PAPERS FROM THE TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL FOR

NAME STUDIES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Twelfth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland was held at the University of Keele from March 21st to March 24th 1980 by the kind invitation of Prof. A.L.F. Rivet, who also organised a programme of papers chiefly concerned with Celtic and Romano-British names. The speakers were: on March 21st, Prof. A.L.F. Rivet, 'Celtic Names and Roman Places'; on March 22nd, Mr G.B. Adams, 'Place-Names from Pre-Celtic Languages in Ireland', Prof. D. Ellis Evans, 'The Significance of Early Celtic Personal Names', Prof. Kenneth Jackson, 'The Twenty-Eight Civitates of Nennius Reconsidered', Dr M.L. Faull, 'Place-Names and the Kingdom of Elmet'; and on March 23rd, Mrs Joan Stevens,'Jersey Place-Names', Mrs Deirdre Flanagan, 'Place-Names in Early Irish Documentation: Structure and Composition', Prof. Colin Smith, 'The Survival of Romano-British Toponymy', and Prof. Kenneth Cameron, 'The Meaning and Significance of Old English Walh in English Place-Names'. During the afternoon of the 22nd, Prof. Rivet led a coach excursion into the Staffordshire-Cheshire Peak District, 'in the steps of Gawain', including a visit to one of the most remarkable of all black-and-white timbered houses, Little Moreton Hall.

In the following pages will be found six of the conference papers, either in summary or in revised form, and the Editor would like to thank the contributors for permission to publish them. Prof. Cameron's paper has already been published in the Journal of the English Place-Name Society, 12 (1979-80).

CELTIC NAMES AND ROMAN PLACES*

The intention is to explore the implications of Romano-British place-names like Durobrivae (Water Newton) where, although the name is Celtic, the elements must refer to the early Roman fort and the Roman bridge over the river Nene. This raises the whole question of what effect conquest by an external power has on the place-names of a country. Some norms may be established by considering what happened elsewhere in both the ancient and the modern world.

In the ancient world Greek colonisation, though not truly analogous to Roman expansion, produced names which, while apparently Greek, turn out to be hellenisations of native names (e.g., in southern Gaul, Nicaea, Antipolis, Olbia, Taurois, Citharista, as interpreted by Dauzat and Benoit); later, the imperialism of Alexander and his successors spattered the whole of the Near East with the personal names of themselves and their consorts (Alexandria, Berenice etc.) without adapting them to local circumstances.

In the modern world the best example is provided by East Africa, where imperial names were conferred on major natural features (Lake Victoria etc.: this was something which the Romans never did), while early forts in Uganda and Kenya took the personal names of administrators or commanders (though only three of them kept these names throughout the whole period of British colonial rule -- which was, by Roman standards, very brief indeed); and a useful analogy for a Roman road is provided by the Kenya and Uganda Railway, where stations bear both personal names (e.g. Sultan Hamud, commemorating a visit by the Sultan of Zanzibar while the line was being built) and constructional names (e.g. Darajani = "At the bridge") and the latter tend to be in the vernacular (Kiswahili) rather than in English. The "Alexander effect" is best illustrated in the modern world by the U.S.S.R., and two points need to be noted here: (a), many revolutionary names replaced names especially evocative of the old order (e.g. Stalingrad replaced Tsaritsyn and Sverdlovsk replaced Ekaterinburg); and (b), unlike the Alexandrian examples, here names were adapted to suit local languages (e.g. in Central Asia, Leninakan, not Leningrad).

In the Roman Empire itself a typical mix of names is again provided by southern Gaul -- native names (Ligurian and Celtic), Latinisations of them, the addition of Latin epithets (e.g. Telo Martius, Toulon) and personal names of consuls and governors applied to new Roman constructions (e.g. Fossae Marianae for Marius's canal and then the town of Fos). In northern Gaul and Britain some constructional Latin names still occur (Ad Pontem etc.), but the personal names are, of course, exclusively imperial (Caesaro-, Augusto- etc.). On the slight evidence available it is suggested that these may, as in the U.S.S.R., have replaced names of high prestige in the old order (e.g. Augustonemetum, "the shrine of Augustus", replacing Celtic Nemossos at Clermont Ferrand). Apart from a few cases of the straight Augusta, the imperial names are compounded with Celtic elements, -bona, -magus, -ritum, and especially -dunum and -durum, both of which should imply fortification. Since few towns succeeded hill-forts and since only Augustodunum (Autun) had town walls in the Augustan period, it seems likely that many of these represent early Roman forts, with the Caesaro- names possibly referring to the hiberna of Julius Caesar. This may even be true of Caesaromagus (Chelmsford) in Britain, where the only other imperial name earlier than the fourth century (when Londinium became Augusta) is Pons Aelii (Newcastle), which reflects the visit of Hadrian.

