, Orkney

Toft in Burness, Delting, Shetland HU4376

Toft, Fair Isle, Shetland, HZ2070

Toft, Unst, Shetland, HP6014

Toft, Weisdale, Shetland

Toft, Yell, Shetland, HP5305

Toft, Yell, Shetland, HP5386

Tofta, Evie, Orkney

Toftens, Delting, Shetland, HU4173

Trollatofar, Kirk Malew, Isle of Man

Tufta, Harray, Orkney, HY3316

Tufta, Sandwick, Orkney, HY2719

Tufter, Birsay, Orkney, HY2724

Tufter, Westray, Orkney, HY4443

Tupton, Unst, Shetland, HP6313

***Ulatota** (Craig Ulatota), Skye, Inverness-shire, NG5047

(ii) Scand. *toft/topt*, f., or Gaelic *tobhta*, f.

Tobhta, Uig, Isle of Lewis, Ross & Cromarty, NB0434

***Tota** (Meall an Tota), Loch Broom (?), Ross & Cromarty NC1115

***Tota** (Allt an Tota), Loch Broom, Ross & Cromarty, NH1592

***Tota** (Doire nan Tota), Little Loch Broom, Ross & Cromarty, NH0787

***Tota** (Cnoc nan Tota), Coll, Argyllshire, NM1856

***Tota** (Cnoc an Tota), Mull, Argyllshire, NM5144

***Tote** (Upper, Lower & Inver Tote), Skye, Inverness-shire, NG5160

Tote, Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire, NG4149

***Tote** (Rubha na Tote), South Uist, Inverness-shire, NF7330

(iii) Scand. toft/topt f., or Scots toft/taft, sb.

Tafts, Fetlar, Shetland, HU6091

Tafts, Walls & Sandness, Shetland, HU2557

Tafts †, Rousay, Orkney, HY3732

Tafts †, Sanday, Orkney, HY7446

Tofts †, Burray, Orkney

Tofts, St. Ola, Orkney, HY4309

Tofts, Canisbay, Caithness, ND 3668

