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Any readers who venture to my (1996) are warned that printer's gremlins were active in it, mainly to remove "becomes" signs from the sound-change *ie>y*.

Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland

Fourteenth Annual Study Conference: Swansea 2005

The fourteenth annual study conference of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland was held at the University of Wales Swansea campus from 2 to 5 April 2005. The programme was organized by Professor Prys Morgan, who also began it with 'Swansea and Gower: an illustrated tour' first of geology and its effects on mediaeval history then of large changes in the socio-economic landscape of recent lifetimes.

Professor Hywel Wyn Owen and Mr. Gruffudd Prys (Bangor) expounded the current state of 'Archif Melville Richards: a place-name resource database for Wales'. Professor Richards' daughter, who was present, thought he would have been pleased at how his successors are handling the material he collected. Dr. Simon Taylor (St. Andrews) gave a progress report on 'A survey of place-names in Fife', starting with colourful maps from the eighteenth century and aspiring 'towards a national survey of place-names of Scotland'. Drs David Parsons and Paul Cullen (Nottingham) exhibited choice specimens from the latest stage of their 'Vocabulary of English Place-Names'. Dr. Duncan Probert (Birmingham) enquired into the extent and mode to which Britons survived the advent of 'Anglo-Saxons in Devon'. He showed that the proportions at different periods of etymologically British to English estate-names in the Exeter area fit the hypothesis of physical survival with cultural distinctness diminishing gradually over several centuries; the sample sizes however are so small as to carry a significant risk that the variation was random. John and Sheila Rowlands (Aberystwyth) demonstrated regional variation in 'The distribution of surnames in Wales'.

Dr. Peder Gammeltoft (Copenhagen) asked 'What is a name to a Viking?' Our view of vikings' onomastic practices like that of their other activities is of course refracted through the prism of thirteenth-century saga writings and what survives of the more or less contemporary skaldic verse they drew on. That did not prevent him from showing that linguistic strategies employed in the British Isles differed

markedly between the different native language areas. Pictish names were more or less ignored; more than 90% of names for Pictish places are new Norse coinages. In the Gaelic zone that proportion is down to two-thirds, the rest taken over mainly by phonetic adaptation. The sample of Welsh and Cornish names was too small for reliable conclusions, but such as it was the proportion of new names was again two-thirds. By contrast a good three-quarters of Old English names were taken over. Usually they were adapted to corresponding Norse name-elements, or failing that similar-sounding elements; thus the Norse word for 'ford' was *vað*, so English names in *ford* were treated as containing *furða* 'wonder, omen' (not inappropriately for the battle of Stamford Bridge). Yet Norse-speakers could feel at home enough in Old English to reshape a name with a purely English element, producing *Lundúnir*, as it were 'Lon-downs', for London. Phonetic adaptation not as part of morphemic reshaping was very rare; the speaker's admirably detailed handout shows it much less real than he counted it. Not having a separate category for names whose Norse form, even if not identical with the standard form in the donor language, was within the range of normal phonetic variation in that language (as *Humra* Humber, *Norðimbraland* Northumberland), distorts proportions for Old English as it seems not to for Gaelic. Possibly among this group belongs OE *Engla land*, ON *England* itself (patently not a new name as the handout has it). It displays haplosyllabic reduction of a kind that straddles the divide between phonetic and morphemic; the question is in which language. Forms like *Engelond* without the first *l* are apparently not attested in written English before the first decade of the thirteenth century. They are sure to have existed earlier in speech; whether two centuries earlier, as seems indicated for skaldic *England*, is debatable.

Dr. Chris Lewis (Institute of Historical Research, London) considered 'English places named after saints: why so few?' England, he said, has less than a twentieth the proportion of place-names involving church dedications that France does; Wales and Scotland have two or three times as many again. John Freeman (London) spoke on 'Place-names and field names in "Welsh" Herefordshire', exploring the interplay of Welsh and English naming in the part of that county south and

west of the river Wye. Dr. Margaret Gelling (Birmingham) told a cautionary tale of 'The Cambridge Dictionary', or what happens when an editor dies, his staff have relied too much on technology, and the publishers insist on production far faster than his scholarly successors think advisable. Lively debate comparing recent place-name dictionaries followed.

