

## Peter Wilkinson (1925–2003)

Peter was well known to members who attended the Society's conferences. They will remember in particular the colourful distribution maps of surnames that he brought along in his later years, showing the different spread of the Wilkinsons compared with the Williamsons or the Wilsons or the striking geographical distributions of names derived from the same occupation, such as Walker, Fuller or Tooker. These maps came from of a long interest in genealogy, a subject that he taught in a succession of extramural classes, and from his prominent role in an informal group at the University of Sheffield who are working on the history of local surnames.

Many members who met him at conferences will not have realised that during his working life Peter was a geologist. He joined the Geology Department at the University of Sheffield in 1946 and retired as senior lecturer in 1990. The highlights of his career were the mapping of Kilimanjaro and later Meru. He was a man with very wide interests, whose library contained books from virtually every discipline. He was something of an institution in the Sheffield music scene, where the Lindsay String Quartet recently dedicated a performance to his memory. Our sympathies go to his wife Eva, who usually accompanied him at the Society's meetings.

DAVID HEY

## REVIEWS

VICTOR WATTS (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004. lxiv + 713 pp. £175, \$250. (ISBN 0 521 36209 1)

Intended as a replacement for Eilert Ekwall's *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (4th edn 1960), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* is a major new reference work based on the collections of the English Place-Name Society (EPNS). It differs significantly in scope from its predecessor, since whereas Ekwall was concerned mainly with names recorded before about 1500, the focus here is on those in contemporary use, covering names in England which appear in the 1983 edition of the *Ordnance Survey Road Atlas of Great Britain*. Although it is disappointing that this results in the exclusion of many names of particular historical or linguistic interest, the Preface makes a strong case for the importance of recent toponymy such as the names given to new towns. Entries range in length from a couple of lines to a column or more, and typically include the modern form of the place-name, location, translation, selection of historical spellings, etymology, discussion, pronunciation (where available from an EPNS volume), and references to scholarly publications. Preliminary material comprises a nine-page Preface by the editor, a Publishers' note, a guide to the format of entries, a list of abbreviations, a glossary of common elements, twelve distribution maps and a bibliography.

The dictionary has been long in the making, being first mooted at the spring conference of this Society (then the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland) in 1985. As explained in the Preface, it began as a collaborative venture by Victor Watts, Oliver Padel and Alexander Rumble; and although the latter two subsequently withdrew from the editorial team, the volume also benefits from the involvement of John Insley as Assistant Editor and Margaret Gelling as Advisory Editor. While many of the entries are based on published scholarship, others include historical spellings from unpublished collections held by EPNS, making available material previously inaccessible to scholars. Entries for Hampshire place-names, for instance, are informed by spellings from Gover's unpublished typescript of 1958, entries for Staffordshire place-names draw on Horovitz's manuscript collection as well as an unpublished typescript for the Survey of the place-names of Staffordshire, and use is also made of material from doctoral theses such as those by Cox (Leicestershire and Rutland) and Cullen (Kent).

Many place-name etymologies are of course uncertain, and the best entries give a summary of the alternative possibilities, with references to the scholarly literature where the arguments are presented in detail. Into this category fall entries for place-names such as Bridford, Hexham and Stallingborough, each of which has been the subject of detailed re-examination in recent years. Not all are equally helpful, however. Some entries offer interpretations which supersede those in the works cited, as with the translation of Grazeley as 'Wolf or badger wallowing place'. The meaning 'wolf' was proposed during the 1990s, but all the references are to older publications giving the meaning 'badger'. The entry for Wellesbourne appears to draw on an article by Mills in *Names, Places and People. An Onomastic Miscellany in Memory of John McNeal Dodgson* (1997), but the only citations are to the EPNS Survey for Warwickshire and Smith's *English Place-Name Elements* vol. 2 p. 249 (in fact Wellesbourne appears on pp. 236 and 243, not 249). In other instances, the onus is placed on the reader to follow up references to secondary literature. The lengthy entry for London offers no etymology but concludes by referring the reader to Coates' article in *Transactions of the Philological Society* 96 (1998) for 'a recent attempt to explain the name'. No hint is given as to the nature of this explanation, and the journal is unlikely to be accessible to a non-academic readership. The fact that the article has been reprinted in Coates and Breeze's *Celtic Voices English Places* is not mentioned. Conversely, the entry for Trunch concludes, 'For a different W[elsh] etymology see now *Celtic Voices* 173', again without revealing the nature of the etymology, and without providing a reference to the original publication in *Norfolk Archaeology* 43 (2000). There is also sometimes a tendency to prioritize work by the editors themselves over that of other scholars. The entry for Harby cites an article by Insley in response to one by the present reviewer in *Notes and Queries* 240 (1995), but omits to cite the original *Notes and Queries* piece, while the entry for Thoresway includes Insley's suggested interpretation 'the (pagan) shrine of Thor' without acknowledging the counter-arguments put forward by Cox in *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994). This is not good practice.

A disconcerting number of etymologies are not in line with current scholarship. Even within the Preface, the discussion of compound names on p. ix refers to Keysoe and Cassio 'from Old English *cæg* "a key", used topographically of a hill shaped in some way reminiscent of a key'. A more plausible interpretation of OE *cæg* as 'stone' has been available since 1962, and is acknowledged under the entry for Keysoe though not for Cassiobury Park. The entry for Badbury repeats the long-discredited suggestion that the

first element 'may have been the name of some legendary hero' without mentioning the possibility of a derivation from an OE adjective *\*badde* proposed by Coates in *NOWELE* 11 (1988). The entry for Harbury follows the 1936 EPNS Survey for Warwickshire by translating as 'Hereburg's fortified place', although formations of this type, combining a feminine personal name with OE *burh*, are now considered more likely to refer to manor houses. The entry for Leatherhead dismisses Coates' suggestion of a Celtic compound meaning 'grey or brown ford' as 'unnecessary', preferring the traditional derivation from an Old English compound meaning 'riding path' which most present-day scholars would find difficult to justify. The omission of the asterisk from the putative second element OE *\*rida*, *-e* obscures the fact that it is not on independent record. Entries for Poughill (Cornwall and Devon) do not take into account the arguments against a derivation from a personal name adduced by Gelling in her discussion of Poughley in the EPNS Survey for Shropshire; while the entry for Runwell gives a range of possibilities for the first element despite the fact that a derivation from OE *rūn* 'secret, council' is now widely accepted. The only citation is the 1935 EPNS Survey for Essex, and the existence of a doublet Rumwell in Somerset is not mentioned, presumably because the latter name does not meet the selection criteria for inclusion within the *Dictionary*. This is one of many instances where the focus on contemporary toponymy leads to the omission of important comparative material.

On a more positive note, this focus goes alongside a decision to move away from the much-criticised tradition in English place-name studies of citing etyma in Old English form for coinages more likely to date from the Middle or Early Modern periods. Etymologies are here attributed to later stages of English where appropriate, so that the first element of Lake Bank in Lincolnshire, first recorded in 1631, is identified as Mod dial. *lade* 'a fenland drainage channel' rather than as OE *lād*, and the first element of Wainscott in Kent, first recorded in 1819, as ModE *wain* 'wagon' rather than as OE *wægn*. The dating of place-names is notoriously problematic, and in some instances one may feel that despite a name being recorded late, the evidence is in favour of a significantly earlier date of coinage. Nonetheless, the principle is a good one, and will be welcomed by many scholars.

In a fast-moving discipline such as onomastics, no dictionary can be completely up-to-date, and it is inevitable that work published when the present volume was at an advanced stage of preparation has had to be omitted. It is difficult to work out where the cut-off point falls. The inclusion of two items dating from 2001 within the list of abbreviated sources (one of them by

Watts himself) gives a slightly misleading impression, since important earlier material is omitted, with coverage of county volumes of the English Place-Name Survey and of the EPNS *Journal* extending only to about 1998, and coverage of other journals such as *Nomina* to about 1997. Particularly regrettable is the exclusion of Gelling and Cole's *The Landscape of Place-Names*, published in 2000 and already the standard reference for topographical place-name vocabulary. More puzzling is the partial coverage of Coates and Breeze's *Celtic Voices English Places*, published in the same year and offering revised etymologies for a number of place-names within the *Cambridge Dictionary*. Here some have been included but not others, so that for instance the *Celtic Voices* interpretations are included for Rollright but not for Carburton, Culm, Kinder, or Wawne. Still more oddly, the entry for Lindisfarne omits the *Celtic Voices* interpretation but concludes 'See further Celtic Voices 241–59', while the entry for Gnosall supports the interpretation proposed by Horovitz and Coates in *Celtic Voices* but appears to attribute it to Horovitz's manuscript collection of Staffordshire place-names rather than to the published paper. Since *Celtic Voices* is included within the list of sources, it would seem reasonable to expect more than this haphazard coverage.

