

Scandinavian Place-Names in England: V

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SATRON

IN THE TOWNSHIP OF MUKER, Grinton parish, Hang West wapentake, North Riding of Yorkshire, is a place named *Satron*, earlier written *Saterom* 1301, *Satteron* 1664. *EPNS*, 5.273, considers the name a compound of ON *sætr*, n. (Norw. dial. *sæter*, f. and n., Swed. dial. *säter*, *sätter*, f.) 'a mountain pasture, a summer farm, a shieling,' and ON *rúm*, n. (OSwed. *rūm*, n.), which in place-names means 'an open place, a clearing' or the like. The name is said to mean 'wood cleared for pasture land.'

This interpretation cannot be correct. The assumed compound **Sæter-rūm* would for several reasons be a unique place-name. No such name is known in Scandinavia. In England the place-name element *-rum* is of extremely rare occurrence. I have found only three possible *rum*-names in the entire Danelaw, one in the North Riding of Yorkshire, viz., *Boldron* in Startford parish, Gilling West wapentake (*Bolrum* ca. 1180, *Bolerum* 1204 and 1255),¹ and two in Lancashire, viz., *Dendron* (*Denrun*, *-rum* 1269) in Aldringham parish, and *Dertren* (*Driterum* 1204) in Bolton-le-Sands parish.² A weightier reason for the improbability of such a compound as **Sæter-rūm* is that the two words *sæter* and *rūm* chiefly belong to different Scandinavian areas, the former to Norway and central and northern Sweden, the latter to Denmark and southern Sweden.³ Therefore, a compound consisting of these two words is possible only in the border area between the northern and southern regions.

Furthermore, *Satron* is located in the inner mountainous and woody region of the North Riding, where the Scandinavian settlers

¹ *EPNS*, 5.303f.; E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*,³ 1960 (hereafter abbreviated Ekwall, *Dict.*), p. 51.

² E. Ekwall, *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (hereafter abbreviated Ekwall, *Lancashire*), pp. 186 and 209.

³ See G. Franzén in *Nordisk Kultur*, 5.151 ff.; F. Hedblom, *De svenska ortnamnen på säter*, pp. 18 ff.

were almost exclusively Norwegians. The name could not possibly be Danish, since the word *sæter* in the meaning of 'a summer farm' did not belong to the Danish language. But on the other hand, the word *rūm* is almost unknown in Norway as the second element in place-names. There are only three or four uncertain instances of *rūm* in this sense in the entire Norwegian place nomenclature.⁴

Thus, the possibility that a compound **Sæter-rum* could exist in Scandinavia or Scandinavian England is almost nonexistent. I see no reason why *Satron* cannot be the dative plural *Sætrum*, denoting two or more summer farms or pastures.⁵ Plural forms of *sætr* (*a Sætrum*, etc.) occur quite frequently in Norwegian and Swedish place-names, and in northern England plural names are often found.⁶ It often happens that the dative plural ending *-um*, *-om* in North-English place-names appears as *-on*, e.g., in the North Riding: *Feldon(e)* 1228 and 1231, *Fildun*, *Fildon* 1228, *Feldom* ca. 1300 to 1536, now *Feldom*;⁷ in the East Riding: *Rison* 1086 DB, *Rysun* 1240, *Risom*, *Rysom* 1175—1291, now *Rysome Garth*; also *Risun*, *Rison* 1086 DB, now *Rise*; *Thirnon* 1086 DB, *Tirnum* 1190, now *Thornholme*;⁸ in the West Riding: *Hrypum* 731 Bede, *Rypon* 948—1285, now *Ripon*.⁹ In cases such as the ones now mentioned from northern England the *-on* (*-un*) was perhaps not so much due to a spontaneous phonetic development as it was rather caused by attraction from the numerous names ending in *-ton* (mostly *-tun*), *-don* (mostly *-dun*), and others. Thus, nothing stands in the way of the assumption that *Satron* represents an old dative plural.

