

## Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland

### Twenty-Third Annual Study Conference

The twenty-third annual study conference organized by the Society for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland was held in the University of Wales's conference centre at Gregynog Hall, Powys, from 4 to 7 April 2014. The programme was organized by David Parsons and Emily Penniford of the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, University of Wales. It began with a discourse by Prys Morgan (Swansea) on the hall itself, named he thought after the hill 'which we in south Wales would call a *crugyn*', replete with picaresque tales of its owners, first traditional gentry the family of Blayney [= *Blaenau*], then a railway millionaire and concrete pioneer's progeny.

On the Saturday morning Carole Hough (Glasgow) cannily brought together two AHRC-funded projects on Scottish toponymy and historical metaphor in 'Belt and braces: the body metaphor and beyond in place-names'. Alison Burns (Glasgow) spoke on 'Ghosts, Flukes and Hungry Hills: an overview of field-names from north-east Scotland', the hinterland of Aberdeen where her grandfather farmed. With that *entrée* she found social interaction with informants more productive than questionnaires. The Flukes of her title could either be fields with a triangular shape like anchor flukes or tidal pools for keeping flounders (OE *flōc*). Richard Morgan (Glamorgan Record Office) expounded a selection of 'Montgomeryshire place-names', full of borrowings in both directions between Welsh and English with plenty of folk-etymological reshaping on both sides. He favoured an eponymous hero for Gregynog. John Baker (Nottingham) gave a conspectus of '*Sāete* names in Shropshire and beyond', stressing how many in Shropshire were formed on names of natural features near which the groups so denoted settled, unlike *Sumorsāete* and *Wilsāete* with early capitals Somerton and Wilton.

Generous time was allowed after lunch for exploration of the grounds and environs, especially by those with weatherproof clothing. Alice Crook (Glasgow) resumed onomasy concentrating on 'Oddities and Ambiguities:

methodological issues in the consultation of the Scottish Old Parish Registers', a resource she thinks much underused for purposes other than constructing family trees. She discussed conventional equations of English (including biblical) and Gaelic-derived names, some very obscure, and boys with a feminine second name. Aengus Finnegan (Westmeath) stepped outside his own county for '*Feighery*, a County Offaly surname'. To popular acclaim he introduced a character *Fearganainm* 'Man without a name', sometimes anglicized as Ferdinand. Graham Collis (Thetford) went 'Looking for Angles and Saxons in the Lumbres Canton', relating physical geography, linguistic boundaries, marine transgressions, barbarian invasions, and Christian missions, to make the point that on the Saxon Shore the Anglo-Saxons are only part of the whole picture.

Paul Cullen (UWE) spoke on 'Kentish names and names of Kent'. He began congenially with breweries extant and defunct, finding Neame and Rigden respectively 68% and 81% Kentish in Archer's atlas of the 1881 census data. Confronting that with divergent historical spellings of what today are similar place-names, he traced surnames to particular local origins, and distinguished names still found mainly near the places that gave rise to them, or at least within the county, from ones originally Kentish whose bearers moved to other parts of the country and ones which may look like Kentish place-names and have become common in Kent but were brought there by immigrants from other counties. There followed a report on the postgraduate workshop which preceded the main conference, whose place-name walk was much more thoroughly rained on than our activities. Peter Kitson (Stoke Prior) provided after-dinner entertainment on 'Old English main road-names', focussing on ones formed with the substantive element of the destination place-name, especially **wīcherpaðas** leading to *Hamwic* Southampton, on London as viewpoint implicit in the etymologies of Watling Street and Ermine Street as well as Akeman Street, and on folk-etymological reshapings which he thought reinforced legendry of giant builders with female personages such as *\*Icenhild*. He discussed how this related to secondary applications of what should be unique road-names, some already in Anglo-Saxon times, their climax Watling Street as a name for the Milky Way in Middle English and especially Scots.

The Sunday began as usual with the Society's annual general meeting. Next came a session of updates on projects, by Rhian Parry (Dolgellau) on *Gwarchod*, with problems encountered when new owners change traditional names, by Katie Hambrook (Oxford) on east Oxfordshire field-names, and by Patrick Hanks (UWE) on *Family Names of the UK*. John and Sheila Rowlands (Aberystwyth) expounded geographical and chronological unevennesses of the change 'From patronymics to settled surnames in Wales: aspects and influences on transition', of which the most important seemed to be people's religious denomination, with Cromwell's Interregnum a complicating factor. Angharad Fychan (Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru) spoke [in Welsh with simultaneous translation] on perils in Welsh place-names of kinds not familiar the other side of the border: ones which warn us to beware a fall or more terminal fates, anthropomorphized watercourses which break their necks, and a plethora of hell's pools.