The society's Annual General Meeting passed off without serious incident. Then Dr. George Redmonds (Huddersfield) presented what he defined as a category of 'Unofficial names' collected from conversation with local people. Some were deformations of recorded names, e.g. The 'Oggeries for Thurgary Lane (from a twelfth-century assart called the Two Thurgaries); others encapsulated social comment, usually derogatory, in a narrowly stratified community, e.g. Brass Knob Row for a road with housewives more than usually house-proud. On the way we learnt how ginnels and snickets differ from alleys: a ginnel is paved and goes uphill, a snicket winds and is unmade. Dr. Conchubar Ó Crualaoich (Place-Names Office, Dublin) spoke on 'Place-names in County Wexford: Irish place-names in an English coat and English place-names in many coats'. He found that the language of surnames contained in barony-names was not a reliable guide to which language people spoke in the vicinity in the time of James I when they were recorded. Dr. Jonathan Roper (Sheffield) found a paucity of 'Personal and place names in English verbal charms'. They were of course holy names; unlike Dr. Lewis he had to go as far as Russia to get significantly larger numbers.

The afternoon excursion, to castles and other conspicuous places in the Vale of Towy, was led by Prys Morgan, practising his skills as an improviser, since traffic delays forced use of a route less interesting than the one he had prepared. The only long stop was at the castle and National Trust house of Dinefwr (*anglice* Dinevor), formerly seat of the princes of South Wales. The closing paper by Dr. John Insley traced onomastically the triethnic history of 'Septimania: Romans, Goths, and Franks', rejoicing in such insolently titled Latin sources as *Judgement promulgated on the perfidy of tyrants*.

P.R.K.

The Scottish Place-Name Society
Comann Ainmean-Aite na h-Alba

The Scottish Place-Name Society was set up in 1996 and has over 300 members in Scotland and abroad. Some of the members are full-time academics working in various aspects of place-names, archaeology, history or language. But the bulk of the membership is composed of people from all walks of life who find place-names a fascinating hobby or interest. Our conferences and newsletters always contain a fine blend of contributions from academics and amateurs. We see this as one of the Society's strengths.

The subscription is £5.00 per financial year (April–March). Members of the Society are entitled to:

· our twice-yearly newsletter, which contains resumés of conference items, books reviews, research in progress, and all new developments in the field
· attendance at our spring AGM with full voting rights, and at the conference attached to the AGM and the autumn conference: these two conferences have been held all over the country
· the opportunity to work with the Society in exciting new developments such as the Scottish place-name database

Further information can be sought from either of the following:

Scottish Place-Name Society	Mr Peter Drummond
c/o Celtic and Scottish Studies	Convener, SPNS
University of Edinburgh	8 Academy Place
27 George Square	Coatbridge
Edinburgh EH8 9LD	ML5 3AX

Or visit the Society's website at:
http://www.st-and.ac.uk/institutes/sassi/spns

REVIEWS

RICHARD A. V. COX, *The Gaelic Place-Names of Carloway, Isle of Lewis: their Structure and Significance*. School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2002. xii + 484 pp. €25. (ISBN 1 85500 192 6)

This is a magnificent book, and is exceptionally good value at €25 (about £16 or £17). Not only is it a superbly thorough record of the place-names in the registration district of Carloway (an area of about 150 km², with a population of 564 in 1981); it is also an outstanding example of how these place-names can be explained and analysed to greatest effect. It is not the first attempt to publish the place-names of an area of the Hebrides where, per force, the absence of early records makes the toponymist's task dependent on material from local informants rather than early forms. There are, for example, Ian Fraser's work on the townships of Illeray (North Uist), Knockrome (Jura) and Achmelvich (Sutherland) based on a single informant in each case (*Scottish Studies*, 14 (1970) 192–97 and 17 (1973) 155–61), or Donald Macaulay's probing analysis and reflections on researching the place-names of the five townships of Bernera (Lewis) (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 41 (1971–72), 313–37). With this book, however, Cox has moved the study of Hebridean place-names onto a higher plain, both in the depth and presentation of its research, and in its analytical and theoretical underpinning, and as such is worthy of a much wider audience than simply students and enthusiasts of Scottish and Norse place-names alone.

