

PAPERS FROM THE ELEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL FOR
NAME STUDIES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Eleventh Conference of the Council for Name Studies was held at the University of Nottingham from the 6th to the 9th of April 1979 by the kind invitation of Professor Kenneth Cameron. The main topic of the Conference was "Personal Names", for which a programme of papers was organised by Mr. Peter McClure. The speakers were: on April 6th, Miss Cecily Clark, "An Apprenticeship in Applied Anthroponymics: Thoughts on Studying Twelfth-Century English Personal Names"; on April 7th, Professor D. Ellis Evans, "Some Aspects of Welsh Personal Names", Mrs. Veronica Smart, "Moneyers' Names on the Anglo-Saxon Coinage", Prof. H.T.J. Miedema, "Anglo-Frisian Relations and the Map of Breg and (H)reg, especially in English, Dutch, and Frisian Place-Names", Mr. G. Brendan Adams, "Surnames in Northern Ireland", and Prof. W.F.H. Nicolaisen, "Literary Names as Text"; and on April 9th, Prof. Brian Ó Cuív, "Borrowed Elements in the Corpus of Irish Personal Names from Medieval Times", Mr. John Insley, "Regional Variation in Scandinavian Personal Nomenclature in England", and Prof. Torben Kisbye, "English Christian Names in Denmark". During the afternoon of the 9th, Professor Cameron led a coach excursion down the Trent valley to Southwell, an occasion that will be particularly remembered by some Conference members who witnessed Mr. Oliver Padel arrest a runaway horse in full career just outside Southwell Minster gates.

In the following pages will be found most of the conference papers, some of them in revised form. The Editor would like to thank contributors for permission to publish them, and also to acknowledge the helpful assistance of Professor Brian Ó Cuív who, because of extensive delays caused by the postal strike in Ireland, kindly prepared a typescript that was ready for printing.

CLARK'S FIRST THREE LAWS OF APPLIED ANTHROPONYMICS*

From the outset my study of Personal Names - both baptismal names and by-names - has been "Applied", that is, expressly directed at throwing light on social and cultural patterns: originally those of Anglo-Norman England; more recently those of the Danelaw too.¹

My techniques of analysis have evolved in the course of the various projects undertaken. They are mainly comparative, with a range of samples representing specific localities or dates being used to establish geographical or chronological patterns of agreement or contrast. For this, working principles are needed. Mine I should like to put forward as CLARK'S FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD LAWS OF APPLIED ANTHROPONYMICS. Although to me these "Laws" seem wholly consonant with the findings from my studies so far, I shall scarcely be surprised if they are called into question or even comprehensively refuted.

The FIRST LAW is fundamental:-

In any homogeneous community, naming-behaviour will remain constant, except when disturbed by outside influence.

That, I recognise, is a double tautology, since a "homogeneous" community might be defined, either as one where naming-behaviour is both uniform and constant, or else as one free of outside influences. This Law's usefulness lies in alerting us to the likelihood that, if in some way a sample fails to agree with what might have been taken as the majority of analogous cases, then we must investigate the disagreement. In this context "agreement" refers only to naming-behaviour in the widest sense, not to the details of name-vocabulary. Without doubt the bearings of the finer variations in name-choice will in time be made clear;² but at the moment I am concerned with no more than choices between the broadest categories. And the "agreement" itself is envisaged in the broadest terms: in order to discount both the investigator's inaccuracies and the random elements present in all surviving records, variations of less than 5% are disregarded. The terms are thus of the crudest, but for that very reason, I hope, safe.

That FIRST LAW, tautologous as it is, may perhaps be allowed to pass. For practical application, however, one needs its more controversial riders. With the SECOND LAW tautology gives way to a principle at once more original and by the same token more questionable:-

In any community previously characterised by uniform naming-behaviour, reactions to a uniform outside influence will likewise be uniform.

That is, if a single foreign name-influence produces differential reactions, then we must ask whether it was in the influence itself or in the host communities that the springs of discrepancy arose.