The afternoon excursion crossed the border to Clun. In uncertain weather church and castle both had their adherents, but the high point came in the museum, where a Victorian flute in the hands of a Belfast aficionado falsified Housman's characterization of the town. Evening brought more project reports, Aengus Finnegan on <logainm.ie> now containing more than 100,000 place-names, Veronica Smart (St Andrews) on the Bibliographical Commentary on Anglo-Saxon Moneyers' Names, and David Parsons (Aberystwyth) on <cymru1900wales.org>, a crowdsourcing project to collect all the names from the second edition six-inch Ordnance Survey maps; with nearly 300,000 transcribed in about three months (about a third of them by one person), he said it generates quite good distribution maps already. The programme reached a properly dominical conclusion with a talk by Thomas Owen Clancy (Glasgow) on 'Saints in the Scottish landscape' (extricated from a minor computer disaster that afternoon by the head chef). He reported that the database of Scottish historical hagiotopeponymy now has a website semi-live, based on 'the once and future Scottish place-name database' begun by Simon Taylor around the turn of the millennium. As is the contemporary mode, his team attained 'a sort of a finish ... you never really finish, the funding just stops'.

P. R. K.

## **Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland**

### **Essay Prize**

1. A prize of £100 will be awarded annually for the best essay submitted on any topic relating to the place-names and/or personal names of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Man or the Channel Islands.
2. Submissions are invited from all students and other researchers. The prize will normally be awarded to those who have not previously had work in onomastics published.
3. Essays should be about 5,000 words in length.
4. Essays should in some way make an original contribution to the subject.
5. The text of the essay should be sent in electronic copy (preferably in MS Word), double-spaced, and including a bibliography of source material used and of books and authors cited.
6. Entries will be judged by a panel appointed by the President of the Society, and may be considered for publication in *Nomina*.
7. Entries must be submitted by 31 August each year. Provided an essay of sufficient merit is forthcoming, the winner will be announced at the AGM the following year.

Entries should be sent to the Honorary Secretary:

Dr Harry Parkin

secretary@snsbi.org.uk

## Reviews

Fran Colman, *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). 328 pp. £75.00 hbk. ISBN 978-0-19-870167-5

Building on its author's earlier body of work in onomastics—notably her studies of moneyers' names—this monograph aims at a coherent theoretical treatment of Anglo-Saxon personal names, their internal structure and their relationship to the general lexicon of Old English (OE).

The book is divided into two major parts. The first, 'On names' (chapters 2–4), is a theoretical account of lexical categories setting out Colman's central thesis that names are a distinct primary lexical category, not a subclass of 'proper' nouns. Moreover, names (or their decomposed elements) are stored in a mental onomasticon which is separate from the lexicon.

The grounds for asserting the categorial distinctness of names are primarily semantic: nouns denote a class of entities with shared properties, and this denotation is independent of particular occurrences of the noun in utterances. Names, meanwhile, do not denote (a name like *John* does not entail any shared properties of its bearers except gender) but they do refer: the use of a name in an utterance allows the hearer to identify the individual referred to. Noun phrases (Colman prefers 'determiner phrases', following the generativist analysis of the determiner as the head) can refer, but nouns by themselves cannot (or rather, they can only do so by virtue of their dependency on a determiner).

As a primary class, names are specified in terms of a theoretical architecture based on the 'notional grammar' of John Anderson, whose

influence is evident throughout Colman's book. Classes of lexical item (subdivided into lexical and functional classes) are described fundamentally by the presence, absence and mutual dependence of the primary categories **P** (predicable) and **N** (referential). Names are at first (chapter 3) classified as 'Determinatives' (specified as {N}, having the category of referentiality but not that of predicability) along with determiners and pronouns; but in a refinement of the theory (§4.1), Colman argues that names are only classifiable as determinatives when they function as syntactic arguments (or from a semantic point of view, as participants in a speech act). The onomasticon is conceived as a mental store of 'inactive' names which can only function as words when they are fixed to an individual through an act of nomination. This means that an 'activated' name acquires the feature {N} through lexical derivation; it is not inherent in the onomastic entry.

One important implication of this theoretical treatment is that it distances name-elements from the common words to which they are etymologically related. The elements of a name like *Æthelstan* are not considered to be simply OE *æþel* 'noble' and *stān* 'stone' compounded to form a name; rather, each of them is the basis for an element derived by conversion from a lexical item of another category (noun or adjective). The selection and combination of elements is motivated not by the compositional 'meaning' of their lexical bases ('noble-stone') but by properties inherent in each element's entry in the onomasticon (*æþel* can be a prototheme but not a deuteriotheme; *stān* can be either, but can only be a deuteriotheme in male names). Sociocultural factors such as alliteration with the names of family members may also influence the selection of elements or whole names.