The bedrock of the book, presented in an admirably lucid and economical fashion, is the gazetteer of 3,816 place-names (pp. 145–390), with a full explanation of the information supplied in the gazetteer, including a chart of phonetic values (pp. 143–44). The recorded pronunciation of these names, and indeed the existence of the large majority of them, are the fruits of eight months of fieldwork conducted by Cox between 1982 and 1985 as part of the research for his PhD dissertation on the place-names of Carloway (Glasgow, 1987). We are told that there were sixty-seven informants whose average age was just under seventy; nearly all of them lived in the townships in which they grew up (except, of course, in the odd case where tenurial arrangements had been disrupted within their lifetime) (pp. 10–11). A list of informants is provided, along with all the available maps and documentary sources (in chronological order) and a bibliography of works cited (pp. 129–42). The limited documentary evidence means that there is a meagre diet of early forms. The lack of chronological depth is balanced by the intimacy afforded

by this minutely focused snapshot of the place-names of a Gaelic-speaking community in the 1980s. It is also in itself a priceless document of a wealth of names that must by now have been diminished by changing patterns of daily life and the decline of Gaelic: in the 1981 census 92.4% of the population in the parishes of Barvas and Uig combined (Carloway straddles both) could speak, read or write Gaelic, while in the 1991 census the figure for Barvas was 84.4% and for Uig 76.4% (pp. 7–8).

This sizeable corpus is discussed from many different angles. Most of the analysis is devoted to linguistic aspects: the syntax of the place-names (pp. 15–30), their onomastic and semantic structure (pp. 31–48), stress and morphology (pp. 49–60), prepositions within names (pp. 61–62) and the phonetics of the names (pp. 63–66). There are also sections on Norse loan-names (pp. 67–68) and loan-words from Pictish (*peite* and *lamrig*, discussed by Cox in *Nomina*, 20 (1997) 47–58), Scots/English, and Norse (pp. 107–10). There is also an exhaustive survey of the onomasticon (pp. 69–106), from which an invaluable and intimate portrait emerges of the district's society and environment, and a series of extremely helpful finding tools: a 'register of elements' in the place-names of Carloway (pp. 391–418), and indexes of 'Isle of Lewis and Scottish Gaelic Place-names' and of 'Words and Other Names'.

The only section that unavoidably lacks the same internal strength is that on chronology (pp. 111–24). Given the total absence of medieval documents relating to this area, and the minute proportion of names recorded before the nineteenth century, it is inevitable that dating criteria are dependent chiefly on more general studies of linguistic history and on what Cox calls 'chrono-logical isoglosses' (p. 112), such as loan-words from Norse or 'English/Scots'. An attempt is also made to assign personal names in place-names (such as *Creag Gille Bhrìghde* and *Creagan Dhòmhnaill Mhic Iain*) to par-ticular periods. The logic is questionable, however. For example, he argues (p. 119) that the two place-names I have cited might belong to the period '1335–1493, when Lewis was under the Lordship of the Isles', on the basis that 'Gilbride, MacIan [and others] … were septs of MacDonald' (p. 119 n. 16). If only History could be so tidy! The most obvious objection is that there is no telling when the eponyms lived. Gille Brìghde and Dòmhnall Mac Iain (which may be 'mac Iain', 'son of Iain', rather than 'MacIain' as a surname) could be in the same class as other individuals recalled in similar place-names, like Murchadh Mòr in *Creag Mhurchaidh Mhòir* or Uilleam Mac Nèill (or mac Nèill) in *Creagan Uilleim Mhic Nèill*.

If this is a lapse in judgement it is but a tiny blip in a massively impressive

work of scholarship. The astonishing range and depth of the data, and its meticulous organisation, is a priceless record of a past way of life when Gaelic was so strong and people were so much more aware of their immediate surroundings. Cox has made it possible for us, as far as the printed page will allow, to see this area with the eyes of his informants down to the most remarkable and transient detail, and to hear their voices as they utter these names. The explanatory chapters, for their part, offer a magnificent introduc-tion to the linguistic component of the discipline of place-name studies, start-ing with the simplest phenomena and reaching the most advanced concepts in little more than fifty pages. Everyone with an interest in Scottish and Norse place-names will want this book; but I would also recommend it strongly to anyone anywhere teaching the study of place-names.