Equally puzzling is the irregular use of *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names*, a new dictionary of place-name terms intended to replace Smith's *English Place-Name Elements (EPNE)* of 1956. The first fascicle (*A-Box*) appeared in 1997 and is included in the list of sources as well as being cited in a number of the relevant entries. However, some entries still cite *EPNE* (e.g. Barnstaple, Belford, Belstead), others cite both *EPNE* and *Vocabulary* (e.g. Beltoft, Belton), and some cite neither. Belstone falls into the latter category, although both *EPNE* and *Vocabulary* support the meaning 'bell-shaped stone' which is here given only equal weighting with the highly implausible alternative that the stone 'made a noise like a bell'! In general, inadequate guidance is provided regarding the meaning of place-name elements from Old English and other languages. They are not always translated within individual entries, and the 'Glossary of most frequently used elements' on pp. xlii–xlix covers a mere thirty-six terms. Although the Preface explains that 'constant reference is made to Smith's work for further information' (p. xiv), not all readers can be expected to have *EPNE* to hand, and it is in any case scarcely acceptable to rely on second-hand references to a book nearly half a century old in an area where so many advances have been made in recent years.

So much place-name scholarship is published in local history journals that it will always be difficult to cover everything, but it is surprising to find that

the editors have overlooked corrected spellings and revised etymologies from *addenda* and *corrigenda* to the EPNS Survey itself. OE *dunnoc* 'hedge-sparrow' is treated as an attested form under Dunkeswell and Dunnockshaw, presumably on the authority of *EPNE*, although Smith's head-form was corrected to *\*dunnoc* in *EPNS Journal* 1 (1968–69). The entry for Melksham notes the association with OE *meoluc* 'milk' suggested in the 1939 EPNS Survey for Wiltshire, but not the more plausible derivation from a personal name *Melc* put forward in an *addendum* the following year. So too the entry for Flaxton reproduces the Domesday Book spellings from the 1928 EPNS Survey for the North Riding of Yorkshire rather than the corrected forms published in *EPNS Journal* 3 (1970–71). This is all the more difficult to account for since the corrected spellings also appear in Fellows Jensen's *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire*, which is cited within the entry. Also reproduced from the North Riding Survey are the spellings *Rosebi* for Roxby in Thornton Dale and *Wergelesbi* for Warlaby, both of which were deleted in subsequent *corrigenda*, while the erroneous form *Chi(r)chebi* is given under Kirby Wiske instead of the corrected form *Chirchebi*. Other counties have also fared badly: for instance, the entry for Exmouth includes an early spelling *Examuða* which appeared in the 1931 EPNS Survey for Devon but was later deleted on the grounds that the correct reading is *Axamuða*, referring to Axmouth. Bizarrely, even the inclusion of references to *addenda* is no guarantee that they have actually been taken into account. The entry for Barcheston follows the 1936 EPNS Survey for Warwickshire by giving a derivation from a personal name OE *Beaduric*, despite citing a *corrigendum* where the form of the personal name was emended to *\*Bedric*. It is difficult to know what to make of this.

There is a plethora of minor but glaring inconsistencies. As regards the presentation of references, journal volume numbers fluctuate between arabic numerals, upper case Roman numerals, and lower case Roman numerals, inclusive dates are variously presented in the form '1892–99' or '1953–4', some but not all citations at the end of individual entries are ordered chronologically; and some give inclusive page numbers for journal articles while others give the first page number only, the first page number followed by 'ff', or a single page number from within the article. References to books, journals, and even individual articles appear in a variety of different guises. Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England* appears twice within the list of abbreviated sources on pp. xxii–xli, abbreviated as 'ASEngland' and as 'Stenton 1947'. (Both references are to the second edition of 1947 rather than the third edition

of 1971.) Some citations of *Notes and Queries* use the continuous volume numbering while others use series numbering, so that the 1996 volume is identified as 241 under Ratley but as n.s.43 under Thursley. An article by Rumble in *Leeds Studies in English* is cited several times within the entry for Buckland, appearing variously as 'Rumble 1987' and 'LSE 18', and an article by Kitson in *Folia Linguistica Historica* is cited as 'Kitson 1994' in the entry for Wilsill, but as 'FLH 14' further down the same page in the entry for Wilstone. Although trivial in themselves, these and similar inconsistencies are symptomatic of a general lack of attention to detail throughout the book.

The standard of proof-reading is terrible. A number of errors had been pointed out in an on-line discussion group even before my review copy arrived, and unfortunately proved to be characteristic of the volume as a whole. The 'full' bibliographical reference on p. xxx to the article by Kitson mentioned above omits the first word of the journal title—one of at least twenty typographical or other errors in the list of abbreviations alone—while typos within the entries themselves are rife, ranging from obvious misprints, such as 'specific' [sic!] for 'generic' under Belstead and '11607' for '1607' under Runfold, to false citations which make references impossible to follow up. Examples of the latter occur under Belper, where 'PNE i.28' should read 'PNE ii.82', Lapford, where an article published in *Nomina* is attributed to the EPNS *Journal*, and Runhall, where a reference to p. 110 of Gelling's *Place-Names in the Landscape* appears to be entirely illusory, as I do not find Runhall mentioned either on this page or in the index to the book. Citations under Alkham, Harrow, Lower Tysoe, Weeley, Wensley (Derby), Woodnesborough, Wormshill and Wye also lead to a dead end until one realises that the abbreviation system has confused Sawyer's *Medieval Settlement* with Cameron's *Place-Name Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon Invasion and Scandinavian Settlements*. Ironically, p. xii of the Preface discusses variations in accuracy of transcription between different secondary sources, but is itself marred by inaccuracies, with 'Willimastrip' an error for 'Williamstrip', and *Cesterton(e)* purported to be given as the Domesday Book spelling for Chesterton in the EPNS Survey for Gloucestershire, which in fact gives it as an amalgamation of the Domesday Book and other spellings—a separate issue discussed by Watts on p. xiii. On p. xx, 'Anglican' for 'Anglian' is not only reminiscent of student howlers, but is made redundant by an entry on the following page for 'Old Anglian dialect of Old English'; and on p. xxxviii the definition of *Tempore Regis Edwardi(i)* as 'i.e. before 1086' omits to give a *terminus a quo*. The volume should never have been allowed to go to press in this state.

Despite a four-page 'Guide to dictionary entries' within the prefatory material, the information is not lucidly presented. Where more than one translation is given, it is sometimes unclear whether the second offers an alternative interpretation of the whole place-name or of a single element; and many entries suffer from the use of abstruse vocabulary and poor phraseology. One wonders, for instance, what non-specialists will make of translations such as 'Copse near the butter producing pasture' (Buttershaw), 'The drengs' settlement' (Drointon), or 'The speech wooded hill' (Madehurst), which bear a certain resemblance to crossword clues! The presentation of etymologies is not standardised, and there are some curious discrepancies between entries where place-names with the same derivation are treated differently. Two occurrences of Downham and one of Downholme are all (correctly) attributed to OE *dūn* 'hill' in its inflected form *dūnum*, but whereas in one instance this is described as 'dative pl.', in the other two it is described as 'locative-dative pl.' It is difficult to see what if any distinction the editors are intending to draw. Bampton in Cumbria is attributed to 'OE *bēam* + *tūn*' and translated as 'Tree farmstead', while Bampton in Oxfordshire is attributed to the same two elements but translated as 'Probably "the homestead by the tree" or possibly "made of beams"'. Part of the problem seems to be that no decision has been made as to whether entries should give a literal translation of the place-name or a paraphrase explaining its application. Hence Buttermere in Wiltshire is attributed to 'OE *butere* + *mere*' and translated as 'Butter pond', while Buttermere in Cumbria is attributed to the same two elements (the first misprinted as *butere*) but translated as 'Lake surrounded by good grazing land'. Neither is there a consistent system for the treatment of individual elements. Consecutive entries for Laverstock in Wiltshire and Laverstock in Hampshire attribute both to 'OE *lāwerce* + *stoc*', but translate the first as 'The lark outlying farm' and the second as 'Lark dependent farm'. Consecutive entries for Greetham in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire attribute both to 'OE *grēot* + *hām*', but translate the first as 'The homestead on the gravel' and the second as 'The homestead or village on the gravel'. Worse still is that the Lincolnshire name (why not also the Leicestershire one?) is described as identical with Greatham in Cleveland, while Greatham itself is translated as 'Gravel estate or enclosure' from 'OE *grēot* + *hām* or *hamm*'. Marlborough in Wiltshire is explained as 'Probably "Mærla's barrow"', with the rider that 'An alternative suggestion for the specific is OE *meagealla* "gentian"'. This is fine, but the entry goes on to state that the name is identical with Malborough in Devon—which is translated without discussion as 'Mærla's hill'! In other



instances, links between place-names are overlooked. Under Kilsby, the comment that 'The sense of *cild* here is unknown' is scarcely adequate without a cross-reference to the parallel formations Chillaton, Chilson and Chilton, where various suggestions for the meaning of *cild* appear.

Some of the information is simply wrong. Page xi of the Preface states that the English Place-Name Society has published eighty annual volumes. At the time of writing this review, the total is seventy-nine, and the cut-off point for inclusion with the *Dictionary* appears to be volume 74. The entry for Banwell notes that 'In early times criminals were sometimes ritually drowned', while the entry for Warnborough elaborates on 'the ancient custom of executing felons by drowning them, hands tied beneath their knees, in a stream'. It is unclear what is meant by either 'early times' or 'ancient', but there is no historical evidence for this practice from the Anglo-Saxon period during which both place-names originate. The entry for Gatwick, rather surprisingly located in the alphabetical sequence under *L-* for London (Gatwick) Airport, claims that there are 'no early forms', citing the EPNS Survey for Surrey p. 291. This page reference is to Gatton: Gatwick appears on p. 288 of the Surrey volume, which lists no fewer than seven early forms dating from 1241–1402.