For the phonetic development of *æ* in *Sætrum* cf., for instance, *Saterthwait* 1336, now *Satterthwaite*, in Lancashire, about which H. Lindkvist, *Middle-English Place-Names of Scandinavian Origin*, p. 120, note 1, remarks that the *a*-vowel of the ME forms "might be

⁴ See Hj. Lindroth, *De nordiska ortnamnen på -rum*, pp. 103f.

⁵ About reasons for not considering ON *setr*, n., see Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England*, pp. 32f., note 1, and *Lancashire*, p. 16f.; A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* (hereafter abbreviated, Smith, *Elem.*), 2.95; Hedblom, *loc. cit.*

⁶ O. Rygh, *Norske Gaardnavne, Indledning*, p. 74; Hedblom, *op.cit.*, *passim*; Smith, *Elem.*, 2.224ff.

⁷ *EPNS*, 5.293.

⁸ *EPNS*, 14.22, 70, 90.

⁹ F. W. Moorman, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, pp. 157f.; Ekwall, *Dict.*, p. 370.

due to shortening before the consonants, in which case the Scand. \bar{x} shared the development of the corresponding native sound in the same position."¹⁰

RAISBECK, RAYBECK

In Upleatham parish, Langbargh East wapentake, North Riding of Yorkshire, is a stream with the official name *Raisbeck*. This is a corrupt form of the local name *Raybeck*, evidenced as *Rabec* ca. 1185. According to *EPNS*, 5.154, the name is a compound of ON *rá* 'a roe-buck' and *bekkr*, m. 'a brook.'

It would be more accurate to give the first element as ON *rá*, f. 'a roe.' The ON word for 'roe-buck' is *rábukkr*, m. Irrespective of that, H. Lindkvist identified, many years before *EPNS* vol. 5 was published, in his above quoted dissertation, p. 189, the first element, with ON *rá*, n. 'a boundary (mark).' He referred to several identical Scandinavian place-names such as ODan. *Rabec*, OSwed. *Rabek*, and several Swed. names *Råbäck*. He added: "From a formal point of view all these names can also be supposed to contain. O. Scand. *rá*, OE *raha*, *ra*, ME *ra* 'a roe'; still in most cases this alternative is scarcely worthy of consideration." Lindkvist's interpretation becomes strikingly correct when one realizes that the *Raybeck* (*Raisbeck*) here concerned constitutes the borderline between the two parishes Upleatham and Guisborough.

BLEAN, BLENG

The following two river-names in northern England are no doubt originally identical:

1. *Blean* or *Blean beck*, a place in Aysgarth parish, Hang West wapentake, North Riding of Yorkshire. Earlier forms: *Blayngbek* 1153 and 1280, *Blainbec* 1218, *Bleing*, *Bleyng* 1253—1307 (three times).

2. *Bleng* 1391, *Brenge* 1577 and 1586, a river in Cumberland. Also as the first element of names of places along the stream: *Bleyngfit* 1391 (now lost); *Blenge Bridge* 1641 (now *Bleng Bridge*); *Blengdale* 1655; *Blengtonge* 1540 and 1544, *Blaing Tongue* 1783 (now *Bleng Tongue*).

¹⁰ Cf. Ekwall, *Dict.*, p. 405.

In *EPNS*, 5.263, Ekwall derived *Blean* and *Bleng* from ON *blæingr*, m., a derivative of ON *blár*, 'blue, dark, black,' used of a 'dark stream.'¹¹ In *English River-Names*, p. 37, he repeated this interpretation and added that *Blæingr* is a poetical name for the raven. Concerning the *Bleng* he gave the supporting information that it has a dark bed and in its upper part runs through a deep narrow valley.

The same explanation was repeated by A. Mawer in *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* 7.15, by the authors of *EPNS*, 20.7f., 21.395, 461, and by A. H. Smith, *Elem.* 1.38.

