Old Norse *bý(r)*-names in Britain: cores and peripheries.

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Introduction

- Anglo-Scandinavian place-names.

- Overview of corpus/dataset.

- Introduction to my research methodology.

Anglo-Scandinavian place-names

Timeline:

AD 865: *ASC* records arrival of Scandinavian *micel here* 'Great Army' in England.
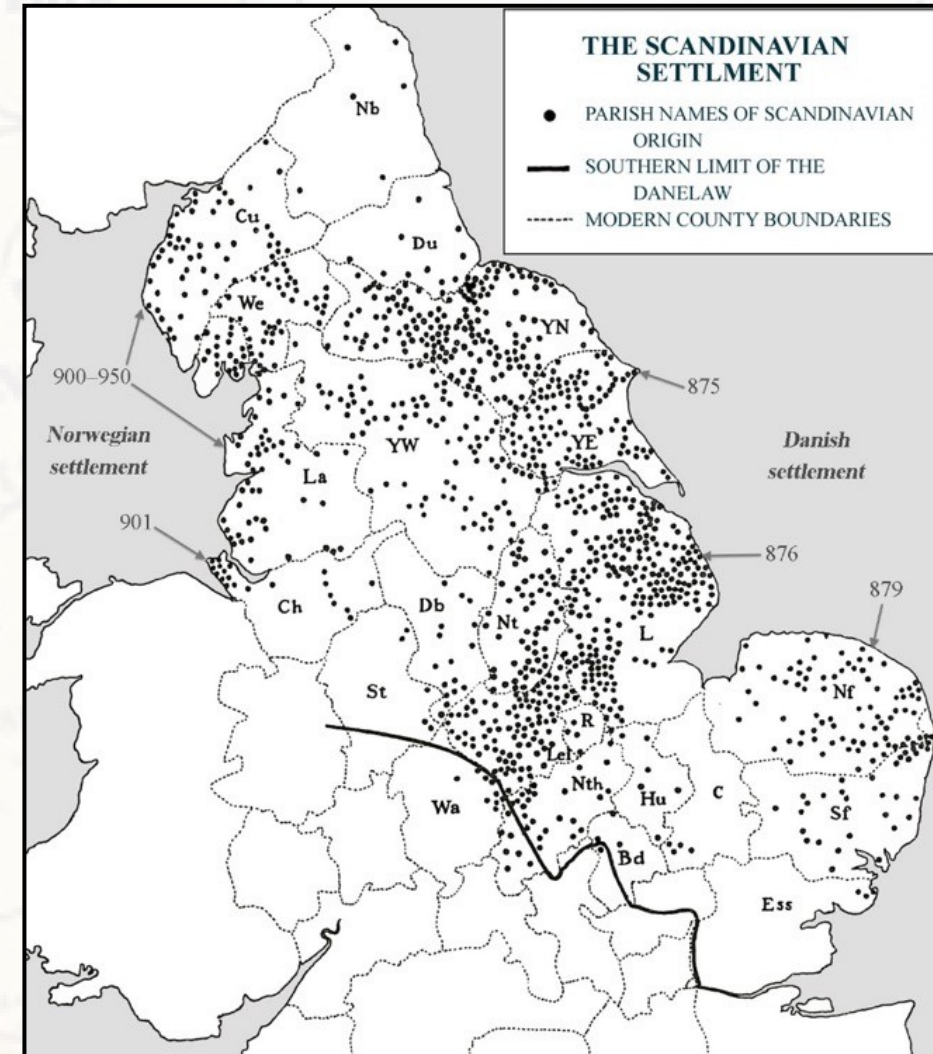
AD 876: *ASC* records Scandinavian settlement in Northumbria.

c. AD 886: Alfred-Guðrum treaty signed.

AD 1016: Knútr inn ríki ('Cnut the Great') conquers England.

AD 1066: Haraldr Harðráði defeated; Norman Conquest.
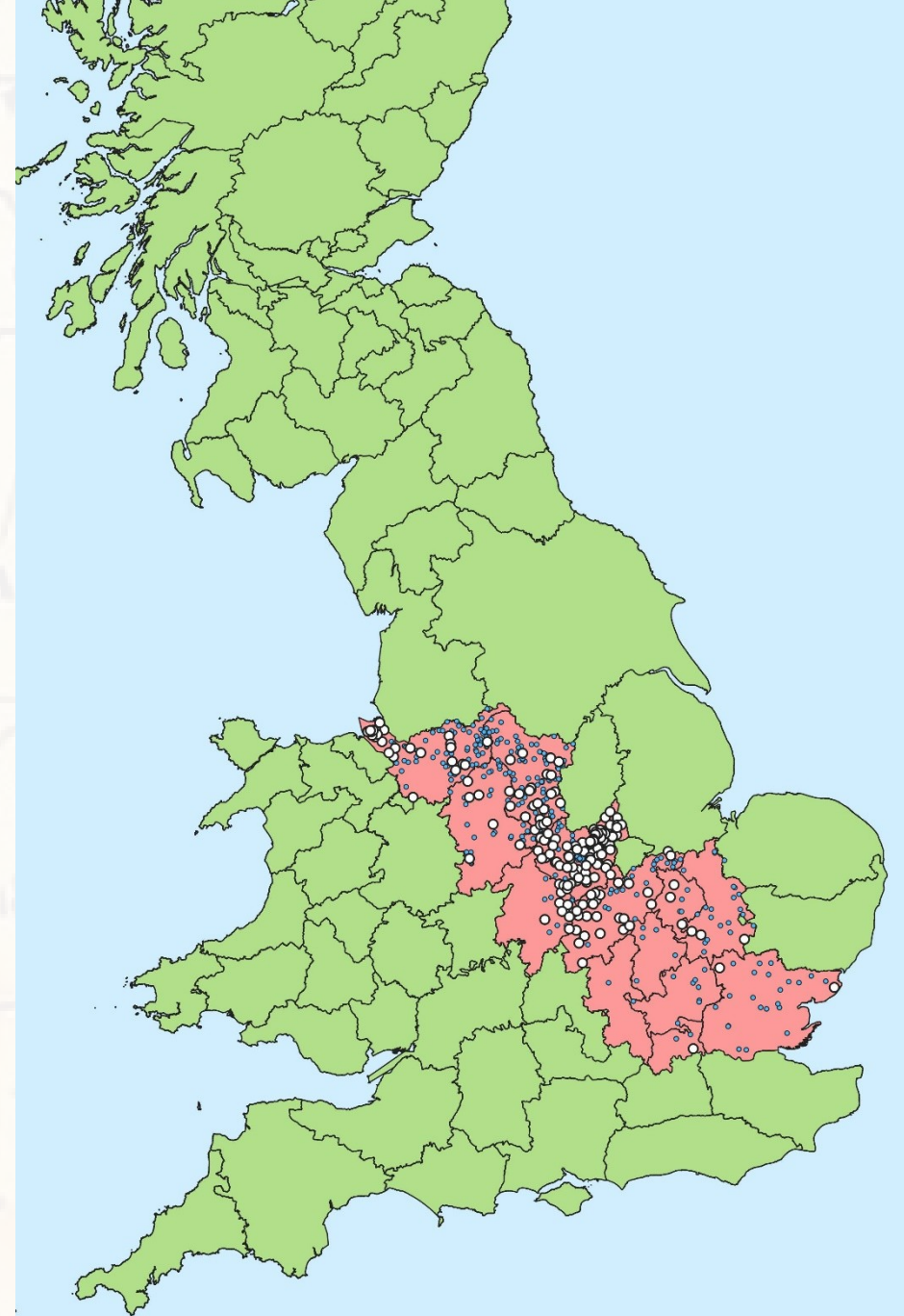
AD 1086: *Domesday Book* compiled.

THE SCANDINAVIAN SETTLMENT
- PARISH NAMES OF SCANDINAVIAN ORIGIN
- SOUTHERN LIMIT OF THE DANELAW
- MODERN COUNTY BOUNDARIES

Alfred-Guðrum Border

Ærest ymb ure landgemæra: up on Temese, 7 ðonne up on Ligan, 7 andlang Ligan oð hire æwylm, ðonne on gerihte to Bedanforda, ðonne up on Usan oð Wætlingastræt.

- Alfred-Guðrum treaty, c. AD 878-890.

Corpus:

- Thirteen historical English counties.

- Uneven distribution of Anglo-Scandinavian place-names.

- Difficult to analyse in isolation.

ON *bý(r)*: the element

ON *bý(r)* = 'farmstead, village' (in Anglo-Scandinavian context).

e.g. Derby DER; Grimsby LIN; Whitby YOR.

- Diagnostically Scandinavian.
- Numerous.
- Datasets are readily available.