Historical spellings are not always well chosen, and can sometimes be misleading. To cite a single example, the entry for Llanyblodwell gives the impression that the final vowel is recorded as <a> from 1577 rather than from 1303, and that spellings in <well> as opposed to <welle> date from 1508 rather than from 1302. This appears to be due to a mechanical selection of forms from the first line of spellings in the EPNS Survey for Shropshire out of context of the whole entry. Given too that the 1707 spelling is represented as *Llanymlodwell* but appears in the Shropshire Survey as *Lanymlodwell*, and that the spelling *Blodwell* is dated 1508 in error for 1598, the entry as a whole inspires little confidence. Where historical forms are from EPNS Surveys, they can at least be followed up and checked by interested readers. This is of course not possible in the case of spellings from unpublished sources, and the level of inaccuracy throughout the volume means that no reliance can be placed on them.

Attention should also be drawn to the book's price, which will—perhaps fortunately—place it out of reach of most individuals and many libraries. A cover price of £175, rising to £200 three months after publication, is difficult to justify, especially as the dictionary's closest rival, A. D. Mills' *A Dictionary of British Place-Names*, published in 2003 by Oxford University Press, retails at a mere £8.99. Like the book currently under review, the Oxford

*Dictionary* is written by a senior editor of the English Place-Name Survey, and is based on the collections of the English Place-Name Society. Covering over twelve thousand English place-names alongside others from different parts of the British Isles, it benefits from revisions to two previous editions, and is presented in a format accessible to general readers as well as scholars. Although offering more condensed entries than the Cambridge *Dictionary*, with fewer historical spellings and little if any discussion, it is far more accurate and reliable. Mills is not infrequently a better guide to etymologies, in some instances providing alternatives which are either overlooked or ignored by Watts (e.g. Bebington, Byworth, Harpenden, Keyham, Warnborough, Warton (Warw), Whilton), and in others presenting more up-to-date interpretations (e.g. Annesley, Carburton, Cheveley, Croyde, Ganarew, Harbury, Hinderclay, Kilkhampton, Kilpeck, Marchington, Ousden, Satterleigh, Skilgate). Moreover, there are few if any misprints within the Oxford *Dictionary*—a refreshing contrast to its Cambridge counterpart!

A partial explanation for some of the many failings and inadequacies of the Cambridge *Dictionary* may be revealed on p. xiv of the Preface, which expresses thanks to 'various student friends who undertook the vital initial task of word-processing the material'. This may well account for the poor standards of transcription, inappropriate selection of historical forms, over-reliance on early volumes of the English Place-Name Survey, and general irregularities of presentation. The finished product bears every indication of having been compiled by people who did not fully understand what they were doing, and whose work was not checked. It is difficult to gauge how far this situation may have arisen as a result of the sad but unavoidable lack of editorial guidance during the final stages of publication. In this respect the Publishers' Note on p. xv is perhaps a little disingenuous, referring to Watts' death 'months before his magnum opus was published'. While technically true, a period of over a year is not normally referred to as 'months', so there appears to be an implication that the volume was essentially finished before its editor departed the stage. For those of us familiar with the high standards of scholarship that Watts consistently upheld, this is difficult to believe. Indeed, at one stage during the preparation of this review, I had begun to wonder quite seriously whether it was possible that in the confusion following his unexpected death, the publishers might have got hold of an uncorrected draft of the dictionary rather than the final version. To be associated with such a slipshod work does a disservice to the memory of a fine scholar. My view is that the book should be withdrawn from sale, and not re-issued until every

entry has been rigorously checked and corrected. Only then will it serve the purpose for which it was intended, of providing an authoritative source of reference for scholars of all disciplines.

CAROLE HOUGH

SVAVAR SIGMUNDSSON, ed., *Kristendommens indflydelse på nordisk navngivning*. NORNA-Rapporter 74. Norna-Forlaget: Uppsala, 2002. 201 pp. SEK 150:00 + VAT and postage. (ISBN 91 7276 073 7)

This volume contains most of the papers read at a symposium which was held at Skálholt, the oldest episcopal see in Iceland, in May 2000 to celebrate the one thousandth anniversary of the introduction of Christianity to that country. There is much new information in the eleven papers, four on personal names and seven on place-names, that are published in the report. Unfortunately, however, it can hardly be said that they present a general picture of Christian influence on Nordic naming. Rather they throw more or less light on various greatly differing aspects of this influence. All the papers and the introductory and concluding remarks are in one or other of the three major Scandinavian languages, Danish, Norwegian or Swedish, but each item is accompanied by a summary in English.

The four papers on personal names follow a well-trodden path showing how names of Christian origin came to displace native names at different periods and to a greater or lesser degree in the various Nordic countries. Guðrún Kvaran's paper 'Christian influence on Icelandic personal names' (pp. 9–19) is a kind of critical commentary on the personal names from the Old and New Testaments, the names of saints, martyrs and popes, and names containing the element *Krist-* that are listed as Christian names by Assar Janzén on pp. 140–44 of his study of 'The Old West Nordic personal names' in *Nordisk Kultur* 7 (1948). Kvaran points out that many of the names listed by Janzén only occur in Norway and not in Iceland. She also notes that although the name of the heathen god *Þór* came into frequent use in Iceland as an element in compound personal names after Christianisation, the use of the name of a heathen god alone as a personal name would still seem to have been under a kind of taboo and there are no instances of such names in Iceland until the middle of the nineteenth century with the single exception of the name *Iðunn* recorded in the first census of 1703 (p. 9). It is interesting to compare this fact with the occurrence of *Thor* as a personal name in Domesday Book of 1086 and some other English sources and possibly in Normandy,

both thoroughly Christianised countries, but not in the Scandinavian homelands in the medieval period (cf. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (1968), pp. 295–96).

Gösta Holm discusses names in northern Sweden in 'The conversion and naming tradition in Norrland, Sweden' (pp. 21–27). He points out that in this region personal names were almost all still heathen when place-names in *-mark* 'secondary settlement in the woods' were being coined in the eleventh–twelfth centuries, that is before the Christian mission had intensified here, whereas by 1543 about 60% of the personal names were of Christian origin and half of the instances of heathen names that had survived were those of the two martyr kings of Scandinavia, Erik and Olov.

Anders Løøvs deals with personal names employed by the southern Sami in his paper 'South-Sami personal names from pre-Christian times to the present' (pp. 59–66). He points out both that it was not until about 1775 that all the South-Sami were converted to Christianity (p. 61) and that in the final decades of the twentieth century a tendency developed to use genuine Sami names or names of Sami structure (p. 66). That the baptism of Sami children was not always done with the goodwill of the parents is shown by the touching anecdote telling how parents on the way home from a Christian baptism stopped *en route* to wash the name off the child and give it another 'beautiful' name after one of its Sami forbears (p. 61).

The longest paper dealing with personal names is Ole-Jørgen Johannessen's 'Christian names in Norway in the Middle Ages' (pp. 29–57). Inspiration for this paper was drawn by the author from a paper by Eva Villarsen Meldgaard originally published in *NORNA-rapporter* 54 in 1994 (pp. 201–17) and reprinted in a revised and expanded version under the title 'Navneskifte i Norden' in *Viking og hvidekrist*, ed. Niels Lund (2000), pp. 113–27. She demonstrated that the first names of Christian origin in Denmark were given by the Danish kings to daughters, younger legitimate sons or the sons of the kings' mistresses, while the eldest sons, the potential heirs to the throne, continued to receive names of Scandinavian origin. Johannessen contrasts the situation in Norway, where although it was among the nobility that names of Christian origin first became common, it was not the case with the legitimate sons of royalty. He does, however, have an explanation for the frequent occurrence of names of Christian origin for the illegitimate daughters of kings or daughters born of queens who had come to Norway from abroad, namely that in these cases there would not have been any obligation to name the daughters according to the old Nordic tradition of 'calling them' after their maternal

family. Johannessen's very detailed study of the names of Christian origin occurring in Norway and the possible reasons for their adoption, such as local cults and church dedications, will be very useful for all who are interested in the routes by which names of Christian origin made their way to Scandinavia. There is just one of his comments that I would query. On p. 42 he notes that it is unlikely that a man called *Askatin* named in *Håkon Håkonssons saga* was a Norwegian. This is true enough. E. H. Lind had already noted in *Norsk-isländska dopnamn ock fingerade namn från medeltiden* (1905–15), p. 73 that *Askatin*, who was abbot of Höfuðey in 1223, later bishop of Bergen, and died in 1277, is once referred to as *anglus*. The name, however, is an Anglo-Norman form of the pagan Nordic personal name *Ásketiill* and there seems no reason to treat it as a name of Christian origin, even though it would seem to have been brought to Norway by an English cleric.

The seven papers dealing with Christian influence on place-names are much more heterogeneous than those dealing with personal names, ranging as they do from papers dealing with names coined in Norway and Iceland both in the early years after the conversion and later, over a paper dealing with the names of Danish religious houses at the time of the Reformation in 1536, to the names given to Danish churches through 1000 years which brings us right up to the present day.