If the name of the streams really is a masculine *blæingr*, I am inclined to identify it with the Norwegian dialect word *bleng*, m. 'buttermilk, whey, a mixture of whey and water.' Aasen and Torp derived this word from ON *blendingr*, m. 'a mixture.'¹² In my opinion it has developed from ON *blæingr*, and the word refers to the bluish color of whey and buttermilk. If my assumption is correct, the English names *Blean* and *Bleng* are synonymous with the Scandinavian *Blanda*, identical with ON *blanda*, f., 'a mixture of whey and water.'¹³

However, it is a well known fact that primary river-names in Scandinavia almost always were feminine, while names of lakes, bays, etc., were masculine. It is true that some masculine names of streams do exist, but they are of young age and refer to small and insignificant brooks and creeks. These names are usually of a facetious nature, e.g., Norw. **Kaldrass(i)* 'the cold anus,' *Spiten* 'the spitter.'¹⁴ Of the North-English streams here concerned at least the *Bleng*, a tributary to the *Irt*, is of considerable proportions. I have failed to localize the *Blean* on any map available to me, but it can hardly be of the same small type as the Norwegian brooks just mentioned.

A second type of masculine Scandinavian river-names consists of original names of waterfalls, rapids, races, usually present participles ending in *-andi*, e.g., *Dynjandi*, *Verpandi*, later used as name of the whole stream or a part thereof. It seems unlikely that *Blean*, *Bleng* should be original names of waterfalls, since it would be

¹¹ For the phonetic development see E. H. Lind in *Namn och bygd*, 1914, p. 176.

¹² J. Aasen, *Norsk Ordbog* (1873), p. 63; A. Torp, *Nynorsk etymologisk ordbok* (1919), p. 28; cf. G. Linde, *Ortnamnen runt Billingen* (Skövde, 1952), p. 3.

¹³ See A. Janzén in *Names* 5.203 ff.

¹⁴ O. Rygh, *Norske Elvenavne* (1904), 124, 242.

strange to find a waterfall characterized as black or dark or wheyey. Normally the foam and mist produced by the water cascades give white or sparkling color effects, e.g., ON *Skinandi* 'the shining one.'¹⁵

In the light of these remarks concerning the gender of ON names of streams it might be wise to consider it at least a possibility that the two Scandinavian river-names in northern England reflect an ON feminine **Bláing* 'the bluish one,' of the same type as the ON mythical river-name *Ífing*¹⁶ and such Norwegian names as *Gerding*, *Gilling*.¹⁷

DUDDON

A river called *Duddon*, pronounced [ˈdʌdən], rises on the mountain Wrynose on the border between Lancashire and Cumberland. It runs in a southwesterly direction ca. 20 miles into the Irish Sea, forming the boundary between the two counties. Older forms occur in both Lancashire and Cumberland documents. They are quoted here in chronological order without indication of provenance:¹⁸ *Dudun* 1140, *Dudena*¹⁹ ca. 1160, *Duden(e)* ca. 1180–1500 (frequently), *Duthen* 1196, *Doden* 1279–1459 (several times), *Dody(n)e* ca. 1280–1535 (several times), *Dudden* 1292–1576 (four times), *Dodin(e)* ca. 1300, *Dody(n)* 1362, *Dudhen* 1578, *Dodon* 1586, etc.

Three other names are undoubtedly intimately connected with the name of the river. They are

1. *Dunnerholm*, a place that stands on a rocky eminence rising 60 feet above sea-level on the low shore of the Duddon estuary. Older forms: *Dunreholm* ca. 1220, *Dunerholm*, *Donner-* 1252.

2. *Dunnerdale*, a township and district east of the river in the southern part of Kirkby Ireleth parish, Lancashire. Older forms: *Dunerdale* 1293 and 1300, *Donerdale* 1300, *Donesdale* 1412, *Dunnersdale* 1522, *Dunerdall* ca. 1530.

3. *Dun(n)ermersk* ca. 1245 and ca. 1270; now lost. Ekwall, *Lancashire*, p. 206, presumes that the place so named was located in

¹⁵ O. Rygh, *op.cit.*, p. 216.

¹⁶ S. Egilsson and F. Jónsson, *Lexicon poeticum* (1931), p. 323.

¹⁷ O. Rygh, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁸ For information about the sources of the forms quoted see E. Ekwall, *Lancashire*, pp. 191, 206, 223, and *English River-Names*, p. 137; *EPNS*, 20. 11.

¹⁹ So is the form given by Ekwall, *English River-Names*, *loc.cit.*, but earlier, *Lancashire*, *loc.cit.*, he quoted it as *Dudenam*.