1. In general coined by ON-speakers.

2. Indicate sizeable communities of ON-speakers in eastern England.

3. Imply significant role for ON-speakers in holding land.

4. Many of these land-holdings can be characterised as marginal or low in status.

5. There is some reason to suspect that the majority of *bý(r)*-names were coined before the 11th century.
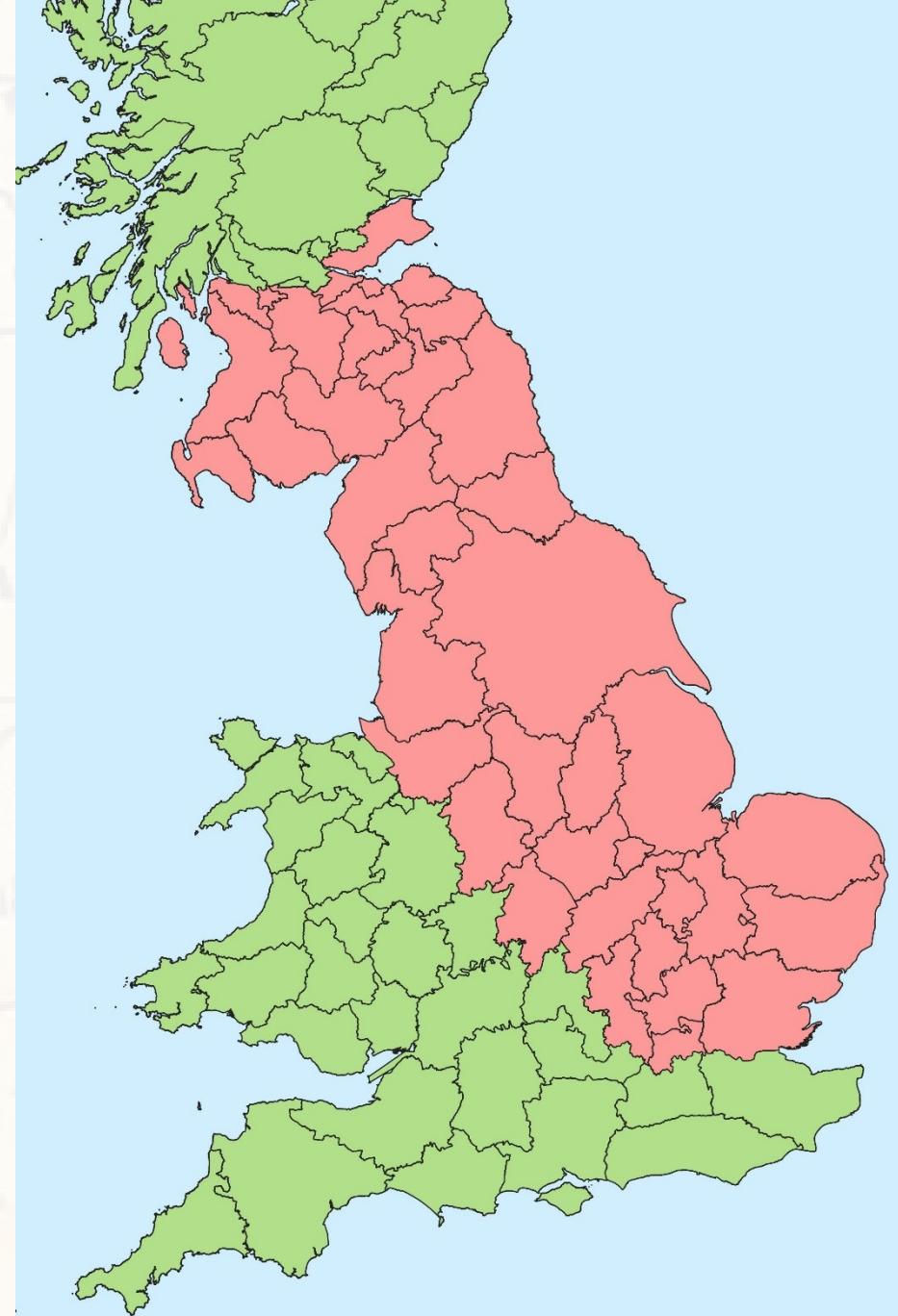
(Abrams and Parsons 2004: 404)

ON *bý(r)*: data collection

Parameters:

1. Mainland England and Scottish Lowlands (Anglo-Norse contact).

2. A genuine *bý(r)*-form.

3. Attested pre-1500 (i.e. can be considered 'medieval').

Sources:

- EPNS and SPNS surveys.

- Regional studies, e.g. Fellows Jensen's SSNEM and SSNNW.

- Place-name dictionaries.

- Journal articles, PhD theses, etc.

ON *bý(r)*: corpus overview

- Total = 802 *bý(r)*-names.

- 418 names (52.1%) etymologically 'certain'.

- 559 names (69.7%) attested by l. 11th century.
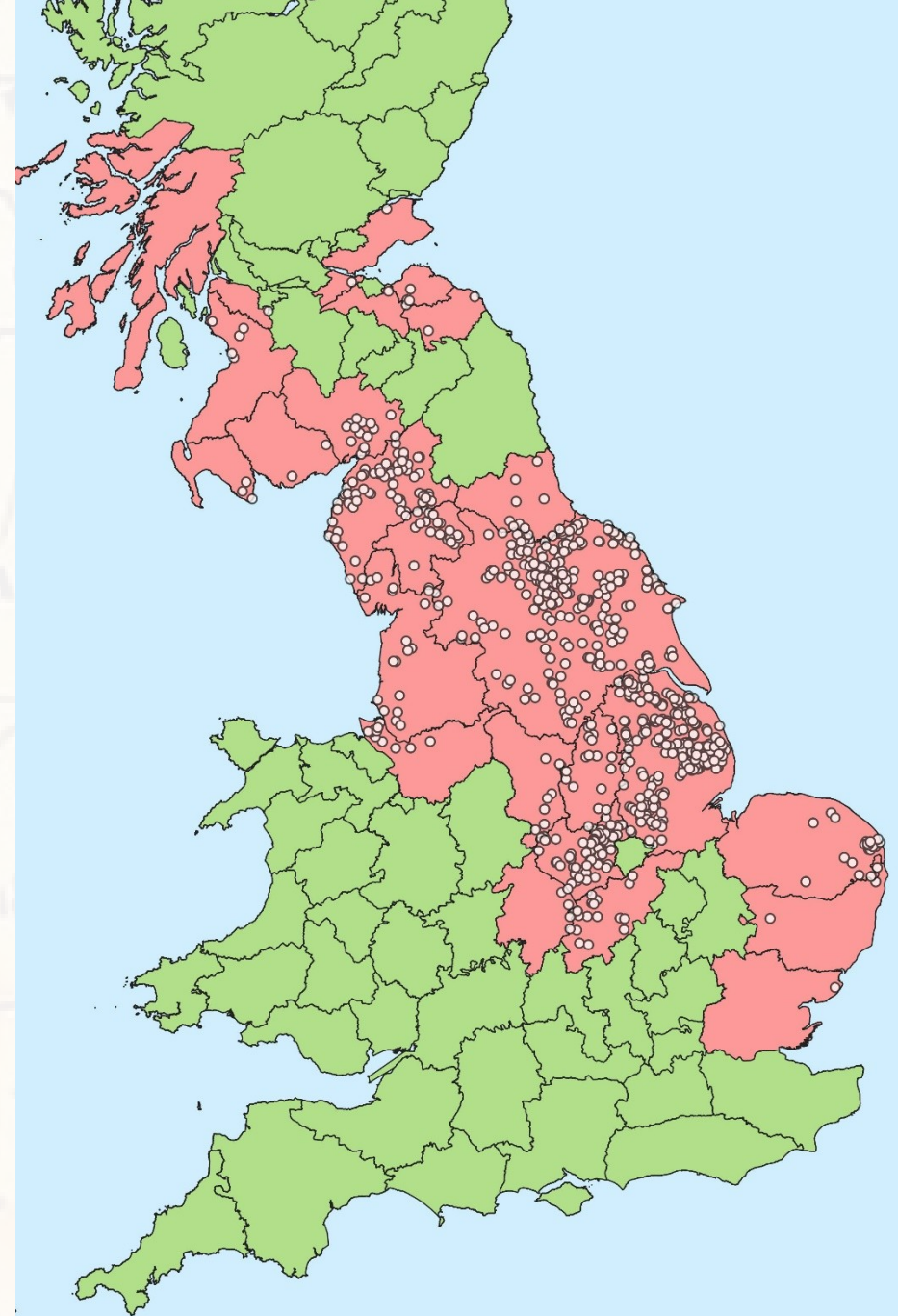
Linguistic neutrality (cognates):