DAUVIT BROUN

MATS WAHLBERG (ed.), *Svenskt ortnamns-lexikon*. Språk- och folkminnesinstitutet, Uppsala, 2003. 422 pp. 350 Swedish kr., hardback. (ISBN 91-7229-020-X)

This Swedish place-name dictionary has been prepared by the Language and Folklife Institute and the Department of Nordic Languages at Uppsala Univer-sity and written by a group of specialist researchers at both institutions under the editorship of Mats Wahlberg.

It is an impressively meticulous work which gives a succinct overview of examples of Swedish, Finnish and Sami place-names from the whole of Sweden. It is the first Swedish place-name dictionary of its kind and it is valuable because it incorporates the main cultural and linguistic strands which are to be found in the place-names of the country. The introduction explains the rationale behind the inclusion of names in the dictionary and it also gives a very clear exposition for the benefit of the reader who has not previously studied place-names under the sub-heading 'What is a place-name?' This is not a book which sacrifices academic precision on the altar of popular appeal; it is concise but always thorough and challenging within the limits set by its format. It is an attractive book which has some colour and black-and-white illustrations scattered throughout, as well as the useful maps of place-name distribution which can be found at various points. The names themselves are organised alphabetically but somehow the fact that the text is broken up by

these interesting illustrations makes it seem less like a dictionary and more like a book that one might happily browse through from beginning to end, finding a place-name on each page to provide food for onomastic thought. On a personal note, I was pleased to find an explanation of Jokkmokk, a name which, for some reason, has always attracted my interest and I do like the picture on p. 118 in which the far horizon beckons, but others will prefer some of the less bleak landscapes in the volume.

The introduction to the dictionary notes that about 6,000 place-names from the whole of Sweden are included in the text. Various types of names are exemplified: parts of the country, topographical names, counties, parishes, towns, communes and population centres are all included. In general, the names which are included are those which are most well known and about which, therefore, people are most likely to enquire. Wisely, space is not wasted on duplicate names, although where a name has multiple functions, for instance as population centre, part of Sweden, river name, city name, administrative province name and so on, these variants are listed separately, as for Göta, Götaland, Göta älv, Göteborg and Göteborgs och Bohus län on p. 103.

The explanation following each name is very clearly structured. The head form, derived from the most recent property register or map, appears first, followed by a precise indication of the location of the place. Next comes the earliest recorded form of the name and a suggested interpretation of the elements of the name, with generic first followed by specific. This simple structure is followed throughout with some embellishment of detail as appropriate and it is certainly very helpful to the reader who is seeking basic information from the dictionary. For the researcher wishing to investigate a name more deeply it is an extremely useful starting point. As most people do, I tested the dictionary by looking up places which have personal significance for me and I did not find it wanting. In the course of doing this, I came across a detailed explanation of the word *tun* on pp. 328–30 which gave readers the opportunity to consider this important element much more closely and also referred them to literature on the element by several reputable place-name scholars. *Sta(d)*, for example, receives similarly close attention (pp. 289–90). This is a particularly pleasing aspect of the *Svenskt ortnamns-lexikon* in which serious scholarship sits easily with information for the educated layperson. It is very well done and the editor and his team deserve praise.

The dictionary concludes with a useful bibliography which is thoughtfully constructed for the benefit of the user who might sometimes wish to peruse general reference material and sometimes material relating to a particular

province or part of Sweden. The final pages of the dictionary give a list of names mentioned in the articles about names and direct the reader to the relevant name reference in the dictionary. This is typical of the precise attention to detail which characterises this dictionary. It is a pleasure to use and I commend it to those readers who have an interest in Swedish place-names, whether they be of Swedish, Finnish or Sami linguistic origin.

DOREEN WAUGH

GRAHAM JONES (ed.), *Saints of Europe. Studies towards a Survey of Cults and Culture*. Shaun Tyas: Donington, 2003. ix + 279 pp., 32 figs. £35. (ISBN 1 900289 57 1)

This collection is an early example of what will undoubtedly become a stream of publications from TASC: the Trans-national Database and Atlas of Saints' Cults. This ambitious and timely project seeks to compile a systematic, comprehensive inventory of devotion to saints' cults across Europe. Using the parish as the fundamental unit of interest, the TASC project as it develops will allow the mapping of spatial, temporal and thematic patterns through the Christian centuries. Its methodology allows for documentary records to be supplemented by evidence from other fields, such as archaeology, etymology, art history, landscape history and, not least, onomastics: these disciplines are indispensable in those locales where formal written records of devotion are partial or lacking.