Martin, and if so, "this *Dunner-* cannot be from *Duddon*." Indeed it can. In both sources²⁰ the master of Martin talks about his "whole territory Dun(n)ermersk." Martin is situated on a peninsula south of the bay into which the *Duddon* emerges. Along the shore is marsh-land (OE *mersc* 'a marsh'). The bay was regarded as a part of the *Duddon* or had a name such as **Dunner Bay* or the like. In any case, it is only natural that the swampy land along the estuary was named for the river.

R. Ferguson, *The Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland* (1856), pp. 114f., equated the termination in *Duddon* with such English river-names as *Marron*, *Leven*, *Ellen* and also with such Norwegian names as *Namsen*, *Glommen*, *Alten*. We know today that this comparison is absurd. Ferguson was equally unfortunate when he erroneously suggested that *Duddon* probably is from an unknown Icelandic word **duðr*, which he thought to be another form of *dunr*, 'a thunder, a thundering noise,' and have the same meaning as *Don* in Yorkshire.

Later, in his book *The Dialect of Cumberland* (1873), p. 209, Ferguson attempted a completely fantastic interpretation when he referred to Welsh *diod* 'drink,' Irish and Old Gaelic *dothar* 'water,' which he connected with Lappish *dadno*[!] and compared with the river-names *Dude* in Germany and *Dodder* in Ireland.

H. C. Wyld and T. O. Hirst, *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (1911), pp. 114f., interpreted the first element in *Dunnerdale* and *Dunnerholm* as the OE personal name *Dunnere* < *Dūnhere*. These authors failed to see that the first element of the two names must be the name of the river *Duddon*, of which they offered no explanation.

The same interpretation, disregarding the river-name, was given by J. Sephton, *A Handbook of Lancashire Place-Names* (1913), pp. 36, 87.

J. B. Johnston, *The Place-Names of England and Wales* (1915), p. 238, regarded the origin of the name *Duddon* as uncertain.

E. Ekwall, *Lancashire* (1922), p. 191, looked upon *Duddon* as a compound containing OE *denu* 'a valley' as the second element and identified the first element with *du-* < Celtic **dubo-* 'black,' for which he found support in the fact that the *Duddon* has clear water

²⁰ *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey. Chetham Society. New series, 78.755, 759.*

but a black bottom. As an alternative he mentioned the possibility that the first element could be one of the OE personal names *Dudda* and *Dudd*. Ekwall's suggestions seem difficult to justify in the light of the oldest forms of the river-name and the compounds containing *Dunner-*, which Ekwall on this occasion did not bring into the picture. This he did on p. 206, where he treated the name *Dunnerholm* and found it plausible that the name of the river and the first element of the compound have the same etymology, although he had no definite explanation to offer. The once instanced OE personal name *Dunnere* did not seem to him a probable source. But he pointed to the possibility of relationship between *Dunner-* and some Norwegian place-names containing ON *Dunnar-*. These names are, however, not etymologically clarified by Ekwall. They will be briefly treated below.

In the article on *Dunnerdale* (p. 223) Ekwall gave another interpretation of the first element, namely as a Scandinavian genitive form of the name *Duddon*. The form *Duthen* of the river-name in an early source he took to be a Scandinavianized form, and he assumed that the Scandinavian form may have been **Duðn*, gen. **Duðnar*. In favor of this suggestion he pointed out that names ending in *-dale* very often have a river-name as the first element. Ekwall obviously thought that *Duddon* was adapted to the phonetic conditions in the language of the Scandinavian settlers, and still believed it to be a hybrid compound of Celt. **du(bo)-* and OE *denu*.

In his great work *English River-Names* (1928), p. 137, Ekwall repeated his opinion that *Duthen* and *Dunner-* are due to Scandinavianization and stated briefly that the etymology of the name is obscure. His last word on the matter appeared in *Dict.* (1960), p. 152, where he simply regarded the name as "unexplained."