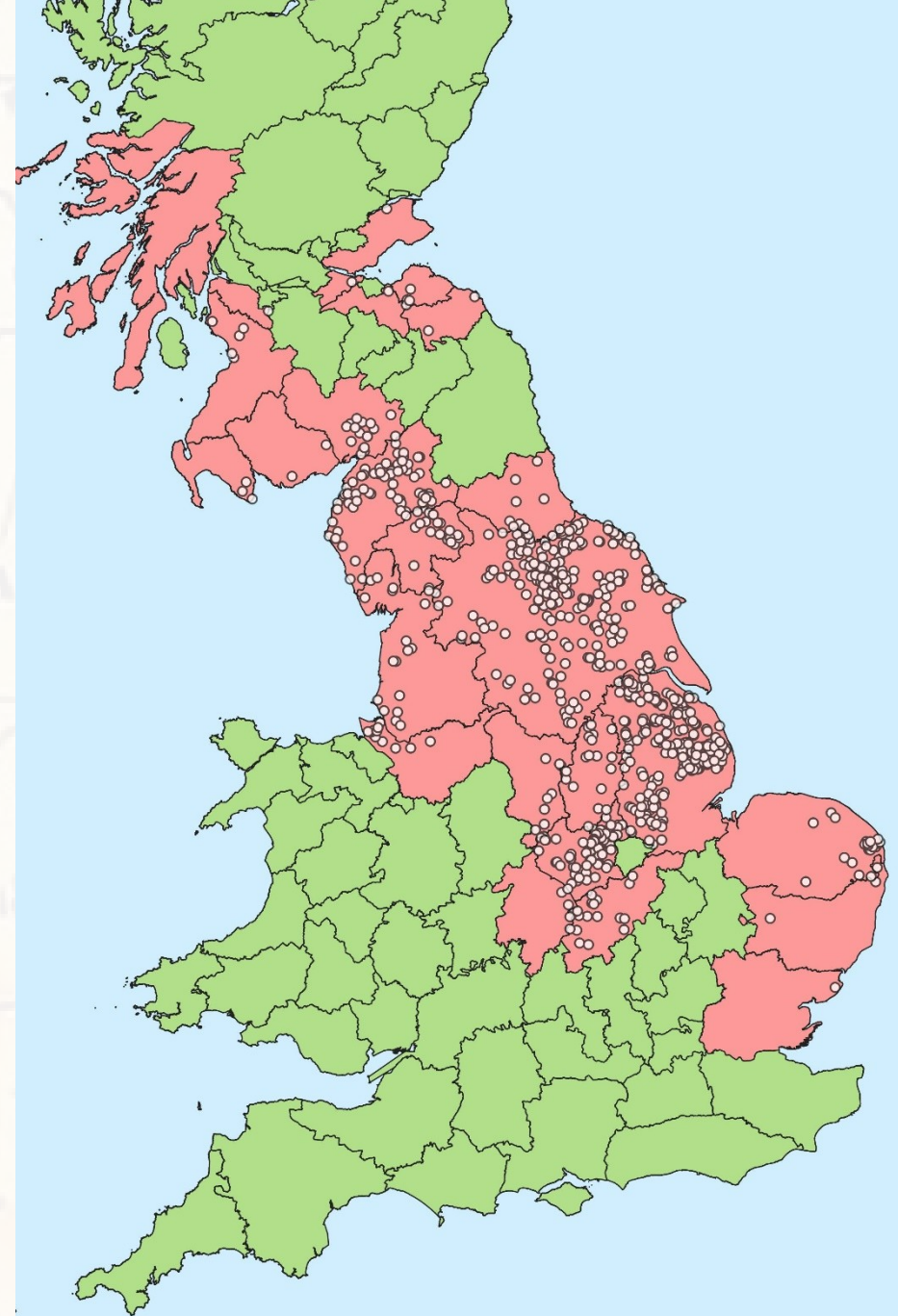**Osgodby LIN** (*Osgotebi* 1086)

Osgodby YOR (*Asgozbi* 1086)

= OE/ON pers.n. *Ōsgeat*/ *Ásgautr*

Mickleby YOR (*Michelbi* 1086)
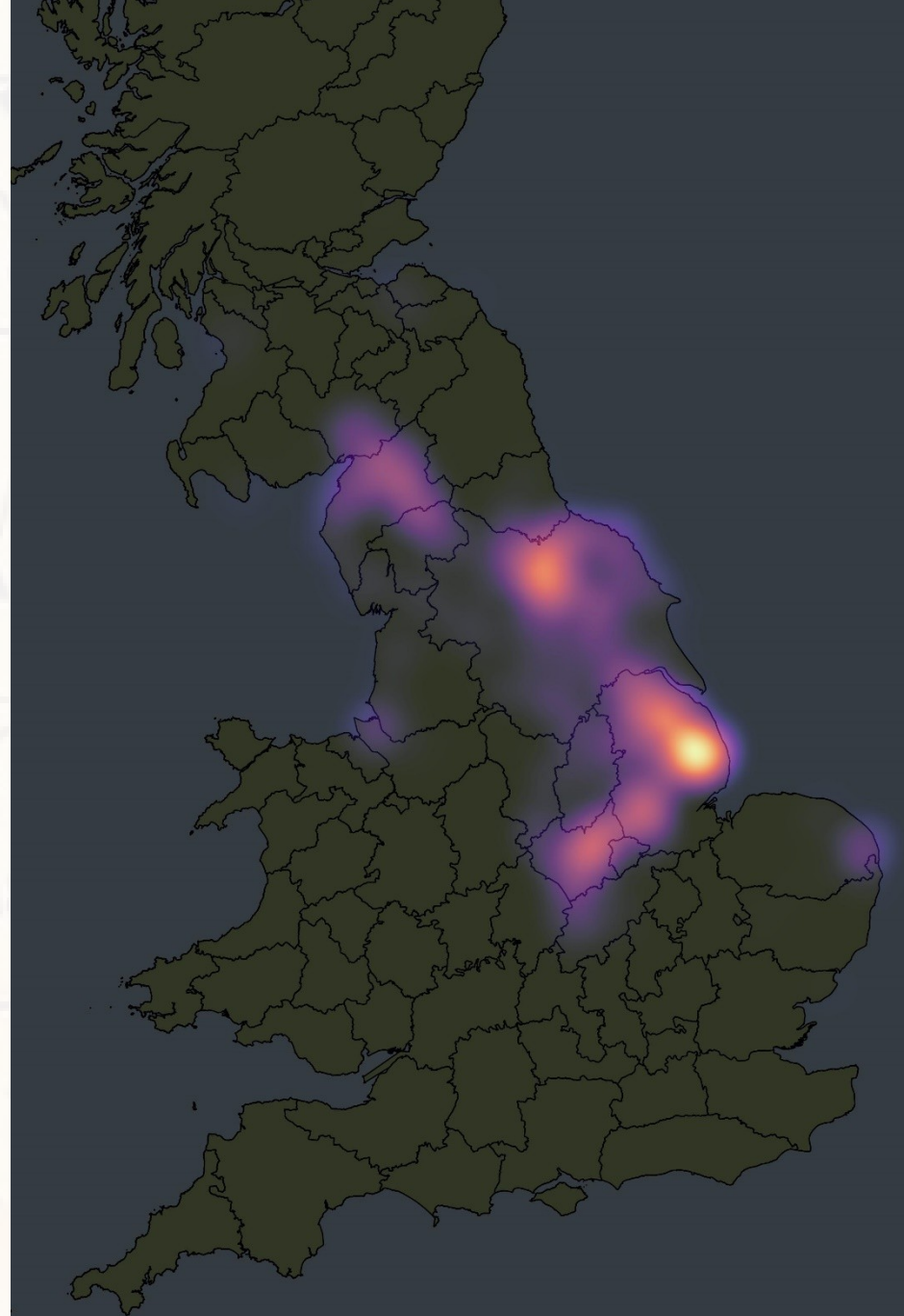
= OE *micel*/ON *mikill* 'big, great'

County	Total	% of corpus
Yorkshire	247	30.8
Lincolnshire	234	29.2
Cumberland	76	9.5
Leicestershire	67	8.4
Westmorland	22	2.7
DUM; NOR; NOT	21 (ea.)	2.6 (ea.)
Lancashire	19	2.4
Northamptonshire	18	2.2
Cheshire	12	1.5
DER; DUR	9 (ea.)	1.1 (ea.)
Galloway	5	0.6
AYR; ELo	4 (ea.)	0.5
SUF; WAR	3 (ea.)	0.4
BER	2	0.3
ESX; FIF; REN; MLo; WLo	1 (ea.)	0.1

Old Norse *bý(r)*- names: cores and peripheries

Factors:

1. Socio-political situation(s).

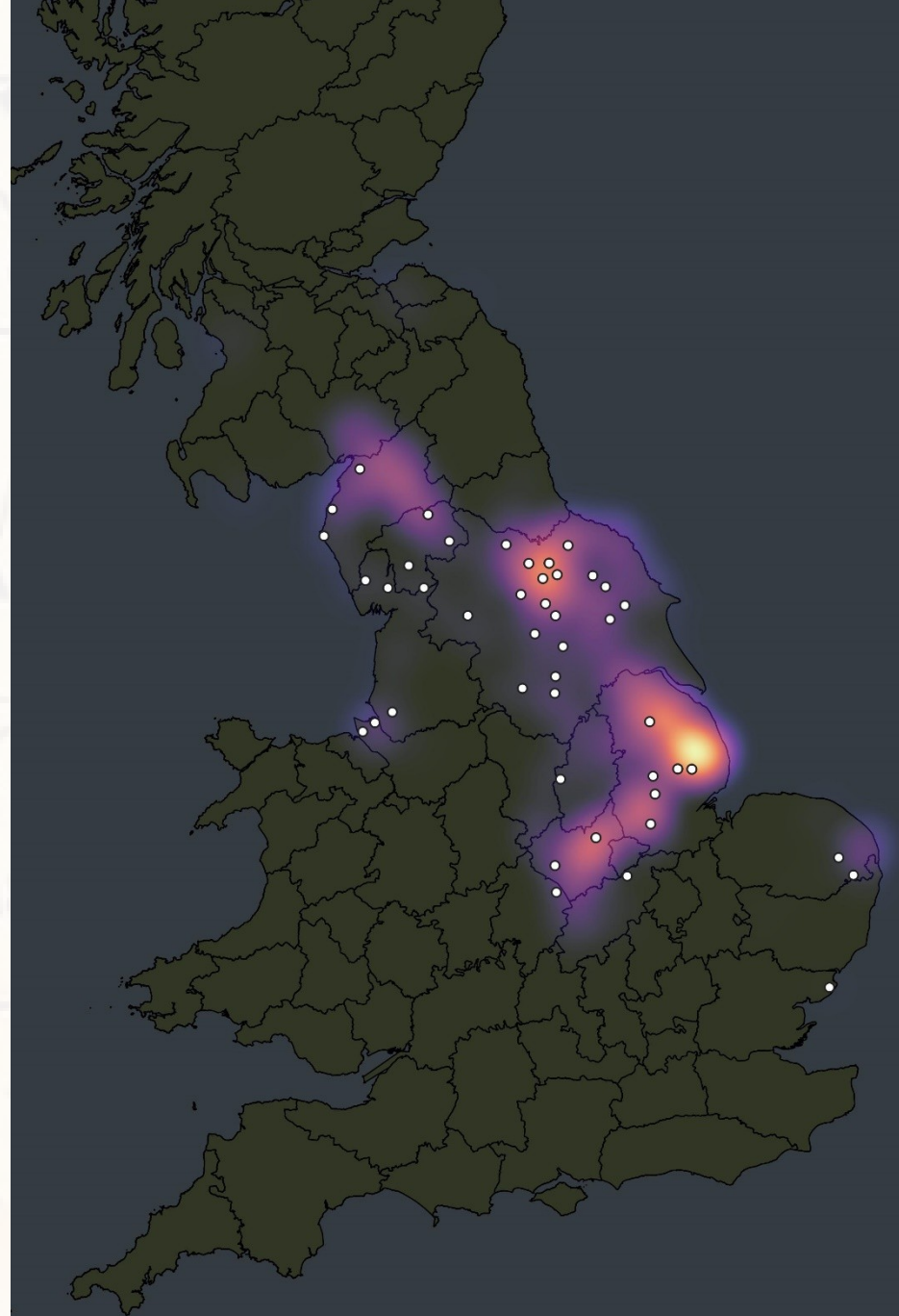2. Topography.

3. Number(s) of Scandinavian-speakers.

Recurrent compounds: Kir(k)by-names

ON *kirkja* 'church' + ON *bý(r)* 'farmstead, village'

- Most recurrent compound: 45 examples (5.6% of corpus).

- Even distribution.

- Appellative compound ON **kirkju-bý(r)*? (*v.* Gelling 1988: 234; SSNEM 355).

e.g. **Kirby Bellars LEI** (*Cherchebi* 1086 > *Kirkebi* 1166)

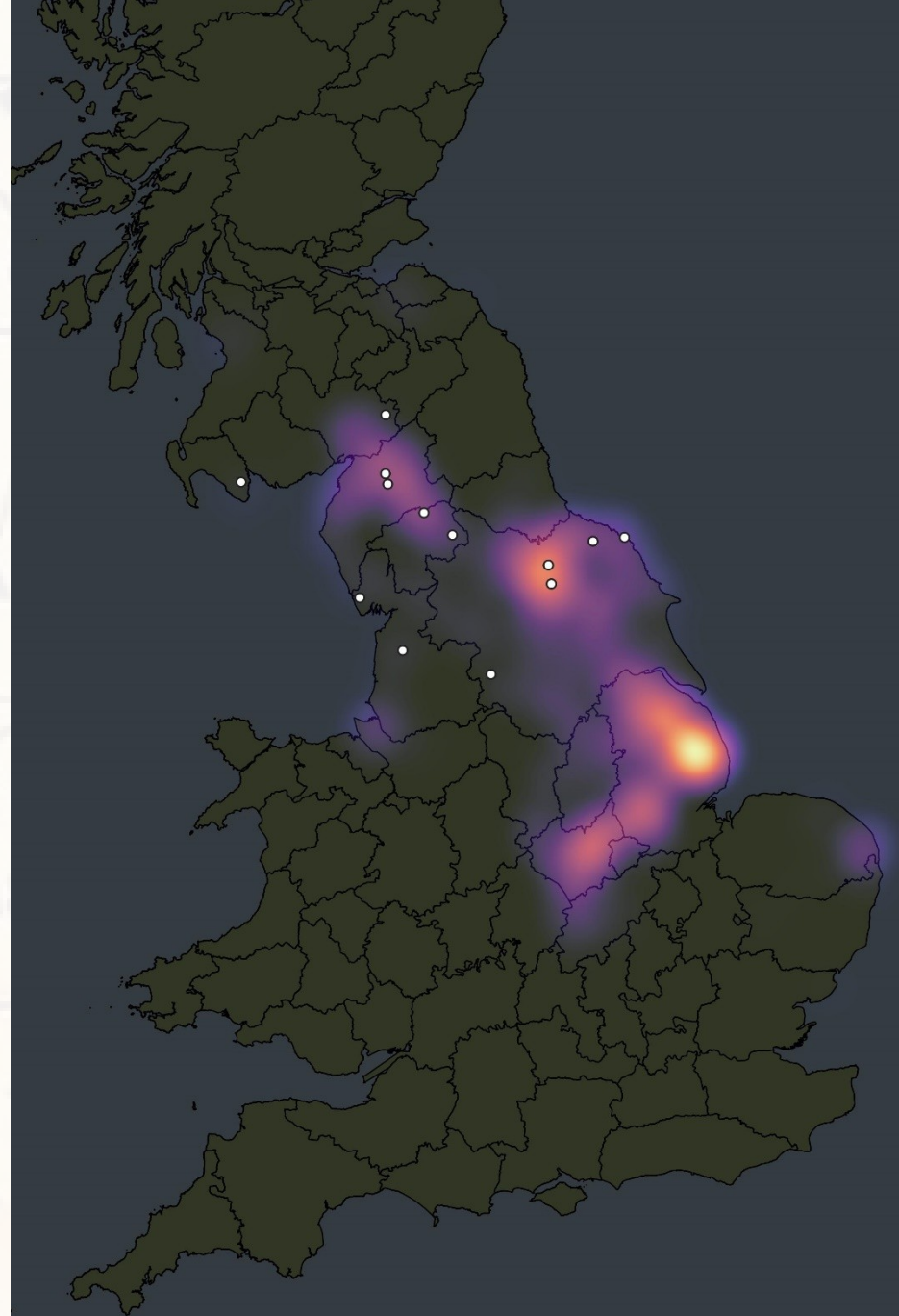**Kirkby (Pontefract) YOR** (*Ki-*, *Kyrkebi* c. 1090)

Recurrent compounds: Saurrby-names

ON *saurr* 'mud, dirt, sour ground' + ON *bý(r)*

- 13 instances (1.6% of corpus).

- Northern distribution.

- Reference to fertile soil?

e.g. **Sowerby YOR** (*Sorebi* 1086 > *Sourby(e)* 13th)

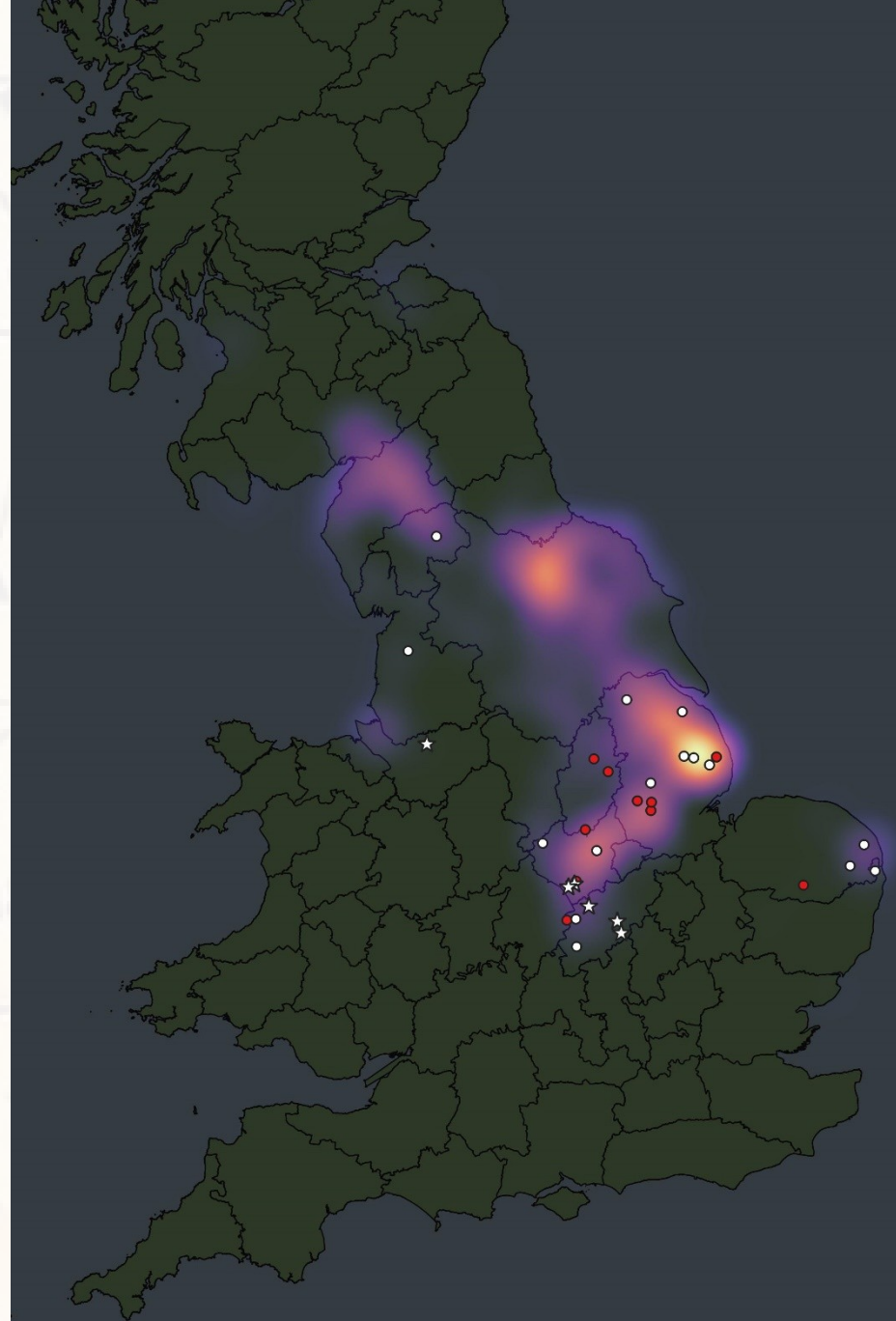**Brough Sowerby WES** (*Sowreby* 1235 > *Sowerby* 1241)