Gunnstein Akselberg's paper 'The Christian onomasticon—development, composition and structure. On the process of christianisation in the medieval period and place-names in Voss' (pp. 67–101), is not only very long but also something of an odd man out. Its aim has been to see how early Christian influence can be documented in the local place-name material in the community of Voss in Western Norway and how the dynamics of the Christian onomasticon can throw light on the general onomasticon, but the result has been a demonstration of the difficulty of testing an onomastic model on an empiric material. Rather more concrete results come from another theoretically oriented paper, that by Vidar Haslum entitled "'Church" and "priest" in Norwegian place-names' (pp. 103–25). The words selected are the most commonly occurring Christian loanwords in Norwegian place-names and the fact that their frequency of occurrence is greatest in western Norway suggests that there was an old and strong ecclesiastical presence in that part of the country. The relevant place-names are examined with respect to both their structure and a name-semantic classification. A comparative investigation of the semantic distributional pattern of compounds containing *kirke* and those containing *præst* reveals two differing patterns and, not surprisingly, a

similarity is revealed between compounds containing the word *præst* and those containing a personal name. The third paper dealing with Norwegian place-names is Inge Særheim's '*Klokkene, Krossen and Kristennamnet*: words signifying Christian culture and tradition in coastal names from southwestern Norway' (pp. 163–76). This is a more traditional study, listing the instances of names containing Christian vocabulary in the specified region and explaining the significance of the names. Most of the explanations are straightforward, describing the situation or pointing to crosses marking boundaries, paths, harbours etc., while other names are a kind of *noa*-name, being an inoffensive name given to a dangerous place in or by the sea in order to secure a safe voyage. Such names have often later acquired a warning function in popular tradition and hence become a reflection of superstition rather than Christian belief.

Two papers deal with Icelandic place-names. Jónína Hafsteinsdóttir's 'The element *kirkja* in place-names in the Westfjords' (pp. 127–44) discusses place-names from the Westfjords region in Iceland that contain the element *-kirkja*, both settlement names and nature names. The most commonly occurring settlement name of the type is *Kirkjuból*, which only occurs in Iceland and generally indicates that there was a church on the farm. Most of these names are found in the west of Iceland and their distribution would surely repay further study. The nature names containing the word for 'church' can reflect the fact that the locality was owned or used or controlled by the church, or that the locality is close to a church, or that it marks a stage on the way to church or is a road leading to the church. The last group of names to be discussed are those that are derived from folk-tales and names of cliffs and rocks that are shaped like church buildings. Svavar Sigmundsson's paper 'Place-names associated with the clergy in Iceland' (pp. 153–62) deals with place-names containing the loanwords denoting such occupational terms as 'bishop', 'priest', 'provost', 'deacon', 'monk' and 'nun' as well as terms for 'mass' and 'church'. It is striking that names containing the word 'bishop' are of rather frequent occurrence and Svavar suggests that this fact reflects the powerful position held by the bishops in Iceland, where they occupied the position held by kings in other countries.

The two Danish papers differ from the others in dealing with names reflecting the influence of Christianity that were coined long after the original conversion of the country. Susanne Vogt's paper 'The names of Danish religious houses—and their durability' (pp. 177–88) deals with a phenomenon that arose after the Reformation in Denmark in 1536, when most of the

religious houses were closed down because their function had become obsolete. Some of the buildings were demolished but others were converted for private use and frequently changed their names completely, although in some cases it was only the no longer relevant generic *kloster* that was replaced by a generic *slot* 'castle' or *gård* 'farm'. Part of an original name was sometimes retained. *Hundslund*, for example, was changed to *Dronninglund* when it was taken over by the queen in 1690 (p. 185). Bent Jørgensen's paper 'The church's name: names of Danish churches through 1000 years' (pp. 145–51) contains much information that is new to me in spite of four decades of residence in Denmark. I had, of course, noticed that it was rare for churches in Denmark to be distinguished by the name of the saint to which they had originally been dedicated but I had not realised why this was so. It turns out that in the Catholic period Danish churches had two names, one secular, the other ecclesiastical. The secular name was generally a formally secondary name with a village name as its first element and the word for church *kirke* as its generic, e.g. *Brønshøj kirke*. The ecclesiastical name was the one given to it at its consecration. e.g. *Sankt Knuds kirke*. This two-stringed system disappeared after the Reformation. Both types of name survive, however, with the secular name generally surviving for rural churches, while the ecclesiastical type is found in urban areas. The transition from Catholicism to Protestantism has resulted in new semantic groups among the names of churches erected in the nineteenth century and later to serve the growing population. In addition to 'old-fashioned' names such as *Sankt Stefans kirke*, there are names containing a saint's name without the *Sankt*, e.g. *Filips kirke*, names containing names of persons closely associated with church life in Denmark, e.g. *Kingos kirke* (after the Danish priest and poet of Scots descent), *Grundtvigs kirke* (after the bishop and poet and founder of the theological movement Grundtvigianism), names containing the names of Old Testament figures such as *Nathanaels kirke* or the names of biblical localities such as *Kapernaums kirke* and *Zions kirke*. A few churches are named after royalty, e.g. *Frederiks kirke* named after Frederik V and *Margrethekirken* after Margrethe II. It is thus not all the churches whose names reflect the influence of Christianity.

In his summing up (pp. 189–92) Mats Wahlberg expresses surprise that none of the papers deals with the formation of the parishes and the coining of parish-names. This is not quite true, since Bent Jørgensen in his final paragraph discusses the relationship between church names and parish names and argues that it is the church that is the mother of the parish (p. 150). I found this statement particularly interesting in the light of my recent study on the

relationship between the Old English word *sōcn* and the parish in Scandinavia (*Namn och Bygd* 88 (2000), 89–106), in which I finally came to the rather indeterminate conclusion that although the meaning 'parish' of the Scandinavian word *sōkn* probably developed in Scandinavia, this development may have been influenced by instances in England where parish boundaries seem to be almost coterminate with those of the territorial lordship known as a 'soke', for example Conisbrough in Yorkshire, while the development of the sense 'territorial lordship' in England can, but need not, reflect Danish influence. At least it seems certain that the church must have come into existence before the parish and that whether or not the parish came to have the same name as the church must have depended on local circumstances.

GILLIAN FELLOWS-JENSEN

RICHARD COATES and ANDREW BREEZE, with a contribution by DAVID HOROVITZ, *Celtic Voices English Places. Studies of the Celtic Impact on Place-Names in England*. Shaun Tyas: Stamford, 2000. xiv + 433 pp., maps and figure. £30.00. (ISBN 1 900289 41 5)

In *Signposts to the Past* (1978, p. 88), Margaret Gelling wrote: 'The scholars to whom the work of the English Place-Name Survey is entrusted are necessarily specialists in Old English and Old Norse ... they are not well equipped to identify or interpret Celtic names'. However, as she went on to point out, since the publication of Kenneth Jackson's *Language and History in Early Britain* in 1953 (along with which we should add his *Addenda & Corrigenda* to Smith's *English Place-Name Elements* in *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 1 (1968–69), 43–52), no researcher has any excuse for neglecting the possibility that a place-name, particularly a 'difficult' one, anywhere in England might have a Celtic origin or incorporate traces of a Celtic name in an Anglicised form. Yet the authors of *Celtic Voices English Places* take the view that English place-name scholars still need to be more alert to this possibility, that 'more of the major place-names of England date from before the advent of the Anglo-Saxons than is generally believed', and that 'names which are problematic for philological analysis are at least as likely to be of Brittonic as of English origin' (Introduction, p. 7). Do they prove the case?

On the simplest criteria, the answer has to be no. Out of the sixty-eight names discussed in detail, only fifteen (by my reckoning) actually propose new, Celtic, etymologies for place-names, previously held to be English.



Moreover, all of these English etymologies date from the early (pre-Jackson) volumes of the English Place-Name Survey or other publications from that period: the fourth (1960) edition of Ekwall's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* is the latest context in which any of them were first proposed. While it is timely for these to be reconsidered, the charge that present-day, or even the past generation of, place-name scholars are culpably negligent with regard to possible Celtic origins is scarcely upheld. Nor, even if all the proposed Celtic etymologies were to be accepted, are these additions to the roster of survivors likely to precipitate a paradigm shift in our understanding of the evidence.

Nevertheless, this volume offers plenty of material for debate. The most substantial articles, such as those on London, Gnosall (Staffordshire) and Lindisfarne, merit detailed reviews in their own right, while shorter pieces on some notoriously problematic names such as Thanet (with *Ruoithin* in the *Historia Britonum*), Speen and Woodspeen (Berkshire), Aust and Ingst (Gloucestershire) and *Domnoc* or *Dommoc* (presumably Suffolk), offer important new perspectives. About half the papers revisit names that have previously been regarded as at least possibly Celtic, offering refined or alternative etymologies. Around half of this number are river-names, many of them reconsidering etymologies first proposed by Ekwall in *English River-Names* (1928). Ekwall was ahead of his time in his openness to the possibility, even the likelihood, of Celtic or pre-Celtic origins, but our understanding of Celtic and European hydronymy has advanced greatly since then, and these papers may contribute to a real paradigm change in this area of name studies. What is needed now is an overview of the current understanding of the distribution of Celtic and earlier river-names, and of the conclusions that can be drawn from the evidence: this would inevitably take us back to the famous map on p. 220 of *Language and History*, and so to a reconsideration of the historical interpretation that Jackson placed on this evidence.