EPNS, vol. 22 (1952), p. xix, considered *Duddon* an Anglian name, and in vol. 20, p. 11, it was said that the older forms do not point to any plain conclusion, but that they are consistent with derivation from *Dudd*, uninflected genitive of the English personal name *Dudd*, and *denu* 'a valley.' Strangely enough, no consideration was given to the compounds containing *Dunner-*. This explanation, putting research back by a quarter of a century, is unacceptable. It would also be somewhat odd that a name of a valley was transferred to a river of no small dimensions. As Ekwall suggested, the case is exactly the reverse.

It would be no surprise if the name of a river in a district with such an extraordinarily strong Scandinavian colonization as the region here concerned should have a Scandinavian name. There are several names in Cumberland, e.g., *Aira Beck* (ON **Eyr-á*), *Greta* (ON **Grjót-á*), etc.²¹

I accept Ekwall's suggestion that the name *Duddon* was **Duðn*, but I conceive this not as a Scandinavianization but as the original Scandinavian name of the river. This ON **Duðn* I interpret as an *n*-derivative of the well-evidenced Scandinavian root **duð-* 'to shake, to shiver.' As is frequently observed, names of rivers are often formed by means of *n*-suffix; cf., for instance, such Norwegian river-names as *Qln*, *Gefn*, *Rotn*, *Sogn*, *Vefsn*, etc.²² The root *duð-* appears in OFries. *dud* 'deafening,' Sanskr. *dodhat-* 'shaking, violent' *dúdhi-* 'violent.' Widely distributed in the Germanic languages are *r*-derivatives, e.g., Norw. dial. *durra* (< **duðra*) 'to shake with a muffled noise, to whirl along humming,' Swed. dial. (Gotland) *durrä* 'to hum loudly,' (Norrland) *door* 'to thunder' (especially about distant rapids and waterfalls), 'to tremble with noise.' In North-English dialects there is a variety of forms meaning 'to tremble, to shiver, to make a buzzing noise, to deafen with noise': *dotter*, *dodher*, *dotther*, *dotder*, pronounced [*do.ðə(r)* *do.də(r)*], *duther*, *dudder*, pronounced [*dæ.ðə(r)*, *dæ.də(r)*]. The variation *ð:d* shows a normal development of Scandinavian *ð* in different North-English dialects (cf. below), but the *-d-* may also reflect formations of intensive or frequentative nature.²³ Since some sort of noise is so often included in the meanings of these words, it is possible that an onomatopoeic root has been fused with the one that means 'to shake, to shiver.'

²¹ See *EPNS*, vol. 20, pp. 3 and 16.

²² See O. Rygh, *Norske Elvenavne*, *passim*.

²³ About the forms now adduced and related words in other languages see A. Torp, *Nynorsk etymologisk ordbok*, p. 76; J. E. Rietz, *Svenskt dialektlexikon*, p. 106; J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Wörterbuch*, pp. 264f.; A. E. Pease, *A Dictionary of the Dialect of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, p. 34; R. Ferguson, *The Dialect of Cumberland*, p. 31; M. C. F. Morris, *Yorkshire Folk-Talk*, p. 297; J. Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 2. 128 and 218. The *r*-derivatives cannot be kept separate from a whole agglomeration of synonymous but originally unrelated words, e.g., North-English dial. *dather*, *dither*, *dadder*, *didder*, *dodder*, Norw. dial. *dadra*, *didra*. The whole material constitutes a confused picture of phonetic variation, secondary ablaut, etc.

In Scandinavia there are several place-names which contain a stem **duðr-*, at least partly referring to names of streams. They have last been treated by L. Hellberg, *Inbyggarnamn på -karlar i svenska ortnamn* (1950), pp. 88 ff.,²⁴ but this analysis is unsatisfactory. Among other things he denies, on insufficient grounds, the existence of a river-name **Dudhr-* and disregards the onomatopoeic root **duð-*. Instead Hellberg connects the Scandinavian names with the Proto-Germ. root **duð-* 'to be slack, powerless' in Mod. Icel. *doði* 'deadness, insensibility,' *doða* 'to weaken,' *doðinn* 'slack, indolent, dull,' etc. This root could very well enter into river-names and denote slowly flowing water. For the names adduced by Hellberg this interpretation is appropriate in some cases, but other names are more likely to mean 'the shivering or thundering one.'