Recurrent compounds: Ashby- and Willoughby-names

OE *æsc/askr* 'ash tree' (or ON pers.n. *Aski*) + *bý(r)*

- 21 instances (2.6% of corpus).

- Predominantly Midlands distribution.

- Important resource.

e.g. **Ashby St Ledgers NTH** (*Ascebi* 1086 > *Assebi* t. Hy 2 > *As(s)heby* 1316)

Ashby Magna LEI (*Essebi* 1086 > *Eissebi* 1203 > *Assheby* 1316)

Linguistic phenomena: interchange with other elements

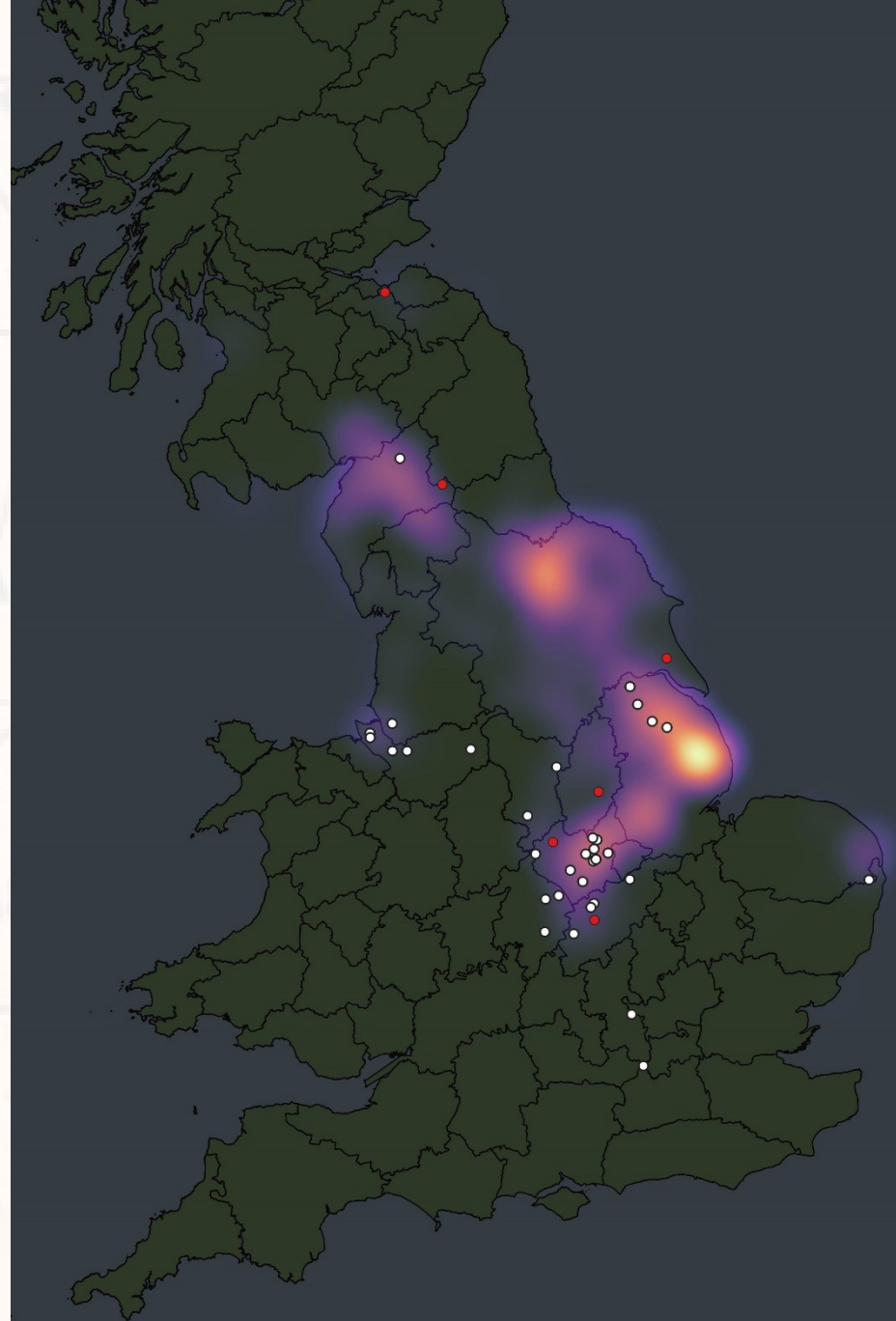ON *bý(r)*/OE *tūn* 'farmstead, village, estate'

- Comparable in meaning.

- Only 6 occurrences (0.7% of corpus).

e.g. **Alston CUM** (*Aldeneby* 1164 > *Aldenestoun c.* 1208)

= ON pers.n. *Halfdan* + ON *bý(r)* < OE *tūn*.

Bleasby NOT (*Blisetune* 958 (14th) > *Bleseby* 13th)

= ON pers.n. *Blesi* or ON *blesi* 'bare spot of ground' + OE *tūn* < ON *bý(r)*

Linguistic phenomena: interchange with other elements

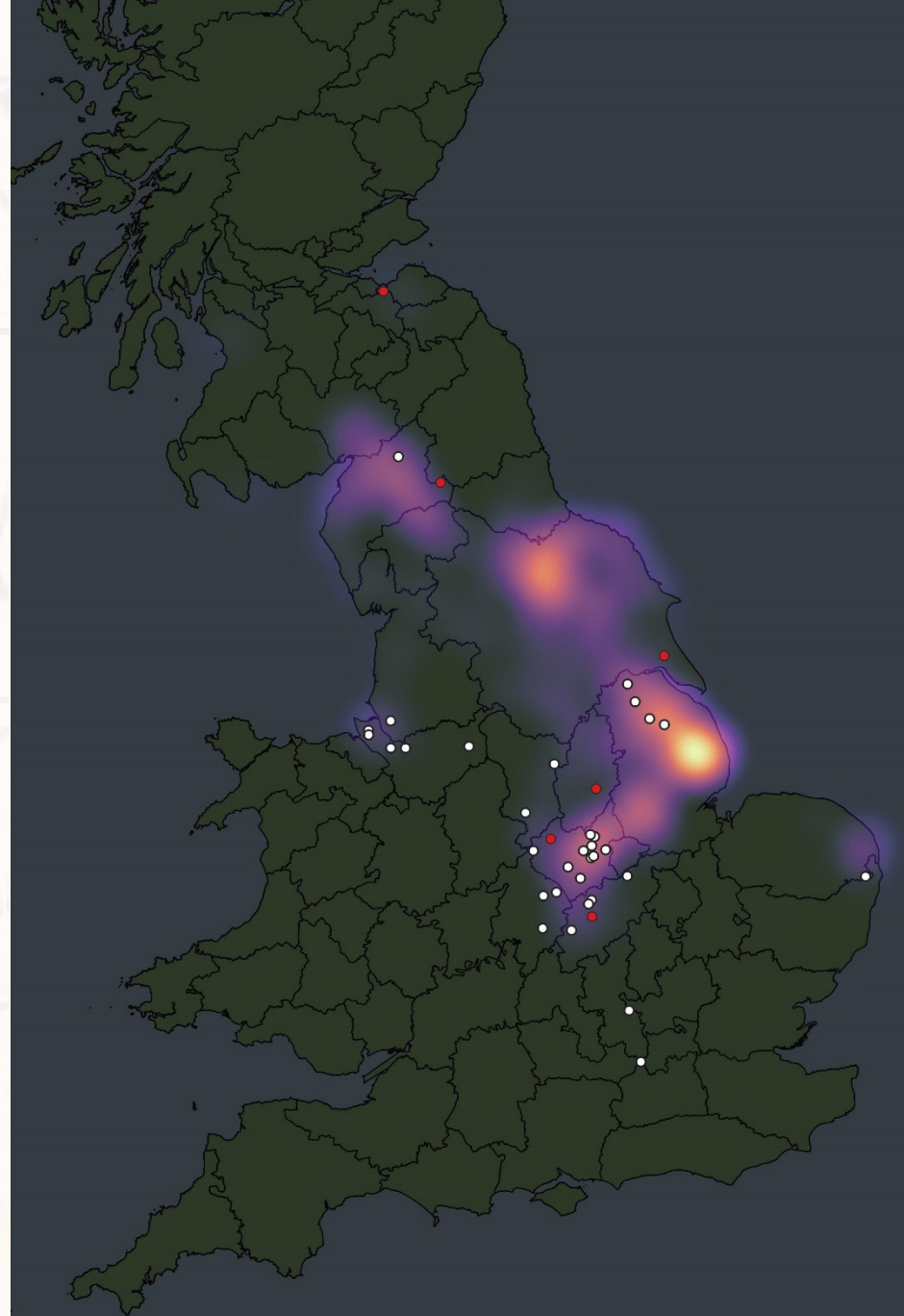ON *bý(r)*/OE *burh* (dative *byrig*) 'fortified place'

- Not comparable in meaning.