This may point to ways in which assumptions still sometimes made by place-name researchers could be challenged: *Celtic Voices English Places* both illustrates the problem and offers resources for change. While Jackson was ready to argue with Stenton on specific points (e.g. *Language and History* p. 215), his underlying historical assumptions were broadly 'Stentonian': that the Anglo-Saxon invaders and their Brittonic-speaking neighbours had formed coherent regional kingdoms by the early sixth century, that the ensuing warfare was conducted largely on ethnic lines, and that the spread of English and demise of Brittonic were straightforwardly associated with

military conquest and political expansion by the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Half a century of research has left historians with a murkier, more complicated picture; half a century of study has left linguists unsurprised that things were not that simple. While place-name scholars are generally cautious of the wilder claims for post-Roman continuity and Celtic survival, we need to work with more sophisticated concepts than a vaguely-defined 'English takeover'.

In view of this and of the authors' claims for more widespread survival of Celtic names, it is surprising that Jackson's dates for the adoption of these names into English are cited as fixed reference points, often with scant attention to any more recent historical interpretations, and with occasional comments—'...the Britons who remained there (no doubt as slaves) when Dorset was conquered by the Anglo-Saxons ...' (p. 96)—that would have raised a donnish eyebrow even in the 1950s! Yet there is material here that could contribute to a much more nuanced understanding of the processes of Anglicisation. Indeed, the strongest section of the book in this respect is that on 'Somerset and the' (quaintly christened) 'Hither West Country' (essentially, Wiltshire and Dorset): the papers in this part, including a useful set of notes on 'Evidence for the persistence of Brittonic in Wiltshire', could provide a substantial input into a re-examination of the history of the expansion of Wessex in the sixth and seventh centuries, an area where the 'kings and battles' record of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* gives a notoriously patchy and inadequate account.

If Jackson's historical assumptions need some critical re-examination, the relative chronology for Brittonic sound-changes presented in *Language and History* remains, as Patrick Sims-Williams has declared (*Britain 400–600*, ed. Bammesberger and Wollman (1990), p. 220), a monumental achievement, unlikely ever to need revision beyond the level of minor detail. No-one would quibble with the authors' regular reference to Jackson's Chronological Table (*Language and History*, pp. 690–99), but again we need to be aware that the absolute dates he assigned to the sound-changes depended on historical and palaeographical assumptions regarding the classical sources, inscriptions, Latin loan-words in Brittonic, Brittonic loan-words in Irish and—crucially for changes he assigned to the late sixth to eighth centuries—Brittonic place-names adopted into English. Sims-Williams has now provided a major re-analysis of the epigraphic evidence on a purely phonological basis in *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain. Phonology and Chronology, c.400–1200* (2002): a similar exercise needs to be undertaken on the place-name evidence, a tabulation of the exemplification of sound-changes in Anglicised names

freed from 'Stentonian' or any other historical presuppositions. Again, there is material in this volume to contribute to such a reassessment: for example, Wawne (East Riding of Yorkshire, pp. 176–77) re: the spirantisation of *-gn-* and rounding of *ā*, Kinder (Derbyshire, pp. 165–66) re: the assimilation of *-nd-* and spirantisation of *-rc*, and names in Wiltshire (p. 112) re: the denasalisation of lenited *m*. However, in Kuhnian terms, the authors are assimilating their new evidence to the existing paradigm, with the ever-present danger of circularity (dating sound-changes from history, history from sound-changes), only edging towards accommodation of the paradigm to the evidence. Perhaps they need to stand back now from their eager quest for new etymologies, to consider the broader implications and offer us a more integrated account of 'the Celtic impact'?

Meanwhile, we have a stimulating collection of work in progress: plenty to disagree with, and that's no bad thing! It has the rough-hewn character of camera-ready copy, untouched by the hand of any publisher's editor. Workers in the field will be grateful for the *Gazetteer* of all place-names in England (except Cornwall) for which defensible Celtic etymologies have been published, along with the Glossary of Elements proposed in these (they would have been all the more grateful if the *Gazetteer* had been indexed and the Glossary cross-referenced to it, but it is churlish to expect all the work to be done for us). The maps are useful guides to location, though given the (acknowledged) varied levels of reliable documentation and the (under-emphasised) long time-span during which the names may have been adopted, their status as meaningful distribution-maps is questionable. The bibliography is a comprehensive readers' guide to the subject.

One final regret: stopping short at the anachronistic Anglo-Scottish border deprives us of Andrew Breeze's frequent excursions into southern Scottish place-names. Surely no serious reconsideration of the place-name evidence for Anglo-Celtic relations can afford to ignore half the Kingdom of Northumbria?

ALAN JAMES

ADRIAN ROOM, *The Penguin Dictionary of British Place Names*. Penguin Books: London, 2003. xxxix + 549 pp. £9.99 paperback (ISBN 0 14 05143 8)

Adrian Room is the author of numerous books on names, including place-names. Particularly relevant to the volume under review are *A Concise Dictionary of Modern Place-Names in Great Britain and Ireland* (1983), *A*

*Dictionary of Irish Place-Names* (1986), *Dictionary of Place-Names in the British Isles* (1988), *Placenames of the World* (1987), and, most recently, the sections on Irish, Welsh and Scottish place-names in *The Oxford Names Companion* (2002). He therefore has a pretty good track record in compiling dictionaries which overlap with, or are at least precursors of or adjacent to, the scope of *The Penguin Dictionary of British Place Names*. In addition he had several compendia to draw on which have covered the whole or part of the field in the past, and his indebtedness to these is acknowledged in his select bibliography. They are so well known that there is no need for listing them in this review. In spite of this corpus of publications, it is probably true to say that, apart from the place-name section in the *Oxford Companion*, there is no place-name dictionary currently available which covers the ground as extensively and in as much detail as the new *Penguin Dictionary*<sup>1</sup> although even it does not regularly cite early spellings which are so essential as evidence for the history and etymology of individual names, and if it does, with the exception of *Domesday Book (DB)* does not indicate the sources in which these early named spellings are recorded. One of its most glaring shortcomings is the editor's decision to include river names (even major ones) only if they are used as settlement names (Annan, Ayr, Banff) or have been incorporated in such (Aberdeen, Bridge of Allan, Inverness, Loch Ness, Inverclyde, Clydebank, Tayport); this is particularly unfortunate when the name of a river appears only as the second part of the name of a location associated with it. Consequently, the important rivers Earn and Naver are not mentioned because there are no entries for Bridge of Earn and Strathearn, and Strathnaver, respectively.

In addition to the reliability of the information offered in its entries which in a dictionary of this kind usually consists of reducing the names it contains to the words they once were, users would expect a concise account of the nature of the items it contains (in this case, place-names), of the criteria employed in their selection and of the aims of the compilation. In his 'Introduction' (pp. xii–xxv), Room meets the expectations one might have in the latter respect reasonably well by discussing such topics as 'the world of

<sup>1</sup> Since this review was written, *A Dictionary of British Place-Names* by A. D. Mills has been published (Oxford University Press, 2003), covering much the same ground as the *Penguin Dictionary*. Entries for Irish, Welsh and Scottish place-names also derive from its counterpart in the *Oxford Names Companion*, but it is much more sensitive to the non-English components of its inventory.

place names', 'the chronology of place names', 'personal and family names', 'place names and church dedications', 'Welsh place names', 'Scottish place names', 'place names and their sources', 'the arrangement of entries' and what he calls 'the sweeping scene', i.e. the evocative nature of place-names. The text is accompanied by several useful maps. In these introductory remarks, we learn that it is the aim of the present dictionary 'to give the origins of over 10,000 names of places in Great Britain', i.e. supposedly in England, Scotland and Wales, but there are all kind of hints, especially in the account of the linguistic chronology, a very complex matter in itself, that the dictionary is largely written from an English perspective as, for instance when, in the scanty description of the various kinds of Celtic names in Scotland, there is no indication of the immigration of Gaelic from Ireland and, while *pett* 'portion' is correctly termed 'Pictish', *aber* 'river mouth' is called 'Old Welsh' (though in the entries themselves it is consistently referred to as undifferentiated 'Celtic', the equivalent of which would be to call all names of English and Scandinavian origin 'Germanic'). The statement, in the Introduction, that 'Old Welsh *aber* ... is seen in *Aberdeen* and *Aberfoyle*, where [sic] it relates to (but is of earlier origin than) Gaelic *inbhir*' is difficult to interpret). The very fact that there are separate sections on Welsh and Scottish place-names but none on place-names in England, highlights this predicament. This point of view is reinforced when the section on 'Welsh place names' is introduced by the phrase 'As visitors to Wales are immediately aware, ...' (what about visitors to England?).

This observation is not to be interpreted as reflecting the paranoia of a critic reviewing the dictionary from north of the Tweed, indeed from north of the Don, but is intended to draw attention to the fact that the *Penguin Dictionary* is perhaps not as evenly 'British' as its title suggests, and it may therefore prove useful to concentrate in this review on the 'reliability' of the treatment of names outside England, especially in Scotland, leaving a commentary on the handling of the place-names in England—the large majority—to English experts.