As a specimen of a discrepant sample we may take the well-known list of citizens of (King's) Lynn entered in the Pipe Roll for 1166.³

Analysis shows here a percentage of surviving pre-Conquest names unexpectedly high for the date - unexpectedly high, not only in comparison with cosmopolitan cities like Winchester and Canterbury, but also with places like Newark, and, most tellingly, even with other records from Norfolk.⁴ Before concluding that each district of twelfth-century England had its own independent rate of development, we may do well to see whether any other explanation fits this discrepancy. Now, to suggest that Lynn might have been less acquainted than the rest of Norfolk with the new continental name-fashions would hardly square with what we know of lively ports. So, if the outside influences could hardly have differed from those operating in other comparable English boroughs, perhaps we should ask whether the cause of the discrepancy lay either in the community at Lynn, or else in the particular sample. To suggest that the burgesses of Lynn were somehow, as a body, more attached than others to the old ways is hardly plausible, for at this time the town was little more than three generations old and so unlikely to have been a repository of unbroken traditions. What then of the sample? Certainly low social class would at this date explain old-fashioned names; but such an explanation would clash with the likelihood that burgesses taken cognisance of in Pipe Rolls must have been among the more prominent and prosperous of their kind. Perhaps the discrepancy in naming-patterns observable between these burgesses and other samples of the post-Conquest population of Norfolk may be due to a basic difference: a higher average age for the Lynn group. For, whereas most of our name-sources, such as rent-rolls, manorial extents and Feet of Fines, offer cross-sections of the male population ranging from those only just of age for holding land to those in extreme old age, burgesses substantial enough to be listed in a Pipe Roll might well all be men of maturity and weight - City Fathers, men of patriarchal experience and authority.

But some may feel refinements such as this to be altogether misplaced, seeing that the basic premiss of an original uniformity in Old-English naming-behaviour has not yet been proved, nor, a fortiori, the rider alleging uniform response to a uniform Norman influence. I can only say that, so far, my surveys of twelfth-century English name-materials have been leading me to the same general conclusion; from being, first, relieved to find the evidence all tending the same way, and, next, gratified, I then came to see how striking the agreements were, especially for a period when communications were poor and when many people of the humbler sort might never in their whole lives have stirred more than a few miles from their birthplace. Perhaps we should bear in mind that communications were better than might seem at first sight: gentry and higher clergy travelled constantly about, and with considerable trains, bringing glimpses and whispers of new fashions to the peasantry; pilgrims set off, and sometimes returned, while others passed through on their way to or from distant shrines; townspeople saw and heard foreign traders of all sorts, and many of them went on trading voyages of their own; peasants often had carrying-services to perform, so that a man from Ramsey, for instance, might be sent to Cambridge, to Bury, or even to Colchester, no doubt returning full of the novelties seen and heard on the way. Thus, townspeople would have been well up-to-date with fashions, and not even the humblest villagers need have been quite unaware of the great world and of its ways of thinking and behaving. Yet direct and indirect contacts of such kinds explain only how knowledge of current fashions might have seeped even into the remotest hamlets: they by no means explain the similar alacrity and enthusiasm shown throughout the country in the adopting of the new name-fashions, whether in Canterbury or in Newark, on the Glastonbury estates or on those of Ramsey or of

Bury St. Edmunds.⁵ Admittedly, the new fashions did spread a thought faster among townspeople than among peasants; but, by the early thirteenth century, forms originally continental seem universally to have been accounting for between 90% and 95% of the names in current use.

Supposing, however, that the effects of an outside influence show widespread variations, rather than just isolated discrepancies, then the THIRD LAW comes into operation, and this is the really questionable one:-

In any community originally homogeneous, any variations in the effects of an outside influence on naming-behaviour will be proportional to variations in the strength of that influence.

This "Law" is especially relevant to the question of the varying strengths of the Scandinavian influence in different areas of the Danelaw.⁶ For, if pre-Viking England had been basically homogeneous in its name-choices (in respect, that is, of the basic categories of name, not of individual items belonging to the same category), then variations in the incidence of Scandinavian names might more plausibly be attributed to varying densities of settlement, that is, to varying availability of Scandinavian name-models, than to varying responses among the different indigenous communities. Indeed, Mrs Smart's work on Anglo-Saxon moneyers' names has already shown that, for this category at least, the ratio of Scandinavian forms to Old-English ones not only varies immensely, from some 75% at York down to zero at many southern mints, but that it does so in ways apparently corresponding to the original settlement pattern.⁷ Thus far, then, the THIRD LAW seems well founded.

