

Short Introduction series can be got from the list of titles, from Archaeology to Wittgenstein by way of Buddhism, Dinosaurs and International Relations. Although relating only generally to name studies, this little book is thought-challenging on the diversity of language systems world-wide, and is a fascinating read for anyone interested in language but daunted by the jargon and algebra of modern linguistics.

Many people are attracted to our Society through family history and genealogy, and this is the field of RICHARD EALES and SHAUN TYAS (eds), *Family and Dynasty in Late Mediaeval England*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies IX, Shaun Tyas: Donington 2003, 237 pp, £35. ISBN 1900289547, though prospective readers should be aware that this is a multi-author volume of essays, rather than a consecutive narrative. Some of the essays focus on individual families, Waytes, Mortimers, Percys and Beauforts, but the general theme is the place of the family in social and political history. Onomasts will endorse the caveat in Gudrun Tscherpel's exposition of the propaganda value of family historiography: 'The most popular way of finding one's family origins was the etymological derivation of the family name, and since there existed so many possibilities of writing that name...it was not difficult to find a town in Normandy with a similar name, and from there, of course, a family must originally have come, very likely together with the Conqueror'. These essays offer unusual insights and subtleties to the context in which family history ought to be studied.

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