In order to achieve some kind of neutrality, the sample chosen for scrutiny consists of the first sixty or so Scottish place-name entries in the *Dictionary* (Abbotsford–Ben Nevis), with a few additional examples from later parts thrown in afterwards. A quick comparison shows that Room's choice of names for inclusion in the inventory is fundamentally the same as his selection for the *Oxford Companion*, with sixteen names omitted, the most surprising omission being the name of the important island of Arran off the

Ayrshire coast. Other curious deletions include Alvah, Ardersier, Armadale (the seat of the Macdonalds in Skye), Balemartine and Balintore. Since the criteria for inclusion are not explicitly stated (John Field's *Place-Names of Great Britain and Ireland* may well be the chief model), it is difficult to guess the reasons for these omissions. What follows is a list of the Scottish entries found in the first forty pages of the *Penguin Dictionary*, with comments as to the 'reliability' of the origins and meanings advanced for them.

NAME	COMMENT
Abbotsford	Correct
Aberdeen	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic
Aberdour	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic; 'water' for 'waters'
Aberfeldy	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic
Aberfoyle	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic; 'pool' for 'streams'
Aberlour	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic
Abernethy	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic; prob. divinity
Aboyne	Derivation incorrect; there is no River Aboyne
Acharacle	Probably correct
Achnashellach Forest	Gaelic derivation correct but <i>forest</i> is an English addition; the overall meaning given is therefore misleading
Achray Forest	The same comments apply
Ailsa Craig	Not 'fairy' rock; the Gaelic first element <i>allasa</i> is obscure
Airdrie	Etymology correct but Gaelic form <i>Ardrugh</i>
Alexandria	Correct
Alford	Etymology obscure
Alloa	Correct
Alloway	Correct
Alness	Gaelic <i>Alanais</i> , <i>f</i> 'flowing water'
Alva	Correct as 'station' on the pre-Celtic river Ailan
Alyth	Correct
Angus	Correct
Annan	Correct but <i>-dale</i> in Annandale may be English and the river name may be pre-Celtic
Anstruther	Probably 'stream of Ethernan'
Antonine Wall	Correct

Appin	'land' preferable to 'lands'
Applecross	Pictish for Celtic
Arbroath	Pictish <i>aber</i> for Celtic
Ardnamurchan	Correct
Ardrishaig	Probably correct
Ardrossan	Correct
Argyll	Correct
Armadale	Correct
[Atholl	Discussed under Blair Atholl]
Auchinleck	Gaelic <i>achadh nan leac</i>
Auchterarder	Correct
Auchtermuchty	Correct
Awe, Loch	The loch of the (River) Awe (Abhainn Abha); <i>Abh</i> is not a variation of Avon
Ayr	Probably pre-Celtic
Badenoch	Correct
Balerno	Correct
Ballachulish	Correct
Ballantrae	Correct
Ballater	Etymology incorrect. Obscure name
Balmoral	Etymology incorrect; first element Gaelic <i>both</i> 'hut' perhaps with religious connotations; second element obscure
Banchory	Etymology incorrect. Gaelic <i>beannchar</i> 'horn-cast'
Banff	Correct
Bannockburn	Correct
Barra	Partially correct
Barrhead	Correct
Bathgate	Cumbric for Celtic
Bearsden	Doubtful
Beauly	Correct
Beith	Partially correct
Benbecula	Correct
Ben Cruachan	Correct
Ben Lomond	Discussed under Lomond, Loch which is wrongly said to be 'loch by Ben Lomond'. Loch and Ben Lomond are named after the

Ben More	River Leven which drains the loch.
Ben Nevis	Correct The meaning of the river name is not 'spiteful' but derives from a root <i>nebh</i> 'moist, water'. Ben Nevis, Loch Nevis and Glen Nevis are derived from the river name.

This is not the kind of material from which to develop viable statistics, except to observe that even if the somewhat imprecise *aber*-designations are omitted, only about half the entries listed have 'correct' origins or meanings which indicates that only every second derivation is 'reliable'. This is not very encouraging. As most of Room's comments are culled from a variety of sources, it is the quality of each source that is responsible for the degree of reliability or felicity attributable to the respective entries. Ultimately, the relatively high proportion of doubtful or wrong information is due to the ambitious intention to provide, if possible, an etymology or meaning for every name included in the dictionary. Room is, of course, not alone in this attitude because other place-name compendia tend to do exactly the same thing. This is, however, an intention which can never be fulfilled, and it would be much more honest and helpful, though perhaps humbling, to admit one's inability to meet such an expectation. In the Scottish component of the *Penguin Dictionary*, terms like 'unknown', or 'uncertain', 'doubtful' or 'obscure' would, for example have been much more appropriate than the meanings suggested concerning names such as Biggar, Bothwell, Buchan, Campsie, Carnoustie, Denny, Dyce, Elgin, Ellon, Fetlar, Forfar, Glamis (Glen)eagles, (Glen)elg, and several others. There is no sense of failure attached to the statement that, in spite of one's best efforts, one has been unable to come up with a satisfactory answer for a name. After all, it is the peculiar characteristic of names that they can and do function effectively without any apparent lexical meaning. This reviewer would strongly urge the compiler and the publishers of the book under review to take this approach into consideration if a revised edition is ever contemplated.

From a Scottish point of view, then, *The Penguin Dictionary of British Place Names* has to be handled with caution. It is, of course, quite possible that the large number of English entries may be approached with more confidence, but that is for others to decide.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN



RICHARD R. RANDALL, *Place Names: How They Define the World—and More*. The Scarecrow Press: Lanham, Maryland and London, 2001. xviii + 203 pp. \$35.00. (ISBN 0 8108 3906 2)

The multiple qualities, functions, meanings, facets, etc. of place-names have invited toponymic studies of many kinds. It is probably true to conjecture that most of these have been undertaken within linguistic contexts, particularly in the pursuit of names as special evidence for linguistic history. Geographers and social historians may also lay claim to having developed a well demonstrated interest in the investigation of place-names from their own, peculiar points of view.

The book under review undoubtedly caters to certain linguistic, geographical and historical considerations but, as its subtitle indicates, is centrally concerned with a number of wider issues deriving from the role place-names play in the definition of the world as the location where as socially conditioned creatures we live and have our being. That this existence is seen and interpreted in national and international terms has its roots in its author's personal involvement in the 'capturing', maintenance and management of 'correct' place-names in such United States organisations as the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Mapping Agency and, above all, the Board of Geographic Names (BGN), but beyond that as a US representative on the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). His perspective is therefore genuinely global, while at the same time coloured by much more regional and even local desiderata, and place-names emerge from these pages as important factors in universal communication, international understanding and national politics. In these respects, Randall's study is therefore truly innovative, adding a new and fascinating slant to onomastic research beyond academic aims or quaint small-town bones of contention.

What makes Randall's approach especially attractive is this mixture of objective observations and personal involvement, with the former never boring through administrative dryness, and the latter never exhibiting traits of mere gossip. Here is an author who knows because he himself has been there, participating in or at least supporting the shaping of many of the policies and practices on which he reports. Most of his evidence is presented in fairly short, sometimes almost vignette-like, units which are clustered under six main headings: I. The Nature of Place Names, II. How Place Names Affect Us, III. Place Names Are Not Permanent, IV. Efforts to End the Confusion, V. U.S. and International Names Programs during and after the Cold War,

and VI. Interesting and Unusual Names. These are underpinned by ten appendices of various lengths which illustrate or in some way exemplify some of the major issues raised in the book, as, for instance, a description of the 'Structure and Working Procedure of the U.S. Board of Geographic Names', 'Excerpts from B & N Gazetteers of Undersea Features and Antarctic Names', 'Comparative Examples of Selected Russian Cyrillic', or 'U.S. and Other Sources of Information about Place Names'.

Whether he discusses such fundamental matters as the definition, function, origins and categories of place-names; elaborates on the particular characteristics of regional sources; enlarges—and this is an especially instructive feature of the book—on the relationship between names and maps ('Maps Say Little without Place Names'); stresses the essential role place-names play in our lives and in how we communicate with each other (for example, family names, automobile names, food and beverage names, railroad names, and mineral names); highlights the relationship between place-names and the arts (literature, music, paintings and photographs); points to the impermanence of place-names in the media and politics; dissects the problems caused by names in multilingual countries; introduces us to the seemingly insurmountable obstacles lying in the way of official attempts to ensure the selection and application of correct names, both at home and abroad, and the methods to overcome them; emphasises the need for place-names where people don't live; discourses on the necessity for an unambiguous terminology of names; alludes to the spelling, transcription and pronunciation of foreign names, as well as gazetteers; reports on name usage in the cold war, the influence of NATO, and the period after the cold war; or, in an illuminating coda, talks about unusual, disputed and unacceptable names;—whether he engages in any of this large variety of activities, Randall's voice is well-informed, authoritative, highly informative and substantially convincing.

Randall's book is not part of a crusade but soberly diagnoses the problems and points to genuine solutions. It persuades through its enlightened sobriety and leaves the reader in no doubt that 'correctness' (in spelling, pronunciation, and other usages) of place-names really does matter in this ever-changing world, in peace and war, and is one of the cornerstones of successful international relations.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain. Phonology and Chronology, c.400–1200*. Publications of the Philological Society, 37. Blackwell: Oxford, 2002. xii + 464 pp., 7 tables and 2 figures. £22.99. (ISBN 1 4051 0903 3)

This is an important and timely book. As Sims-Williams explains in the Preface, his aim is not to present new readings of the inscribed texts but rather to give the linguistic analysis which is not attempted in most of the published corpora, for example those compiled by Macalister, by Nash-Williams and by the present reviewer. This linguistic analysis includes a careful account of the chronology of the stones based on the likely linguistic datings of their texts. Sims-Williams' book thus addresses what has for too long been a pressing need in the field of Celtic epigraphy.