A yawning pit, however, confronts anyone seeking larger and less specialised samples of name-distribution in post-Viking, pre-Conquest England; for records ample enough for statistical analysis hardly survive for any periods less than two or even three centuries later than the original settlement of the Danelaw. Is it unjustifiably rash to try to argue back from the residual fashions of the twelfth century to the demographic patterns of the early tenth and even late ninth centuries? Rash in some degree it must be, because by the twelfth century the original distribution of Scandinavian names in England had been disturbed, indeed distorted, not simply by the passing centuries, but much more by two specific events: first, the Cnutian hegemony of the 1020s, with its influx of Danish magnates; and, next, by the Norman settlement, with its confusing contribution of Franco-Scandinavian names. Nevertheless, it might be argued that these two events, unlike the ninth-century settlement of the Danelaw, would have affected most parts of the country fairly uniformly, increasing the currency of Scandinavian names evenly, and not, therefore, deforming too drastically the comparative distributions. Whether such a point of view is tenable may best be determined by cautious experimentation.

Mrs Smart's findings imply that pre-Cnutian name-distributions reflected fairly closely the Viking settlement-patterns. Whether or not twelfth-century distributions still reflected the varying densities of settlement may be roughly determined by testing some samples against the known variations of settlement. Should these pilot tests prove reassuring, then samples may be taken from areas where the Scandinavian presence has been less precisely assessed, with the aim of finding out how

far personal names can usefully supplement demographic evidence of other kinds.

My findings are so far merely those of a pilot study, and by no means to be taken as definitive. Provisionally, it may be said that, although my figures differ from Mrs Smart's, our distribution-profiles are nonetheless compatible one with the other. South of the Thames, we know, pre-Cnutian Viking settlement would hardly have existed; and, correspondingly, pre-Conquest Winchester shows hardly any names identifiable as Anglo-Scandinavian. In Lincolnshire, on the other hand, settlement is known to have been dense, and there Anglo-Scandinavian names are correspondingly common: a section of the Registrum Antiquissimum dealing with the south of the county shows Scandinavian forms accounting for 70% or more of the insular names for men still current;⁸ and from the early thirteenth century the Lincolnshire Feet of Fines and Assize Rolls similarly show Scandinavian forms running at between 60% and 70%.⁹ At Newark, not far from the Lincolnshire border, and in the heart of the territory once owing allegiance to the Five Boroughs, Scandinavian forms account for some 60% of the insular men's names recorded in the 1170s. Those figures concern frequencies of occurrence; name-stocks tell a similar story, with the insular names current at Newark, for instance, including some 60% of Scandinavian forms. The "southern Danelaw" (Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) was less densely settled than Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, and also spent less long under Viking rule. A document which may, with some licence, be taken to represent the more northerly part of this district is the late-twelfth-century manorial survey from Ramsey (not ideal for the purpose, as it includes estates in Norfolk along with those lying close around the abbey itself, and I have not yet found time to assess the groups separately); this shows only some 30% of the insular names for men as Anglo-Scandinavian - about half the proportion at Newark, and under half that in south Lincolnshire. The Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire materials in Sir Frank Stenton's Northamptonshire Charters¹⁰ show Scandinavian forms as apparently amounting to some 35% of the insular names current for men - a figure perhaps on the high side owing to the difficulty of distinguishing between Anglo- and Franco-Scandinavian forms. For the more southerly part of the district there is the so-called "Northamptonshire" Assize Roll of the early thirteenth century, covering not only the titular county but also much of the southern Danelaw and beyond:¹¹ this shows the Anglo-Scandinavian element among the insular names for men as amounting to no more than 25% at the most. These figures, although no more than the roughest samplings, seem to bear out the hope that even the twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century records of Anglo-Scandinavian names may still bear some relationship to the varying densities of the original Viking settlement, as asserted in my THIRD LAW.