In the second part of the book, 'Towards the Old English onomasticon' (chapters 5–9), Colman applies the theory outlined in the first part to Old English personal names. Chapter 5 sets out the familiar categorization of OE names into dithematic and monothematic, with the latter subclassified into lall names (e.g., *Abba*), original bynames (confirmed by co-occurrence with a pre-name, e.g., *Lēofa*, cf. *Wulfgar Lēofa*) and hypocoristic reductions of dithematic names (e.g., *Lēofsige* > *Lēofa*). In §5.2, Colman

takes up the problem of dithematic names which show an apparent mismatch between the grammatical gender of the word which is the base for the deuterotheme and the sex of the named individual: for example, male names with the etymologically feminine elements *-mund*, *-noth*, *-laf* (cf. OE *mund* ‘hand; protection’, *nōð* ‘temerity, daring’, and *lāf* ‘remnant, leavings’, respectively) as well as neuter *-cild* (OE *cild* ‘child’) are all well attested; and they decline like strong masculine nouns (gen. *Eadmundes*, etc.). Colman’s explanation of the change of gender is that the common words are converted into name-elements, stored separately in the onomasticon as items belonging to a different declension class, and with their grammatical gender determined by natural gender. This process of conversion renders irrelevant the apparent clash between the gender of a name-element and its common-word base. The question of why particular deuterothemes are assigned to male or female names remains unanswered, however: Colman’s concern is with grammatical structure (albeit within a model of grammar in which semantic features are fundamental).

Following a digression on lexical formation in general (chapter 6), in chapter 7 Colman compares compound nouns to dithematic names, noting that both undergo comparable processes of phonological reduction, particularly consonant assimilation at the boundary between the elements (e.g., OE *hlāf+weard* > *hlaford* > modern English *lord*; *Æpel+wulf* > *Æthulf*). Morphologically, however, she sees an important difference: while phonological reduction may go hand in hand with reduction from two morphemes to one in both nouns and names, the associated semantic opacity (in the reduced form /hlaford/, the identity and etymological meanings of the elements are no longer obvious) is a feature of nouns only. Structural changes in names do not (Colman concludes) involve semantic obscuration, since names have no denotational meaning to begin with.

Chapter 8 focusses at length on *n*-stem names. Here one of Colman’s principal concerns is to assert that the nominative *-a* suffix (feminine *n*-stem names are almost entirely left out of the discussion) is purely inflectional and should not be considered a derivational name-forming suffix, as has been suggested by many scholars. The dispute between Colman and her predecessors is in the weight given to etymology: Colman

does not dispute that the Indo-European *n*-stem formants (\*-en- and the various ablaut grades thereof) were originally derivational, bearing the feature ‘identification’ (where others have proposed ‘definiteness’, ‘singulative’ and other meanings). Synchronically, however, their OE reflexes (nom. sg. masc. -a, fem./neut. -e) are no more than part of the inflectional paradigm. The ‘definiteness’ traditionally associated with the weak adjectival paradigm in OE (and the Germanic languages in general) is a derived feature acquired at the syntactic, rather than the morphological, level. Turning from the *n*-stems in general to *n*-stem names, Colman notes the popularity of the *n*-declension in monothematic names, regardless of their source (whether they are original bynames, lall names or hypocoristic reductions of dithematic names), and suggests that conversion of names to this class is motivated by the historical association with the notional feature ‘identification’ (which, however, is assigned to the *n*-stem declensional class as a whole, and not to its morphological exponents).

If I have a criticism of the book as a whole, it lies in a lack of editorial care. Typographical errors are numerous, and there are some inconsistencies in referencing secondary literature as well as in the provision (or not) of modern English translations for OE lexical items and texts. The handling of OE material at times leaves me wondering about the intended readership. The frequent absence of glosses (in the early chapters) and the detailed discussion of etymologies implies that the reader is expected to be familiar with OE; yet one section (§5.2) opens with a description of OE alliterative verse no more advanced than those one would find in any textbook, and containing no information which would be new to any reader with a working knowledge of the language. The general outline of the *n*-stems in chapter 8, on the other hand, serves a clearer purpose as it introduces the more in-depth arguments which are the topic of the chapter; although even here Colman (or her editor?) feels the need to present *n*-stem nominal and adjectival paradigms twice (pp. 221, 236). All of these are minor issues, but one would expect a publisher with the prestigious reputation of OUP to pay greater attention to them than has been the case in the production of this book.