The introductory chapter, Chapter 1, explains in detail the nature of the problem of this chronology, described there with justification as a 'burning issue' in Celtic epigraphy. Inscribed stones have usually been dated by typology, that is by reference to their monumental form, their decoration and their letter forms, with insufficient reference to the language of the texts. On occasion, as Sims-Williams makes clear, typological datings have then been used to assign dates to linguistic sound-changes. His approach is exactly the reverse, to use the relative dates of the Celtic sound-changes to see whether or not the typological datings of the stones are confirmed. As Sims-Williams acknowledges, care must be taken to avoid circular argument here, and generally speaking this is done. Occasionally, however, the present reviewer still felt a little uncomfortable, for example with p. 8, note 31.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of which stones are to be discussed, which to be omitted. The word 'Britain' of the title is, it appears, to be interpreted idiosyncratically: the 'Celtic Inscriptions of Britain' omits those of Ireland and Iona but includes those of Brittany. Since over fifty pages of the book are devoted to Irish phonology and chronology, with particular reference to Irish names appearing on Welsh and Cornish stones, the omission of the inscriptions of Ireland and Iona might seem a little surprising.

Chapter 1 also explains in a detailed manner the procedure followed in the book and the tabularisation of the results. The system adopted, although complicated, is explained with great clarity which makes it easy to follow. In the manner of a pilot project, 115 Welsh inscriptions are examined. In 110 of these cases, Nash-Williams' relative datings, based on typology, are found to be broadly in line with Sims-Williams' relative datings based on linguistic

analysis. Discussion of the relationship between relative and absolute datings is delayed until after the linguistic analyses that are contained in the following four chapters.

The most important part of the book, and the place where Sims-Williams makes his most penetrating and original observations, is Chapter 2 on Brittonic phonology. The starting point is the list of ninety-eight Brittonic sound-changes listed by K. H. Jackson in his *Language and History in Early Britain* (1953). Sims-Williams carefully distinguishes, by the use of typographical devices, between sound-changes for which there is no inscriptional evidence from Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, and those for which there is. (Nevertheless, the worry about circular argument surfaces from time to time, highlighted for this reviewer by the second paragraph on p. 21.) Sims-Williams offers many useful and thought-provoking ideas about the personal names in the inscriptions. To cite one example from many, in discussing on pp. 91–100 the sound-change numbered 27 (the raising of *e* to *i* before a nasal), some illuminating ideas are put forward about the derivation and spelling of names like *Dinvi*, father of *Qvenatavci* (p. 95), or those containing Brittonic *hen-* 'old' (pp. 93–94).

While Chapter 2 discusses the relative chronology of the Brittonic sound changes, Chapter 3 moves the argument a step further by linking this with absolute chronology. Of the 183 inscriptions tabulated in Chapter 3, only twelve differ significantly when their linguistic datings are compared with those derived from their general epigraphy. These twelve exceptions are discussed in detail before absolute datings are proposed. These absolute datings are expressed in terms of terminal dates, for example, linguistically speaking Period 1 'ends before c.540 at the latest', while Periods 20 to 24 all begin 'c.800'. These correlate broadly with the epigraphic dating bands, for example, Periods 1 to 7 being probably fifth to sixth century and Periods 21 following being seventh to ninth century. The careful argument of this chapter is reassuring and convincing. Far too often in the past inscriptions have been dated without the lines of argument being spelled out, so that on occasion one has been led to conclude that the principle is no more rational than that of 'think of a number'. Nothing could be further from Sims-Williams' detailed and reasoned arguments put forward in this chapter. In Chapter 6, which concludes the book, a useful summary list of proposed dates is given, in the form 'Brittonic Period 7–9', 'Irish period 1–3' etc.

Chapters 4 and 5 are concerned with Irish phonology and chronology and one immediate problem identified by Sims-Williams is that there is no

published list of chronological sound-changes in Primitive Irish comparable to the list of Brittonic sound-changes compiled by Jackson. Instead, Sims-Williams adapts the lists put forward by McCone and others to produce his own chronological list of forty-three sound-changes. Using the same procedures as in chapters 2 and 3, some 140 Irish names in the inscriptions of Britain (as defined) are discussed. A useful typographical device is used to distinguish names that are probably of Irish origin from those that are only possibly so. A particularly interesting section is §5.7 where the Brittonic and Irish chronologies are compared, leading Sims-Williams to the conclusion that, on the evidence of the names in the inscriptions, these chronologies are broadly compatible.

This book has a great deal to offer a wide academic readership. Celtic philologists will welcome it, as will those interested both in Celtic onomastics and in the early history of the Celtic areas of Britain. Any reviewer can find points to criticise, and to an epigrapher the main criticism is likely to be that Sims-Williams has relied, as he openly admits, not on personal examination of most of the stones, but on the readings in published corpora. Unfortunately, these corpora differ enormously in accuracy and reliability. However, this is less of a disadvantage than it might have been. Sims-Williams' philological dating conclusions, carefully constructed and argued as they are, are based on much more evidence than just that of the stones. These conclusions will surely remain generally valid. In the future, as accurate and up-to-date readings of more of the stones are made, their linguistic dates will be made by reference to Sims-Williams' dating scheme. The value of this to Celtic epigraphers can hardly be over-emphasised.

ELISABETH OKASHA

A. D. MILLS, *A Dictionary of London Place Names*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001. lxiii + 276 pp. £7.99 paperback. (ISBN 0 19 280106 6)

Dr Mills, master of the invaluable onomasticon, delivers again. Some 1,700 names within the Greater London Boroughs and the City of London are presented and analysed alphabetically in one of the most important English regional studies outside the English Place-Name Society's series. The entries are models of their kind for a 'popular' reference work, engagingly and lucidly written (employing the minimum of abbreviations), accurate and scholarly. There is of course overlap with the many previous studies of subsections of the Greater London corpus, but this impressively full survey is unique in its selection, arrangement and treatment of the major names of the capital. More-

over, it is over twenty years since John Field published his broadly comparable work *Place-Names of Greater London* (1980), and many more years on top of that since the appearance of Eilert Ekwall's *Street-Names of the City of London* (2nd impression 1965), J. K. Wallenberg's *Kentish Place-Names* (1931) and *The Place-Names of Kent* (1934), and the EPNS surveys of Essex, Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Surrey. This is a timely reassessment of an intriguing body of names. Inexpensive too.

The 44-page introduction is commendably thorough and extensive in its range of topics. A careful chronological overview, an excellent section on 'Some different place-name types and structures', and the numerous thematic sections which follow constitute a valuable and very readable guide to toponymic methodology. What is perhaps a unique exercise in a scholarly volume on English place-names is the postscript to this introduction, 'Some associations, uses, and applications of London place names', an entertaining examination of all manner of perceptions, connotations, (mis)appropriations, and what might be termed 'extra meanings' of the name-stock.

A series of maps demarcating the London Boroughs is provided. These are clear and effective, with a substantial number of place-names marked in differing font-types according to their likely antiquity. It is thus a little surprising at first to find that not all ancient parish names are shown on these stratified maps (e.g. Hatcham, Knockholt, Newington) even if the names do appear in the dictionary (Knockholt is missing entirely). One could not deduce from its entry in the dictionary that, for instance, Hatcham had ever belonged in Surrey, for former boundaries are not of concern here, as is perhaps forgivable in a book based upon the modern Boroughs. Still, I cannot be alone in sometimes wishing for an indication of historic counties even in studies which are not based on them.

Each place-name entry in the dictionary is assigned to the Borough in which it lies, and is furnished where possible with a range of early spellings, though regrettably few sources are stated. A broad readership is catered for: the etymological discussions are sufficiently detailed and accurate to satisfy the philologist, the wealth of background detail is as full as the local historian could reasonably demand, and the clarity of style should allow that man on the omnibus to grasp the niceties of Clapham. The format is necessarily concise, yet care is taken to present the little extra detail beyond a bald definition which breathes life into the names, be it anecdotal remarks on the clerks of Clerkenwell, confirmation of the pudding of Pudding Lane, or an aside on the noteworthy location of Hackney Wick. Mills also has an eye for

juxtapositions both fanciful and prosaic, alerting us to such telling pairs as Hornfair Park and Cuckold's Point, Giltspur Street and *Knyghtryders Strete*, Lampton and Osterley, Happy Valley and The Devil's Den.

It is hard to find genuine fault with any single entry. Let me try a few. It might be noted that the early data for Yiewsley offer little support for the interpretation involving \**Wifel*, a postulated Old English personal name which is in any case of questionable authenticity; a solution involving a first element without *-l-* would be preferable. The discussion of Lothbury silently omits those early forms which show medial *-ing-*, albeit without doing too much violence to the interpretation (*Street-Names of the City of London*, pp. 196–97). There is no comment on the appearance of an intrusive *-t-* in Stamford Bridge. Given the extreme rarity of elements of Scandinavian origin in the area, Biggin Hill may well contain the topographically plausible OE *bēcun* 'beacon' rather than ME *bigging* 'building' (Mills himself (p. xlix) notes the nickname *Biggin on the Bump* for Biggin Hill aerodrome).<sup>1</sup> An unduly suspicious reader might have hoped for some comment on the striking similarity of the name Lombard Street to the fractionally earlier name(s) of the same street (*regius vicus* [to] *Longebrod* 1252, *Langburnestrate* 1285)—did those thirteenth-century Lombard merchants feel a magnetic pull? But this is a scattering of minor quibbles sifted out of 256 pages of dictionary entries; we are clearly in safe hands.