Graham Jones' introductory essay provides a very useful overview of the origins and aims of TASC; elsewhere, Helmut Flachenecker uses the phrase 'gateways to study' (p. 86), and this seems a perfect summation. TASC seeks to provide something which is no more and no less than an inventory of cult observance, 'an open-access research tool [for] academia ... plus an historical and cultural information resource for the general public' (p. lx). As such, it is restricted to tangibles, to facts and figures; it is unable in itself to explore motivations—political, economic and social as well as religious—but it serves to facilitate the study of these intangibles by providing the possibility of drawing meaningful comparisons over space and time. Jones is a medievalist, but he is keen to underline the importance of taking the research beyond the Reformation and into the modern era, citing as an example his own work on Catalan inventories which has demonstrated a considerable increase in both

christocentric and new Marian cults after the Council of Trent. The nine-teenth-century Catholic revival in the Netherlands is another example of late change, and it underlines the need to move beyond the search for the 'authentic' dedication of a church or other locus, in the sense of the earliest which is historically attested. As Jones states, with the mapping of change over time a 'rich palimpsest of dedications' (p. 5) becomes clear, and hence the study of changing motivations and conditions becomes possible.

Jones also emphasises the utility of dedications for researchers whose main interest falls outside the realm of religious history. He notes that cults are in general tenacious: 80% of parochial dedications in a Catalan diocese are the same today as they were in the early medieval period. Survival is even apparent through periods of profound disruption, for example in England throughout the Danish invasions and settlement, and also in central and east-ern Europe despite the Turkish conquest. Saints can act as an expression of national or regional identity, and thousands of towns and villages have taken the name of their patron saint, the dedicatee of their primary religious build-ing. Jones presents a map of hagiotoponyms in France, sadly almost illegible, but this does at least demonstrate the potential relevance which TASC has for place-name studies: in his commentary on this map he notes that E. Le Roy Ladurie and A. Zysberg ('Géographie des hagiotoponymes en France', *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 38, 6 (November/December 1983), 1304–34) have established that the concentration of hagiotoponyms in western and southern France matches quite closely the country's zone of sparsest population. Meanwhile, Michael Costen's paper includes a dis-cussion of St Wite and her apparent inclusion in the place-name Whitchurch (Dorset). In the reverse direction, place-name evidence can uncover traces of lost cults. In their paper on saints' cults in medieval Transylvania, Maria Craciun and Carmen Florea comment that some villages seem to have been named after a church which is otherwise unrecorded. Margaret McCormack's paper on saints' cults in Iceland also demonstrates the usefulness of onomastics: she notes that the forename *Mary* was not given to Icelandic girls until after the Reformation, so any medieval place-name on the island containing the element *Mariu* must therefore be associated with the Virgin. McCormack also demonstrates the effect of travel and trade, noting that saints who attracted interest before 1200 in Iceland had a better chance of becoming primary patrons than those whose devotions arrived later, and suggesting that the importation of alabaster altarpieces from England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may have led to the acquisition of new venerations also.

Paolo Golinelli's paper gives a good example of how the localisation of a cult affects economic life, for the annual end of agricultural workers' contracts in Bologna reflected interest in St Michael (September 29), whereas elsewhere in northern Italy the feast of St Martin was used (November 11).

The unusual geographic range of this collection is one of its strongest features, not least because of the ways in which information about places beyond our personal knowledge can illuminate more familiar areas. I was par-ticularly struck by Youhanna Nessim Youssef's discussion of the siting of pil-grimage churches and monasteries in Egypt, where the provision space for the pitching of pilgrims' tents seems to have been a primary issue. The question is, were sites chosen with this factor in mind, or did the less accessible sites fall from favour and disappear? Likewise, Youssef's contention that the development of the cult of Bashnûna (Bashnufa) in the 1990s answered contemporary needs among the Copts both highlights the extent to which saints are constructed and also suggests the possibility of changing allegiances as previously popular figures lose some of their usefulness. That said, these types of questions are not directly addressed. The papers in this volume are restricted to a discussion of the typology of sources, historiography and the current state of research, and there is in general very little analysis of data. Jones' second paper, on cults in England, Wales and Catalunya, comes to a tantalising end: he states that 'cults appear to have been chosen for the meanings they carried in the saints' stories and attributes' (pp. 259–60), but does not elaborate. I feel that one paper dealing with just this kind of example would have been a really useful addition to the volume, demonstrating how TASC can be put to work.