- 32 occurrences (4% of corpus).

- Phonological similarity.

e.g. **Aldeby NOR** (*Aldebury* 1086 > *Aldeby* c. 1180)

= Scandinavianised OE p.n. *(E)aldanbyrig* 'the old fortification'

Stainsby DER (*Steinesbi* 1086 > *Stainisberia* 1176 > *Staineresbi* 1185)

ON pers.n. *Steinn* or *Steinnarr* + ON *bý(r)* < OE *burh* (dat. *byrig*)
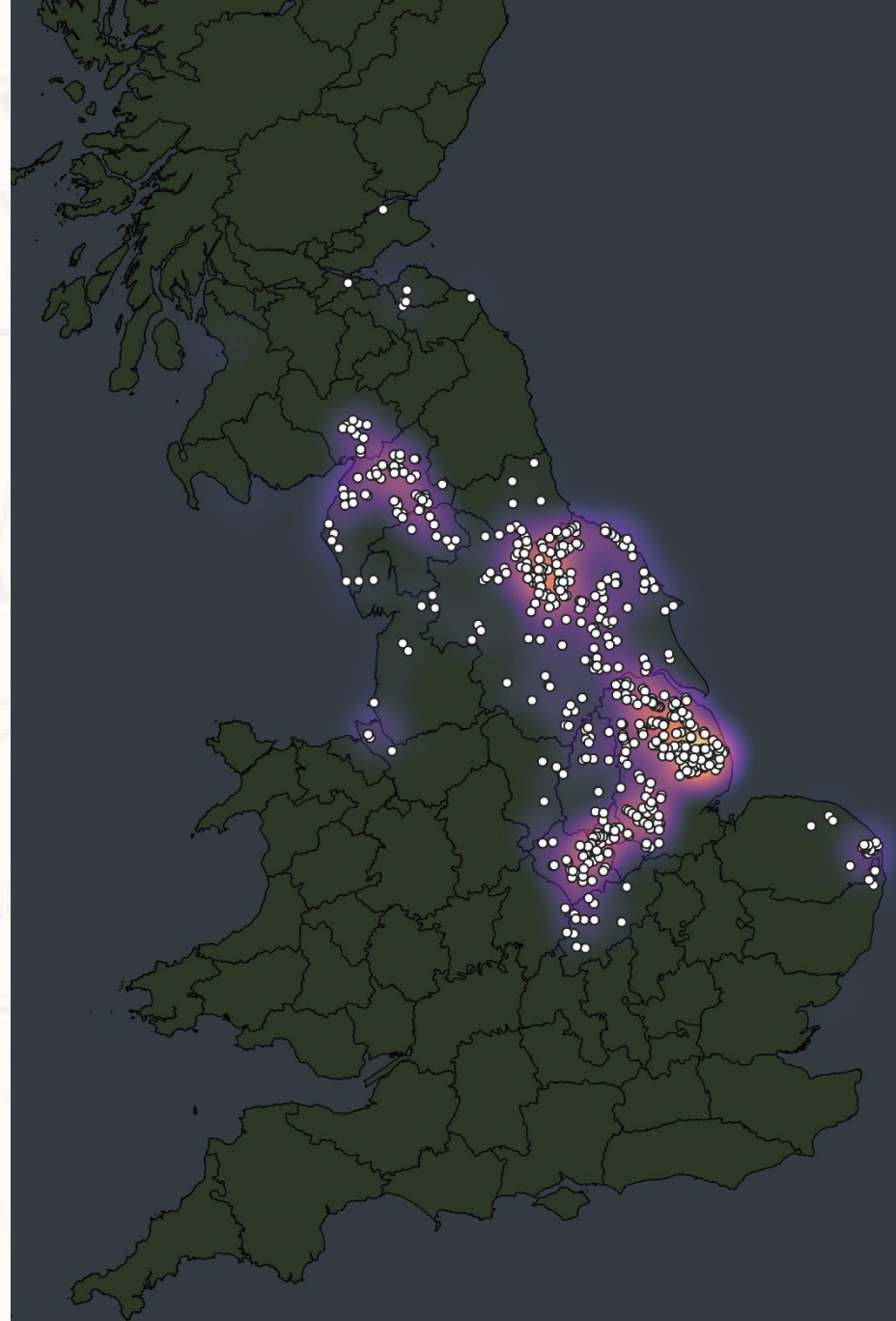
Categories: personal names

<u>550 possible personal name specifics (68.6% of corpus).</u>

1) Identifiable personal names = 212 (26.4% of corpus).

e.g. ON pers.n. *Þórolfr* in Thurlby LIN (*Tvrolfbi, Turoluesbi* 1086)

2) Personal name or common noun/adjective = 236 (29.4% of corpus).

e.g. ON *Gaddr* or ON *gaddr* 'goad, spike' in Gaddesby LEI (*Gadesbi* 1086)
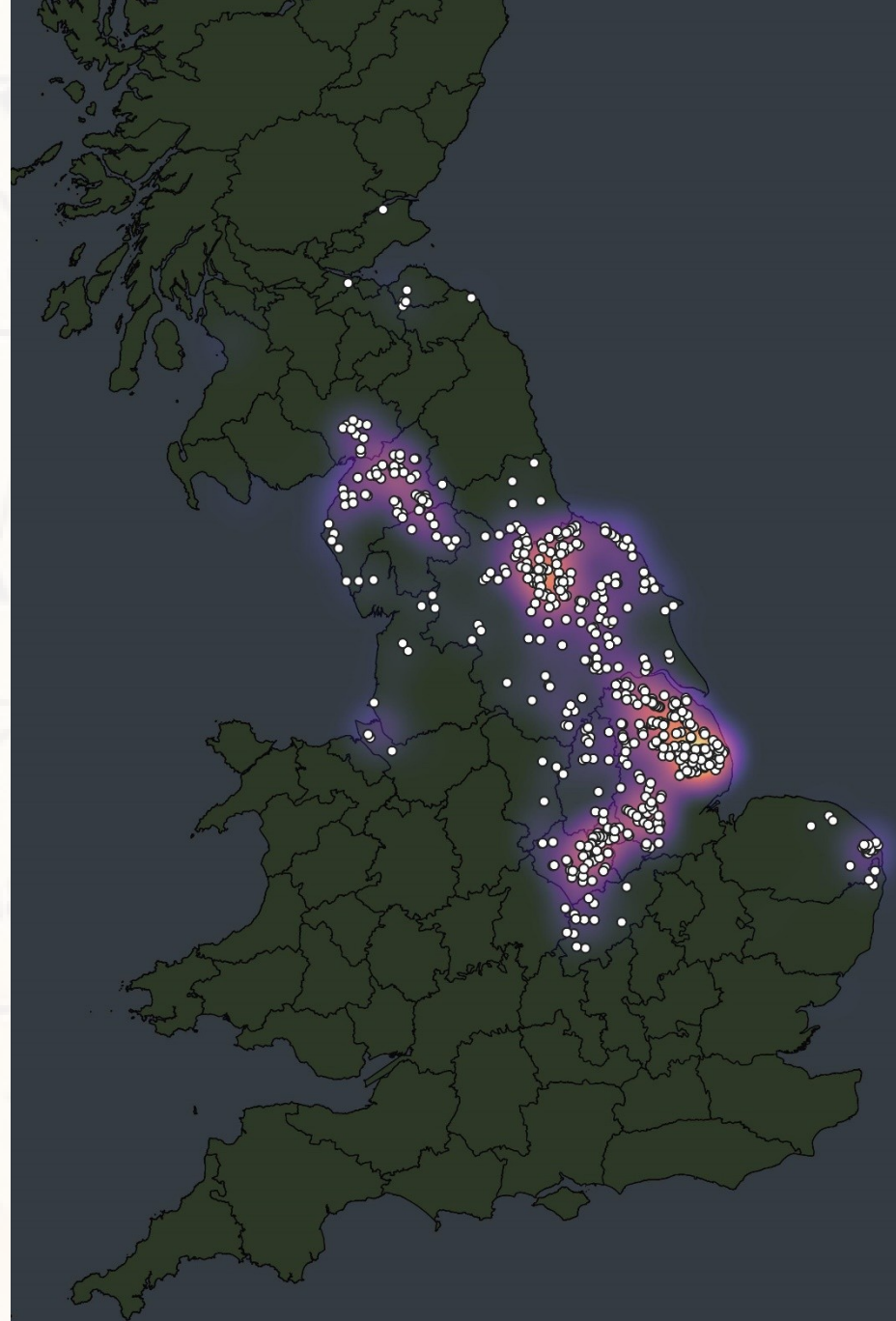
Categories: personal names

<u>550 possible personal name specifics (68.6% of corpus).</u>

3) Personal name or more than one common noun/adjective = 50 (6.2% of corpus).