It is a bonus to discover the many 'lost' names which are included. These are discussed under the modern name of their location (only *Stane Street* has a separate entry), so finding them can be a little tricky. Happily there is a glossary of elements (bar personal names) which includes the lost names. The provision of this A-to-Z of elements is particularly welcome, being at once a useful tool for everyday research and a treasure-trove of rare delights. Such items as ME \**berdcherver* 'beard-cutter, barber', OE \**sifethen* 'full of chaff or bran', ME \**knightridere* 'mounted knight, knight who rode at tournaments', ME *neckercher* 'neckerchief', ME *paternostre* 'maker of rosaries', even OE *ludgeat* 'back gate, postern' are previously unknown to the nation's

<sup>1</sup> An identical development with intervocalic voicing of [k] to [g] can be seen in another Kentish name, Biggin Street (*Bikken Strete* 1296, *Byggenstrete* 1547, *Bekin Street* 1549, *Began Strete* 1566) in Dover, a town famed for its Roman lighthouses (P. Cullen, *The Place-Names of the Lathes of St Augustine and Shipway, Kent* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex, 1997), p. 468). In the earliest spelling of Biggin Hill (*Byggunhull* 1499), medial *-un-* also favours *bēcun* over *bigging*.

list-scourers. Although with further trawling through the dictionary one could suggest additions (ME *ground*, *ponde*, and ModE *arsenal*, *chopped*, *gravel*, *midway*, *primrose*, *twig* are candidates), by realistic standards this is a comprehensive glossary. Many headforms have evidently been chosen to reflect the range of linguistic periods and forms in which the place-names are first recorded (hence ME *melle*, *mille* as well as OE *myln* for 'mill'), though occasionally an Old English headform is employed in traditional EPNS fashion despite the lateness of the place-name record (OE *gār-lēac* in Garlick Hill from 1281, OE *hlāf-mæsse* in Lammas Park from 1839).

As is often the case with onomastic material, this assemblage affords a good number of words which antedate their earliest attestations in the standard dictionaries.<sup>1</sup> Note, for instance, ME *dok* 'dock [for ships]' 1422 in St Katharine's Dock (1486 in *OED-2* s.v. *dock* sb.3), ME *menouresse* 'Franciscan nun' 1341 in Minories (1386 in *MED* s.v. *Menouresse*, 1395 in *OED-3* s.v. *Minouresse*), ME *popler* 'poplar' 1327 in Poplar (1346 in *MED* s.v. *popler(e)*, 1382 in *OED-2* s.v. *poplar*), ME *pultrie* 'poultry market' 1298 in Poultry (1345–46 in *MED* s.v. *pultriē*, 1429 in *OED-2* s.v. *poultry* sense 2), ME *viniterie* 'wine-store' 1244 in Vintry (1273 in *MED* s.v. *vintri(e)*, 1297 in *OED-2* s.v. *vintry*), ModE *cock* 'chief' 1524 in Cockfosters (1628 in *OED-2* s.v. *cock* sb.1 sense 22), and ModE *chock-hole* 'rut in a road' c.1745 in Chohole Gate (1884 in *OED-2* s.v. *chock* sb.1).

I have spotted just two typographical errors in the whole book: under Billiter Street a syllable has dropped out of the 1298 form *Belyetslane*, which should read *Belyeterslane* (Ekwall, *Street-Names of the City of London*, p. 113), and in the glossary \**stapled* 'built with pillars' should be ME rather than OE. The material in Ekwall's *addenda* appears to have gone unnoticed (thus for Billiter Street we may add the earlier form *Belyetereslane* 1244, and for Bevis Marks the earlier *Bewesmarkes* 1372). I would also venture to add *in campo sancti Egidii* a.1471 for St Giles in the Fields.<sup>2</sup> That useful additional data remain to be marshalled is evident from a browse through the

<sup>1</sup> *MED* = H. Kurath and S. M. Kuhn (eds), *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor, 1952–2001); *OED-2* = J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (eds), *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1989); *OED-3* = J. Simpson (ed.) *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (online <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>, draft entries March 2002).

<sup>2</sup> G. L. Harriss and M. A. Harriss, 'John Benet's Chronicle for the years 1400 to 1462', *Camden Miscellany*, XXIV, Camden Fourth Series, 9 (London, 1972), p. 177.



card indexes in the English Place-Name Society's library at Nottingham—whence, for example, earlier forms for Garlick Hill (*Garlecheythe* 1275), Houndsditch (*Hundesdich* 1100–35), Lime Street (*Limstrate* 1100–35), Ludgate (*Lutgata* 1100–35), Nicholas Lane (*vico Scī Nicholai* c.1200), Old Jewry (*la Giuwerie* 1299), Paternoster Row (*Paternosterrowe* 1307), Poultry (*Polettar'* 1275), Pudding Lane (*Puddinglane* 1320), St Martin's le Grand (*venella Scī Martini* c.1200), Turnagain Lane (*Wendageyneslane* 1216–72) and Vintry (*vinitaria* 1170). But that task awaits the future editor of an exhaustive EPNS survey of the place-names of the City of London. Completeness is in any case impossible, and this most welcome concise dictionary of the whole of Greater London achieves a laudable level of coverage: very few of Mills' etymologies are likely to be challenged by the discovery of further documentation.

PAUL CULLEN

GWYNEDD O. PIERCE, *Place-Names in Glamorgan*. Merton Priory Press, Cardiff, 2002. 240 pp. £14.95 paperback. (ISBN 1 898937 57 5)

This book consists of notes on place-names in Glamorgan, which have been extracted from a series of articles on Welsh place-names published in the *Western Mail* between 1993 and 1998. These articles were written and contributed to by four well respected Welsh scholars: Bedwyr Lewis Jones, Gwynedd O. Pierce (the author), Tomos Roberts and Hywel Wyn Owen. The articles were originally written in Welsh, and the book is, according to the author, a response to demands for an English edition. It makes no claim to be either a scholarly work or a complete reference text. As the author states quite clearly in the introduction, 'The series [of articles in the *Western Mail*] ... was conceived with the intention that it should be read by that amorphous category, the "general reader". Consequently the presentation is in a form which some toponymists will call "popular".' Footnotes are not supplied, but a fairly thorough list of further reading material is included. The names are in alphabetical order, and there is an index to the modern forms of the names. However, one consequence of the popular format is that not all Glamorgan place-names are discussed, and the book is therefore not a reference text.

However, the popular format also results in the origin of each individual name being discussed in very readable short essays. These essays disclose an impressive knowledge of historical forms, of local landscape features and of local history for the Glamorgan area. Determining the origins of names found

in areas that have been bilingual for such a length of time as Glamorgan requires a good grasp of all three areas of knowledge, and this is demonstrated throughout the book. A particular example is the folk reinterpretation of surnames as Welsh place-name elements: *Coedarhydyglyn* (p. 43), for example, turns out to originate as Coed Raglan, with Raglan being the surname of local landowners; *Maes-y-ward* (p. 185) is either Maes Heyward or Maes Siward, likewise.

I found this to be a well-laid out and nicely presented book, both interesting and informative for the 'lay' reader, being neither excessively weighty with reference nor patronisingly simplistic. By the same token, it is perhaps not for the Welsh place-name scholar, although specialists in the place-names of other countries may find it an interesting introduction.

MEREDITH CANE

#### Also received

The works we are sent for review in *Nomina* reflect the many different directions from which people approach name studies. Perhaps the most usual is the straightforward place-names survey; we receive many from Scandinavia where this discipline is very active. KJELL VENÅS, *Norske innsjønamn IV, Telemark fylke*, Novus Forlag: Oslo 2002. 480 pp. no price given. ISBN 827099 3492 is part of an ongoing scholarly series and comprises a dictionary of Telemark lake-names with chapters of analysis.

Heart of Albion Press appears from its list of publications to be devoted to the local history of Leicestershire and Rutland, and its place-names book JILL BOURNE, *Understanding Leicestershire and Rutland Place Names*, Loughborough 2003. 124 pp. £6.95. ISBN 1872883710 obviously draws very heavily on the work of Barrie Cox, Margaret Gelling and Kenneth Cameron. It discusses the Celtic, Anglo-Saxon and Viking strata, gives the names in dictionary form and indexes the elements; place-name scholars will find little new and may quarrel with some of the necessary simplifications, but for all that, it is a useful little handbook for the general public with an interest in these midland counties.

From the early days of Sweet and Searle, onomastics has been closely connected with language study, and it is probably for that reason that Oxford University Press sent us P. H. MATTHEWS, *Linguistics, a Very Short Introduction*, Oxford 2003. 134pp. £6.99. ISBN 0192801481. A taste of the Very

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.

VERONICA SMART

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*Carole Hough*

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### II: Ancillary disciplines

#### (a) Historical studies

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