Emboldened by such provisional reassurance, we may attempt a further pilot survey, this time for an area for which evidence about Viking densities is less readily available: East Anglia. For Norfolk, most twelfth-century materials so far examined show the percentage of apparently Anglo-Scandinavian forms among the insular names for men as running at a fairly consistent 35% to 40% - a shade higher, that is, than the consolidated figure for the Ramsey survey including Norfolk manors alongside those in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire. In itself the consistency of the figures seems to confirm the view that variations do not occur at random but as a reflection of cultural influences at work on the population concerned; even the Miracula of St. William show a similar pattern - so perhaps miraculés do form valid cross-sections of local people.¹² Of

course, between believing figures to be significant and devising a formula for their precise interpretation, a great gulf yawns; but it seems tenable to suggest that in Norfolk Viking settlement was much lighter than in Lincolnshire, but in its turn denser than in the South-East Midlands. For Suffolk, the Feet of Fines corresponding to the Norfolk ones already quoted show a lower proportion of Anglo-Scandinavian forms among the current insular names for men: some 25%, as against Norfolk's 35% to 40%; and the figure is confirmed by the late-twelfth-century survey from Bury St. Edmunds, which shows among the peasants an average of some 20% to 25%. And for Essex, the Domesday list of some 270 "king's burgesses" at Colchester shows Scandinavian forms accounting for no more than some 10% of the insular names for men.¹³

Provisional as these findings are, a pattern has emerged from them such as seems (unless the samples have all been wildly unrepresentative) to confirm the hypothesis that, even in twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century records, and in spite of intervening centuries and social upheavals, the percentages of Anglo-Scandinavian names bear some relationship to the original strength of Viking influence in the districts represented, so continuing to bear out my THIRD LAW. It may be wise to speak only of "influence", rather than of "density of settlement", for, closely related as these two phenomena must be, the relationship between them is not easy to calibrate arithmetically. A vast amount remains to be done in this field, first in surveying and analysing the major records, and then in checking what small-scale variations there may have been in Scandinavian influence on medieval English personal names. What I hope may result from these studies is that soon historians seeking evidence of demographic and cultural movements will accept the evidence of personal names as ranking with - or even above - that of field- and other minor place-names.

As a coda, I should like to bring together two major topics, one linguistic, the other cultural: Scandinavian influence in England; and the rôle of women in early medieval society. The findings previously quoted all referred exclusively to men's names: not because these tell the whole story, but precisely because they do not. Some two years ago I published a paper demonstrating that in Anglo-Norman England women's names were approximately a generation slower than men's to show the influence of the continental fashions brought by the invaders; and with the Viking settlement too there seems to have been a differential effect on the naming-patterns of the sexes. Repeatedly one finds that among women's names Scandinavian forms are markedly less frequent than among the men's names in the same documents - and that in spite of the generally better preservation of insular names for women: in the Norfolk Feet of Fines, for instance, Scandinavian forms account for well under 10% of the surviving insular names for women, as against some 40% of those for men. The distribution is not going to be easy to plot, for in all medieval records women's names are scarce, and, if only names of insular types are counted, many samples prove tiny, probably too tiny to be valid. If, nevertheless, investigations do confirm this apparent discrepancy between women's names and men's, then it may be justifiable to claim, as I did concerning the differential effects of post-Conquest influences, that the imbalance in the name-patterns may reflect one in the settlement-patterns, with many Viking men having arrived unaccompanied and married into the English population. This would constitute a further application of my THIRD LAW. The conclusion would seem, a priori, far from unlikely. The Vikings were notoriously polygamous - so much so that "more Danico" is the

accepted term for a certain semi-official sort of concubinage; some, it was said, used to bath and change their linen expressly in order to pursue more successful careers of seduction.¹⁴ They hardly sound likely to have been such devoted husbands as to have insisted on bringing their original Danish wives over to join them on their newly-acquired English estates. An *a priori* supposition is not, however, a fact, but needs as much confirmation as the surviving evidence will allow. In default of more direct evidence, it may be that differential frequencies of Anglo-Scandinavian names for women and for men may, in due course, afford at least an oblique confirmation of the guess that the Viking settlement in England was partly accomplished by men who arrived on their own and then took English wives.

NOTES

*A paper given at the eleventh conference of the Council for Name Studies at Nottingham, 6th April, 1979.