My other major criticism of this collection is the quality of the production values. The layout is often poor, with tables and figures apparently located arbitrarily: for example, Jones' very useful table of components of veneration is presented on p. 11, but does not seem to be referred to in the text until p. 213. The placement and legibility of maps is a particular problem: a number of maps appear within the introductory chapter but there seems to be no discussion of them, and several maps, for example figures 8 and 12, are virtually impossible to read. However, we can at least conclude that this points up the real need for electronic mapping with use of colour, the provision of chronological or thematic overlays and the potential to modify the scale with a zoom function. But it has to be admitted that there are many technical problems with this book. The title elements in tables are often not highlighted and hence merge with the content, for example the tables on pp.

166–70. Elsewhere, on pp. 66–67, the text of the article is placed below the titles of two large figures, and is separated from the rest of the text by a gap of two pages: this is by no means the most reader-friendly format that could have been devised. The titles of some figures are absent or incomplete: for example, Irina Tcherniakova's paper makes several references to Map 3, but the maps associated with her paper are not numbered. Furthermore, keys explaining the symbols used in maps are not always present, or are inconsistently presented. In consequence it is sometimes difficult to connect the argument presented in the text to the tables and maps, and some maps and appendices are not discussed at all. Perhaps the biggest issue is the lack of any indices. A full index would undoubtedly have been very lengthy, but the omission of any index of saints' names or place-names is a serious problem for anyone who wishes to use the book for reference.

There are also several instances of opaque authorial assertions: the sense is sometimes that the author is too close to their own research to be able to explain it fully. Jones does make very helpful editorial interpolations in some papers, highlighting differences in usage between countries and regions, but more of this is needed. For example, an argument presented by Tcherniakova on pp. 150–51 needs much greater clarity to allow the reader to locate the place-names given; her Table 3 presumably links to the map on p. 142, but it is unclear exactly how. Likewise, the provision of a map would have helped to make sense of Youssef's paper, which assumes that the reader is familiar with the concepts of Upper, Middle and Lower Egypt, whilst datings for the patriarchs mentioned would also have helped to illuminate the argument.

Despite these reservations, I am confident that this volume will provide a useful introduction to the work of TASC, and will encourage more researchers to become involved in a project which currently encompasses twenty-nine partner institutions in nineteen countries. Furthermore, it should encourage scholars to start to analyse the downloadable datasets that TASC makes accessible through their website; Susan Pearce's caveat that patterns of distribution are as much in the eye of the beholder as they are in the data is an important warning, but, for me, the real interest is in the attempt to make sense of these patterns. I await further developments eagerly.

SAMANTHA RICHES

MINNA SAARELMA-MAUNUMAA, *Edhina Ekogidho—Names as Links: The Encounter between African and European Anthroponymic Systems among the Ambo People in Namibia.* Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki (Studia Fennica Linguistica 11), 2003. 373 pp. €32. (ISBN 951-746-529-7, ISSN 1235-1938)

This work is based on the author's Helsinki doctoral dissertation on the changing personal-naming practices of the Ambo of northern Namibia in the context(s) of European colonialism and Christianization. The situation was, as the author (MSM) notes (p. 322), less complex than in other parts of Africa, but its relative simplicity allows a very clear formulation of the influences, processes and changes at work, and the result is a book which is at the same time both copiously and precisely documented, and descriptively and theoretically sophisticated. The writer of the blurb on the cover describes it as 'remarkable', and this positive judgement is certainly merited.