When compounded with imperial names -dunum and -durum always appear
as the second element and this is universally true of -dunum in classical
times when otherwise compounded.   Besides -durum, however, we also have
Duro- occurring as the first element.   This is normal in Britain (where
Lactodurum, Towcester, is the only known example of the other form);   and
on the Continent, with only two outlying examples, Duro- names are con-
centrated between the Marne and the sea.   This suggests that the form is a
specifically Belgic development and this may have important implications for
Britain.

Assuming that some at least of these fortification names describe early
Roman forts (later to be transferred to their successor towns), two questions
arise: first, what were the forts called by the Romans when they were
operative, and second, how did they acquire these secondary names?   The
answer suggested for the first question is that they were known by the name
of the unit in garrison, since to apply the name of a commander would have
been lèse majesté in imperial times and there is evidence elsewhere, notably
on the upper Danube, of unit names for forts persisting.   As for the second
question, the name Durobrivae could be the result of an enquiry when a unit
finally abandoned a fort ("We can't go on calling this Cohors III Nerviorum:
what is its proper name?"   "We call it the fort by the bridge").

While some Duro- and -dunum names (e.g. Camulodunum) are obviously of
pre-Roman origin, the full paper of which this is a summary concludes by
considering some two dozen names which may be considered secondary in this
sense, including Durocornovium (Wanborough, where the second element might
even reflect garrisoning by the Cohors I Cornoviorum) and a few which may
refer to Roman activity other than fortification.   It is suggested that
these conclusions have both toponymical and cultural implications.

NOTE

A.L.F. RIVET

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PLACE-NAMES AND THE KINGDOM OF ELMET*

Place-names constitute almost the entire corpus of evidence for the
nature of the kingdom of Elmet as the literary material is very slight.
The only source which proves its existence as a kingdom is the Historia
Brittonum, ch. 63, which records that Edwin occupied Elmet and expelled
Ceretic, king of that region, presumably soon after Edwin became king of
Northumbria in 617.   Even after its incorporation into Northumbria, Elmet
appears to have retained a separate regional identity for some considerable
time, to judge from twelfth- and thirteenth-century references to it as a
provincia, and from its use as a personal-name affix, de Elmet, borne by
people living in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and the North and East Ridings
of Yorkshire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The place-name evidence is relevant to identifying both the boundaries
of Elmet and sites within the kingdom.   The general area of Elmet is
indicated by a concentration of surviving Celtic place-names, which extend
north-westwards into Craven, which may also have been an unrecorded British
kingdom.   The eastern boundary of Elmet is defined by a line of some nine
vills, whose names are recorded with the affix '-in Elmet' in the period
after the Norman Conquest.   The distribution of these vills coincides with
that of presumed early Anglo-Saxon place-names in hām and of seventh-century
pagan Anglo-Saxon burials, and seems to be related to a system of eastward-
facing defensive dykes, which probably date to the Dark Ages.   This line
follows the narrow Magnesian Limestone belt (approximately the course of
the modern A1), which probably formed the eastern boundary of Elmet in the
early seventh century at the time when the kingdom may have been coming
under threat from Æthelfrith.   The Magnesian Limestone zone in Yorkshire
appears to have been cleared from at least as early as the Iron Age, in
contrast to the area of Elmet to the west, whose heavily wooded nature is
evidenced by the distribution of Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse place-names
formed with elements referring to woodland, and by Bede's reference to
the monastery of Abbot Thrythwulf as being in silua Elmete.

The southern boundary of the kingdom was probably formed in part by
a tributary of the Don, the river Sheaf, whose name comes from OE scēaδ
'boundary'.   The boundary probably continued along the line later followed
by the boundary between Northumbria and Mercia and subsequently between the
West Riding of Yorkshire and Derbyshire.   Dore, which the Anglo-Saxon
Chronicle entries for 830 and 942 show was on the northern boundary of
Mercia, is formed from OE duru 'door, gate', referring to the entry into
Northumbria and probably also earlier into Elmet.   The southernmost of the
group of eccles names within Elmet (see further below) are located in this
southern corner of the kingdom, while the promontary fort at Carl Wark near
Hathersage, if, as seems likely, this is indeed Dark Age in date, may also
relate to this southern boundary.

The north-western boundary of Elmet must simultaneously have been the
south-eastern boundary of Craven, whose territory is much more clearly
defined than is that of Elmet.   Craven, the area which is now generally
referred to as the Dales, was thought of as a distinct region of that name
until at least the mid-seventeenth century.   The area which constituted
Craven may be reconstructed by the plotting of the vills listed in Domesday
Book as lying in the wapentake of Cravescire, of the fifty-three vills whose
names are recorded in the Middle Ages with the affix '-in Craven', of the
thirty places recorded in the sixteenth-century Fountains Abbey lease book