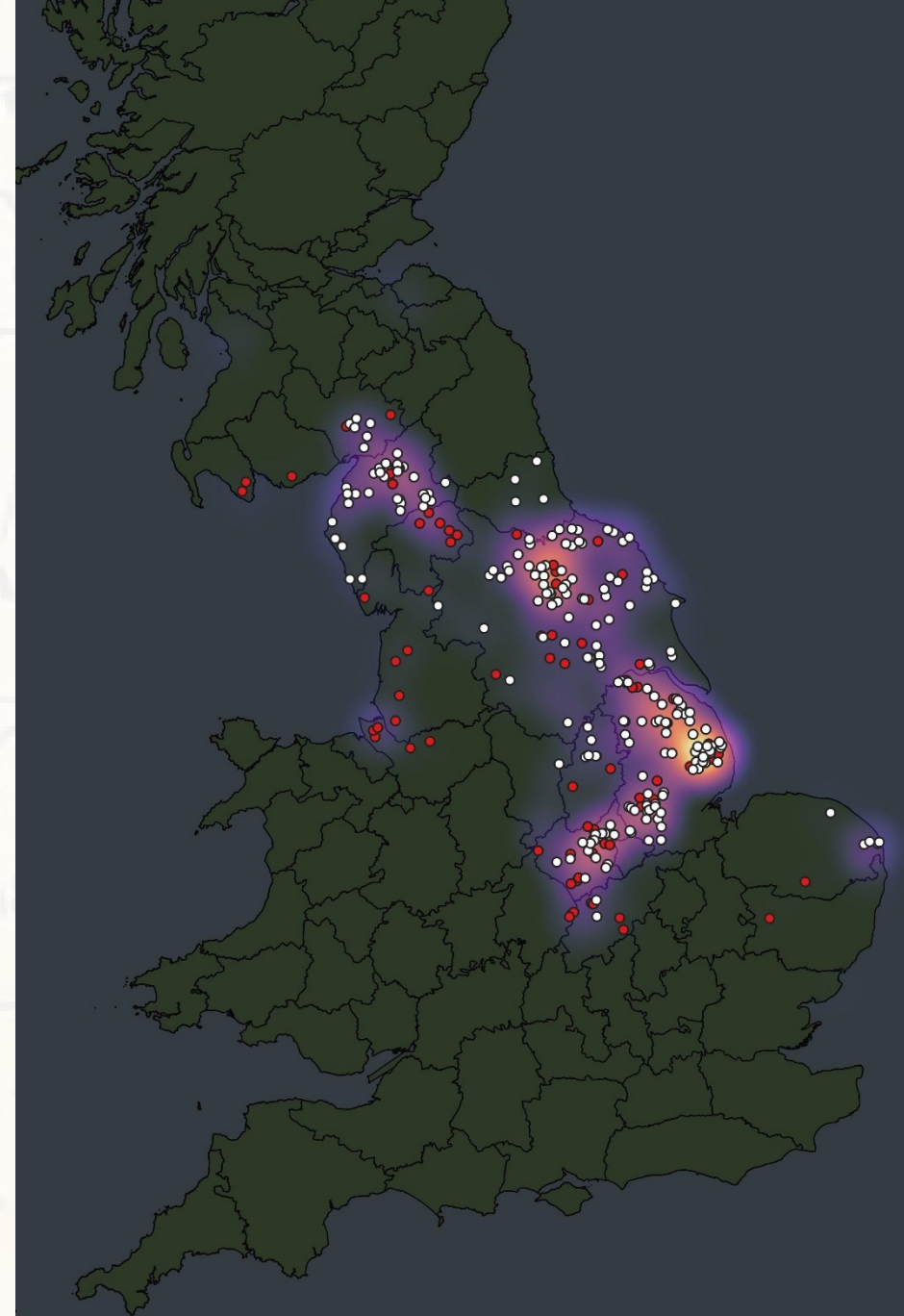e.g. OE/ON pers.ns. *Col(l)a/Kol(l)i* or OE *col* 'coal' Coleby LIN (*Colebi* 1086)

4) Theoretical = 52 (6.5% of corpus).

e.g. ON *Þrykki* in Thrigby NOR (*Trikebei, Trukebei* 1086)

Identifiable personal names

Linguistic Origin	Total	% of corpus
Old Norse	100	12.5
Old Norse/Old English cognate	33	4.1
Old Norse or Old English	16	2
Old English	15	1.9
Old French	11	1.4
Continental Germanic	9	1.1
Common Germanic	9	1.1
Old Norse/Cont. Germanic cognate	9	1.1
Continental (other)	6	0.7
Old Irish	3	0.4
Old Norse/other	1	0.1

Identifiable ON personal names

- 100 instances (12.5% of corpus).

- Predominantly eastern.
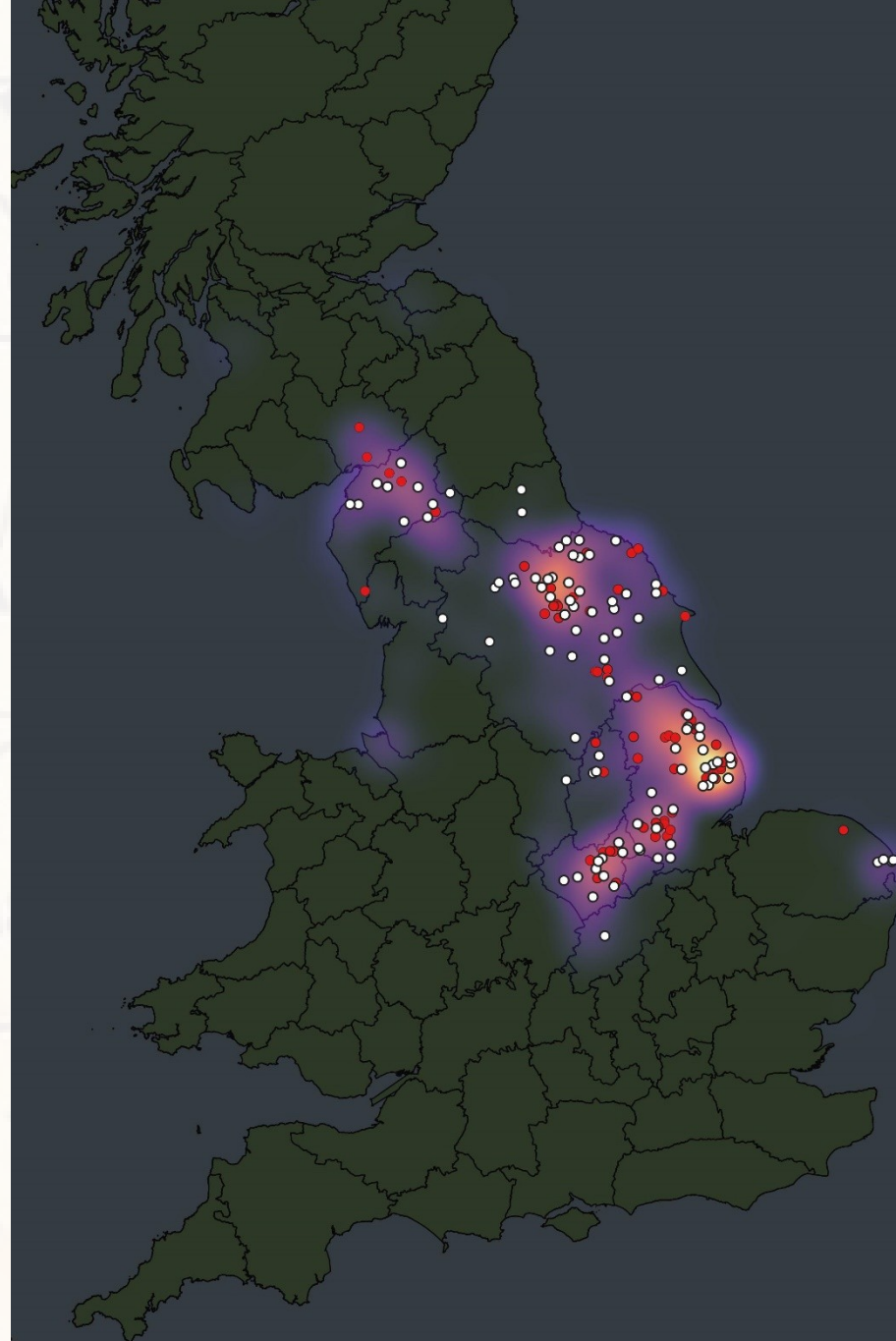
- Dense clusters.