Concerning the Duddon the choice between the two possible alternatives is easy. It runs from the mountain Wrynose and, while receiving many mountain streams as tributaries all along its course, descends rapidly to the sea. If my interpretation of ON **Duðn* is correct, the meaning of the name seems most appropriate, even if it may be impossible to determine whether it refers to a swift and violent or a trembling, shivering flow or to the noisy sound of the water or if both the movement and the sound of the water are involved. Norwegian river-names often illustrate clamorous sounds of various kinds, e.g., *Belja*, *Garpa*, *Gaula*, *Skrika* and many others; cf. also the mythical *Gjøll*. A swift-rushing flow of the water is the basis for such names as Norw. *Eisa*, *Etn*, *Fjorm*, *Fløyma*, *Gaus*, *Sokn*, etc. A shivering movement of the water is referred to in Norw. *Skjalfa*, *Titra*, West-Swed. *Bejja*, *Pipra*.²⁵

The present pronunciation *dudn* of *Duddon* developed regularly from **Duðn*. Between *ð* and *n* a (facultative) prop vowel developed. As usual, in old sources it was marked by various vowel signs.

In several North-English dialects, including that of Cumberland, *ð* changed to *d*. It has not been established to what extent and under

²⁴ For earlier discussions of Scandinavian names containing **Duðr-* see K. F. Johansson in *Nordiska ortnamn. Hyllningskrift tillägnad Adolf Noreen på sextioårsdagen* (= *Namn och bygd* 1914), pp. 205 ff.; Hj. Lindroth in *Från ortnamns- och dialektforskningen inom Kalmar län (Södra Kalmar län 2, 1926)*, p. 10; C. I. Ståhle, *Studier över de svenska ortnamnen på -inge*, pp. 482 f.

²⁵ About the Norwegian names see O. Rygh, *op. cit.*, *passim*; about the Swedish ones see Hj. Lindroth, *Bohusläns härads- och sockennamn*, p. 41; A. Janzén in *Namn och bygd*, 23 (1935), pp. 22 f.

what circumstances this change took place, nor is the geographical distribution known in detail, but cf. such North-English forms as *smiddy* < ON *smiðja*, *addle* < ON *oðlask*, *gedless* < ON *gedlauss*.²⁶ But in compounds such as **Duðnarholmr*, *-dalr*, *-mersc* the intervocalic *-ðn-* was assimilated to *-nn-*; cf. *Swinithwaite* (*Swiningethwait*, *Swiningtweit* 1202) in Yorkshire, containing ON *sviðningr*, m. 'a place cleared by burning'²⁷ and see D. A. Seip, *Norsk Språkhistorie til omkring 1370* (1955), p. 281, and the literature there quoted.

As Ekwall observed, there are some Norwegian place-names that possibly contain an ON **Duðn(ar)*-. I agree and find it desirable that at least the following names be reconsidered on the basis of the assumption that they may contain an ON river-name **Duðn*.

1. *Dynna* (*Dunnar*, plur., 1396, *Dunna* 1520), in *NG*, vol. 4:2, p. 150, regarded as a form of an unknown ON word **dunn*, f., possibly cognate with the verb *dynja* 'to thunder, to shiver, to rush ahead at a terrific pace.' However, no forms with *nn* of the stem in *dynja* are otherwise known. River-names do appear in the plural form indicating more than one habitation. There is a waterfall in the vicinity.

2. *Dunnarstodum* (dat. plur.) ca. 1360, now lost, in *NG* vol. 12, p. 306, supposed to contain the same **dunn* as *Dynna*, but perhaps instead from **Duðnar-staðir*. The names in *-staðir* do not always contain the names of the settlers.

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²⁶ R. Ferguson, *The Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland*, p. 154; P. Thorson, *Anglo-Norse Studies*, 1.11.

²⁷ *EPNS*, 5.25 (the ON form erroneously given as *sviðningr*); A. H. Smith, *Elem.*, 2.170 (the ON form for unknown reasons given as *sviðnungr*, which may have existed, though).