1. For details, see *Nomina*, I (1977), 4-5, 9-10, and *ibid.*, II (1978), 4.
2. Cf., for instance, the paper delivered by John Insley at the same Conference (printed below, pp. 52-60).
3. *The Great Roll of the Pipe for 12 Henry II, A.D. 1165-1166*, Pipe Roll Society IX (London, 1888), 21-9.
4. Materials used for comparison include:- Olof von Feilitzen, 'The Personal Names and Bynames of the Winton Domesday', in M. Biddle (ed.) *et alii*, *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages: an Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday*, Winchester Studies I (Oxford, 1976), pp. 145-91; W. Urry, *Canterbury under the Angevin Kings* (London, 1967); M.W. Barley *et alii* (eds.), *Documents relating to the Manor and Soke of Newark-on-Trent*, Thoroton Society Record Series XVI (Nottingham, 1956), pp. 1-15, and the discussion by Kenneth Cameron on pp. xi-xv; H.W. Saunders (ed. and tr.), *The First Register of Norwich Cathedral Priory*, Norfolk Record Society XI (1939); B. Dodwell (ed.), *The Charters of Norwich Cathedral Priory*, pt. 1, Pipe Roll Society n.s. XL (London, 1974); J.R. West (ed.), *St. Benet of Holme 1020-1210*, 2 vols., Norfolk Record Society II and III (1932); B. Dodwell (ed.), *Feet of Fines for the County of Norfolk for 10 Richard I, 1198-1199, and for 1-4 John, 1199-1202, &c.*, Pipe Roll Society n.s. XXVII (London, 1952); *eadem* (ed.), *Feet of Fines for the County of Norfolk for the Reign of King John, 1201-1215; for the County of Suffolk for the Reign of King John, 1199-1214, &c.*, Pipe Roll Society n.s. XXXII (London, 1958); also A. Jessopp and M.R. James (eds. and trs.), *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich* (Cambridge, 1896).
5. To the materials listed in n. 4 should be added:- J.E. Jackson (ed.), *Liber Henrici de Soliaco, &c.*, Roxburghe Club (London, 1882); W.H. Hart and P.A. Lyons (eds.), *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, 3 vols., Rolls Series (London, 1884-1893), esp. III, 218-315; R.H.C. Davis (ed.), *The Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds*, Camden Third Series LXXXIV (London, 1954).
6. Here I must acknowledge my great debt to Mrs. Dorothy Owen, Keeper of the Archives to Cambridge University, who, by inviting me to contribute

a chapter to the edition which she is preparing for the British Academy of the early records of King's Lynn, drew my attention to the unsettled questions about Scandinavian settlement in East Anglia and encouraged me to explore the possible evidence to be derived from personal names.

In my detailed work on this topic I have relied heavily upon Gillian Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1968).

7. V.J. Smart, 'Moneyers of the late Anglo-Saxon Coinage, 973-1016', *Commentationes de nummis sæculorum ix-xi in Suecia repertis*, pt. 2, *Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar: Antikvariska Serien XIX* (Stockholm, 1968), 191-276.
8. K. Major (ed.), *The Registrum Antiquissimum of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln*, VII (Hereford, 1953), dealing with Parts of Holland and Parts of Kesteven.
9. M.S. Walker (ed.), *Feet of Fines for the County of Lincoln for the Reign of John, 1199-1216*, Pipe Roll Society n.s. XXIX (London, 1954); D.M. Stenton (ed.), *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls, A.D. 1202-1209*, Lincoln Record Society XXII (1926).
10. F.M. Stenton (ed.), *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*, Northamptonshire Record Society IV (Lincoln and London, 1930).
11. D.M. Stenton (ed.), *The Earliest Northamptonshire Assize Rolls, A.D. 1202 and 1203*, Northamptonshire Record Society V (Lincoln and London, 1930).
12. Cf. "the risk that beneficiaries of miracles may not make a representative sample", *Journal of Medieval History*, II (1976), 10.
13. *Domesday Book seu Liber Censualis Willelmi Primi Regis Angliae, &c.*, 4 vols. (London, 1783-1816), II, ff. 104r-106r.
14. See J. Brøndsted (tr. K. Skov), *The Vikings*, Penguin Books (Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 254.

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