e.g. **Asselby YOR** (*Aschilebi* 1086)

= ON pers.n. *Ásketill*

Hacconby LIN (*Hacunesbi* 1086)

= ON pers.n. *Hákon*

Throxenby YOR (*Trstanebi* [sic] 1167 > *Thurstanby* 1276)

= ON pers.n. *Þórsteinn*
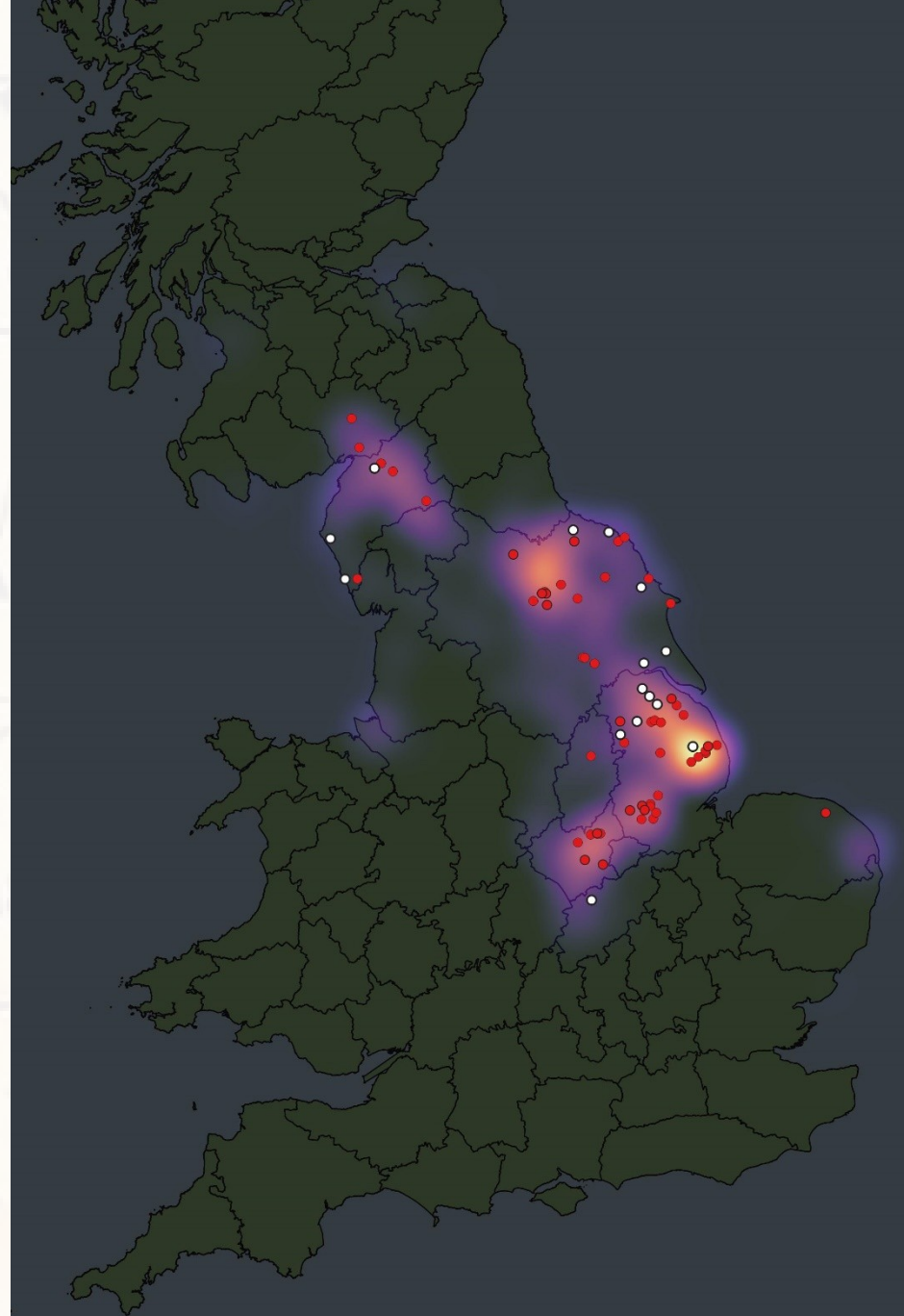
Identifiable OE personal names

- 15 instances (1.9% of corpus).

- Predominantly eastern.

- Somewhat peripheral.

e.g. **Atterby LIN** (*Adredebi* 1185 > *Atheradeby* 1202)

= OE pers.n. *Æðelrǣd*

Ellerby YOR (*Aluuardebi* 1086)

= OE pers.n. *Ælfweard*

Identifiable Cont. personal names

- 26 instances (3.2% of corpus).

- Cumberland: William Rufus invasion in AD 1092.

- Evidence for continued use of ON *bý(r)* in the 11th/12th centuries?

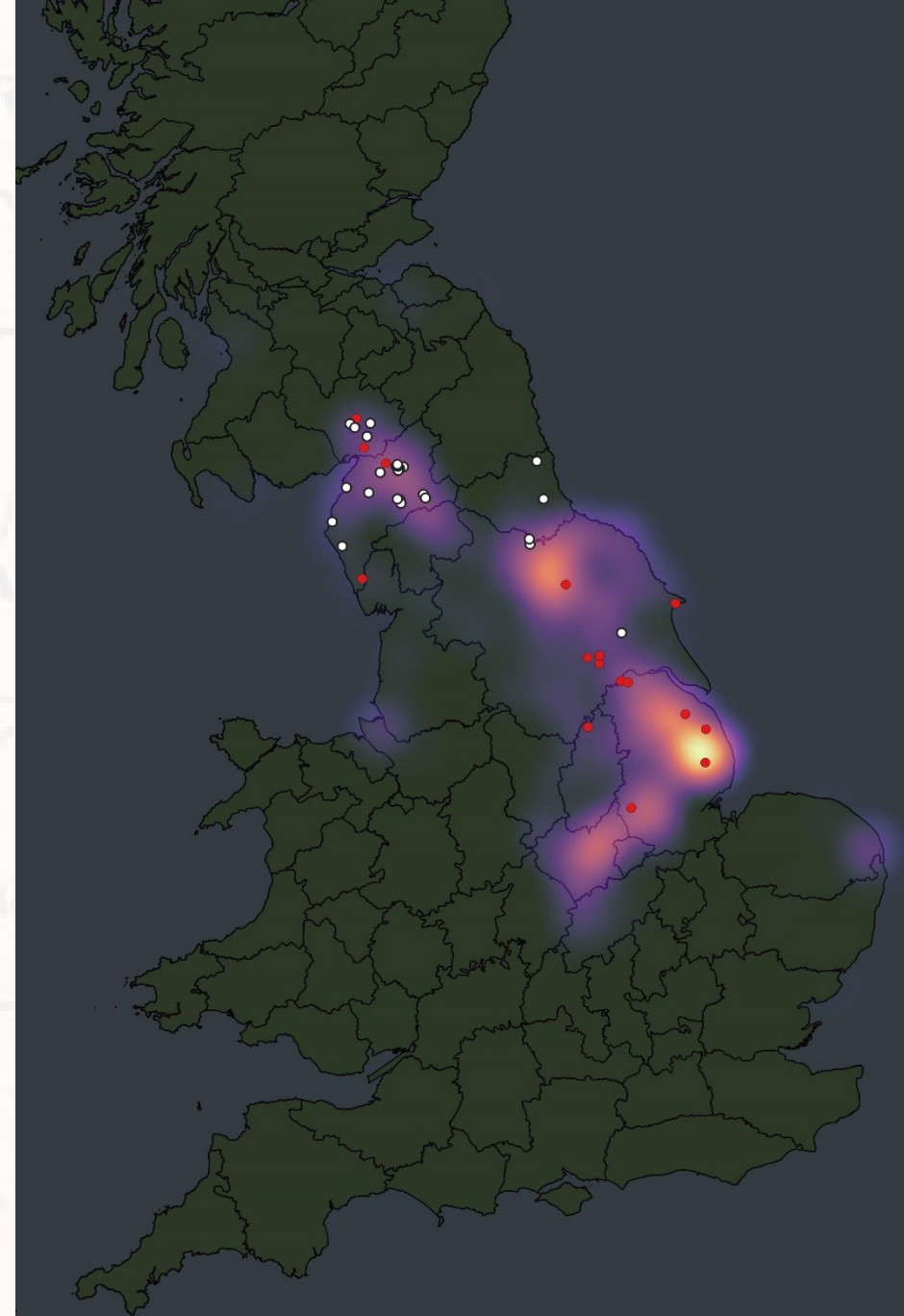e.g. **Jolby YOR** (*Joheleby* 1193-99)

= Bib/OFr pers.n. *Johel*

Moresby CUM (*Moresceby* c. 1160 > *Moricebi* 1195)

= OFr pers.n. *Maurice*

Robberby CUM (*Roberteby* c. 1237)

= CGer pers.n. *Robert*

Summary

- The distribution of Anglo-Scandinavian *bý(r)*-names has 'core' and 'peripheral' areas.

- These cores and peripheries can be visually represented.

- This representation can form the basis of various case-studies.