The Ambo people, better known in British sources as the Ovambo (if at all), were culturally uninfluenced by Europe until around 1880, when they began to be evangelized by German, and later Finnish, Lutheran missionaries. The story MSM tells is largely one of the interaction between the Ambo of three linguistically and culturally related districts close to the Angolan border and the dominant Finnish mission (pp. 75–106), and the resultant transformation of traditional anthroponyms, name-structures, naming practices and naming ceremonies (pp. 107–94). Her main primary sources are the baptismal records of these congregations from 1913 to 1993, with a leavening of unscripted information on name-related practices taken from interviews with Ambo informants. If the reader expects a pedestrian tale of the replacement of the old by the new, s/he will be surprised. What has happened is a real synthesis between old and new, with some elements of the old retained, some discarded and some reinterpreted, and some elements of the new integrated into transmuted traditional practices, eloquently illustrating Volker Kohlheim's principle that cultural change begets indeterminate linguistic consequences (as well as, incidentally, its social corollary, the 'three laws of applied anthroponymics' of Cecily Clark). The following summary rests mainly on pp. 311–22, which itself is a cogent and insightful summary of the vast amount of material presented earlier in the book; I omit much of great interest and many qualifications that should apply to bald assertions.

Names are hugely important in traditional Ambo culture, and are regarded as one of the essences of their bearers (see p. 107), which explains why

getting the right name for birth-circumstances and for integration into the moral fabric of society are seen as crucial. The Ambo had temporary names given at birth and often motivated by circumstances (in the most general sense) obtaining at the time of birth. These were replaced at a ritually suitable moment by a formal 'real' name normally chosen by the father, usually copying that of a person respected by the father as a role-model for his child, an act which set up mutual obligations between the namesakes *(mbushe)* and in specific ways integrated the families (e.g. a child would address his namesake's kin as if his/her own kin). That explains the title of the book, which is Ambo for 'A name is a bond'. This notion, depending on what looks like a sort of conceptual unification of referents, is clearly so radically different from European ideas of naming, in which names are usually thought of as arbitrary labels, that MSM appears to think current name theory is essentially Eurocentric (pp. 29–30); the meaning of a person's name in Ambo thinking actually *is* the namesake (p. 119), and there are other arresting conceptions of what a name might be (p. 126). The Ambo typically have many other names in addition to the two mentioned, but whilst these are culturally very important and well documented here, they are marginal to MSM's main aim of showing the transformation of the core system of 'real' naming and its attendant practices. Traditional Ambo society was matrilineal and patrilocal; the onomastic consequences of this were the inheritance of mothers' clan-names and fathers' given-names, and the absolute right of fathers to bestow names as an explicit signal that they undertook practical responsibility for their offspring. One thing which remains not quite clear is how to reconcile naming after namesakes with the traditional open-endedness of the Ambo name-stock.

European missionaries brought new names (biblical, bestowed especially on boys, and other-European, including Finnish and German, bestowed especially on girls) which had no lexical meaning. These were bestowed at baptism instead of usually transparent Ambo names in the traditional real-naming contexts, but they were used initially to continue the namesake tradition. The result was an impoverishment of the name-stock because the namesakes were drawn to a significant extent from the members of the small numbers of missionary families, and then, of course, from those named after them. This (among other causes) led in due course to a fashionable but funda-mental change in the Ambo naming-system (accelerating since about 1950) to a replacement of the real-name + patronym two-name norm by one in which, increasingly, the first has been a Eurobiblical one in which the African name-

sake tradition is respected, and the second an Ambo one which (in many cases, still) is bestowed as a right by the father though not necessarily respect-ing the namesake tradition; in fact such names often expressed the new Christian values of the giver. Since about 1960, it has been common to adopt a further Ambo name which respects the European tradition of official sur-naming; this additional name is patrilineally inherited, of course, although such surnaming, privileging the male line, is currently contested in Namibian society, as is the adoption of a husband's surname by a wife. The remarkable thing is the way that the elements of language-choice for naming and the cultural significances of this choice have been teased apart and reintegrated into an entirely new system which is neither fully traditional nor fully novel. MSM is quick to point out the similarities between the Namibian and northern European experiences of change wrought by the adoption of Christianity and their anthroponymic consequences, and is alert to the role of general geo-political, social and cultural trends in promoting other novelties. She is clear on the different roles played by fashion in current European and Ambo prac-tices leading to greater conservatism in Ambo first given names. She is also at pains to stress the gradualness of the changes she discusses and the existence at the same time of competing name-systems and underlying motivations, and also to foreground the special role of the father in both the traditional and modern practices, nowhere more than where she says: 'In general, being addressed by one's father's name is regarded as a special compliment among the Ambo people' (p. 171).

There are full appendices setting out the name-material (pp. 344–57), a massive bibliography (pp. 323–43) and a name-index (pp. 358–73); despite the extremely orderly plan of the book, a topic-index would have been a valuable tool, for example to assemble the scattered references to patronyms, to cases where the relation between names and the sex of the bearer is problematic, or to the impact of Afrikaans. The book is written in almost flawless English, contains very few evident errors of fact or presentation, and is well-produced. It does great credit to the author and the publisher. I found little of substance to carp at, but since reviewers are expected to find some-thing, I could ungraciously say that some of the name-system taxonomies proposed by various scholars could have been dealt with more critically, and sometimes no stand is taken on issues of theoretical controversy (e.g. on the nature—proper or otherwise—of clan-names and some forms of address (pp. 129–30)). Occasionally this reader was left puzzled about the morphology of certain names which seemed to suggest a different sex from the true sex of the

referent (e.g. Ambo male names in *Na-*, which is elsewhere claimed to be a marker characterizing female names especially). But all these matters are relatively unimportant given the scope of the work. It is hard to imagine that any stone has been left unturned, and the name-stocks are analysed from many different angles, linguistic, cultural and numerical.

A growing amount of good work has been done recently on African naming-systems and their linguistics, ably reviewed by MSM (pp. 47–64), and this thorough dissertation is an excellent addition to the growing bibliography of works that can be fully recommended to any scholar with a general interest in the practices of personal-naming as well as to Africanists.

RICHARD COATES

ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH, *Portuguese Irregular Verbs* (ISBN 0 9544075 63); *At The Villa of Reduced Circumstances* (ISBN 0 9544075 98); *The Finer Points of Sausage Dogs* (ISBN 0 9544075 8X). Polygon: Edinburgh, 2003 (reprinted 2004). The copies I have are in paperback, sold as a boxed set, at a greatly reduced price. The cover price for the paperbacks is £7.99 each.

It might be thought unusual, or even presumptuous, for a 'review' of fiction to appear in *Nomina*. Personally I had enjoyed the books, which may say more about this reader than the actual works of fiction, and I felt that other readers of *Nomina* might also enjoy them.

Alexander McCall Smith is Professor of Medical Law at the University of Edinburgh, and his first-hand knowledge of life in academic establishments can clearly be recognised in these works. The first volume in this trilogy traces the early career of Professor Dr Moritz-Maria von Igelfeld and is particularly pertinent to name scholars, covering as it does his fieldwork in search of Early Irish Pornography, his 'great work on *Portuguese Irregular Verbs*' leading to 'frequent invitations to conferences, all of which seemed to be held in most agreeable places'. McCall Smith's descriptions of the 'tedious day at the Comparative Philology Conference in Siena' certainly makes one feel that he has personal experience of such occasions, but, one hastens to add, not at meetings of the Society for Name Studies! Throughout there is gentle humour arising out of both his characters and the situations in which they find themselves.

The sequel to *Portuguese Irregular Verbs* sees von Igelfeld mistakenly being invited to address an American group of vets, getting involved with dachshunds, and eventually becoming the star attraction on a Mediterranean cruise ship—one of the apparent perks of being an alternative to someone who would subject 'all those poor passengers to some terribly dull set of lectures on the subjunctive'.

The third volume covers von Igelfeld's period as visiting scholar at Cambridge, which had been arranged by a colleague who had ulterior motives for this. From Cambridge, following his period of involvement in academic intrigue there, he returns to Germany, musing on why a certain English professor's conversation was 'a loosely-held together stream of non sequiturs and unsupported assertions', his conclusion being that it was the result of 'being Anglo-Saxon ... instead of being German'. He then makes an eventful visit to Colombia.

I am not on any commission from the publishers, having bought my own copies; but, as I said earlier, I thoroughly enjoyed the books—a light read, but not one which is lightweight. McCall Smith assumes that he has an educated audience. You may well enjoy them.

MARY C. HIGHAM

Website

The website of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland is to be found at:

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Members of the Society are invited to submit items for inclusion to: SueLaflin@blueyonder.co.uk

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Work in Progress

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