This work is concerned with the theoretical basis of the proposed mental onomasticon, rather than with the presentation of an onomasticon in the sense of a dictionary or database of name-elements. The emphasis on *a priori* theory makes the early chapters challenging reading, and it results at times in what seems to me rather circular argumentation (Colman affirms the correctness of her analyses of name structures by reference to the theoretical apparatus in the first part; but it is not clear that the theory proceeds from analysis of a well-defined corpus of data). It would be unjust, though, to criticize Colman simply for having a stronger taste for theory than this reviewer. At no point is she less than explicit about the nature of her approach to the material. For onomasts interested in general theories of name structure and the place of names in the grammar of Old English, Colman offers a detailed and thought-provoking thesis which may provide (at least part of) the foundation for any future corpus of OE name-elements.

MARTIN FINDELL

Boel Jepson, *English Place-Name Elements Relating to Boundaries* (Lund: Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, 2011). 257 pp. SEK 149 pbk. ISBN 978-91-7473-165-1.

Scholars at Lund University have made many contributions to English place-name studies, of which the latest is a PhD thesis by Boel Jepson. Starting from the premise that territorial boundaries are historically important phenomena enshrined in place-names, she utilizes material from the English Place-Name Survey (EPNS) and other printed sources for a comparative analysis of the place-name elements Old English (OE) *(ge)māere*, OE *mearc*, OE *\*rān*, *\*rāen(e)* and Old Norse (ON) *rein*, ON *rā* and OE *hār*. The study investigates the meaning and, to some extent, the geographical distribution of the elements and their later reflexes, from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards.

Jepson's methodology is to compile and analyse a corpus of place-names containing each of the above elements, with comprehensive coverage of material from the EPNS volumes for Gloucestershire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, and more selective coverage of other historical counties. She finds that while both OE (*ge*)*māere* and OE *mearc* have the principal meaning 'boundary', the former is more widespread in southern England, while the latter occurs mainly in the south-east. However, these isoglosses become fuzzier as time goes on. As regards OE \**rān*, \**rān(e)* and ON *rein*, the principal meaning is 'boundary strip', but the secondary meanings 'ploughland area bounded by boundary strips, ploughland strip', 'bank between terraces' and 'terrace' are also possible in some cases. ON *rā* 'boundary' or 'boundary mark', the only term strictly confined to boundaries, is mostly found in names recorded from the medieval period or later. The controversial issue of whether OE *hār* 'hoary, grey, old' developed the meaning 'boundary' is addressed, but remains unresolved.

The thesis has evidently been a long time in preparation. Chapter 1 explains that the counties of Gloucestershire and the West Riding of Yorkshire were chosen for particular study partly because the former is situated in southern England and the latter in northern England, and partly because the relevant EPNS volumes had been published 'fairly recently' (p. 18): respectively in 1964 and 1961–62. Keeping up with the growing body of literature in the meantime must have been a challenge, and it is noticeable that bibliography items are not always the most up-to-date. Research tools include R. L. Venezky's *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English* (1980) rather than the online *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (<<http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/pages/pub/web-corpus.html>>), and early editions of Anglo-Saxon charters by W. de Gray Birch (1885–99) and M. Kemble (1839–48) rather than the British Academy's ongoing Anglo-Saxon Charters series (1973–). The Bibliography lists M. Gelling's *Place-Names in the Landscape* (1984) but not its successor *The Landscape of Place-Names* (2000), and A. D. Mills' *A Dictionary of English Place-Names* (1991, 1997) rather than the updated *A Dictionary of British Place-Names* (2003). Perhaps most strikingly, coverage of 'other counties' does not extend to Leicestershire, Lincolnshire or Shropshire, for each of which

several EPNS volumes have now been produced, nor to Rutland, which was completed in 1994. Nevertheless, names from such counties are occasionally mentioned, as with (*Alic.*) *del Rohous* 1327 in Shropshire (p. 224).

Overall the research is painstaking and thorough, as well as being systematically organized. Each of the main chapters deals with a single element or group of elements, first outlining etymological issues, then setting out the material, and finally discussing the results. Previous scholarship features mainly in footnotes, where a tendency to rely on direct quotations sometimes militates against close engagement with the arguments. It is puzzling that the first element of Raby Park in the West Riding of Yorkshire is attributed to ON *rā* ‘boundary’ on the grounds that ‘this is a common combination’ (p. 161), yet the footnote quotes the entry for Raby Castle in Durham from V. Watts, *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* (2004, 489), which prefers a derivation from ON *rā* ‘roe-deer’. The discussion sections are also disappointingly brief. In Chapter 2, on the prototypical boundary word OE (*ge*)*mære*, sixty-five pages of material are followed by just three pages of discussion. Admittedly the distribution of the term is discussed alongside that of OE *mearc* in Chapter 3, but here too the discussion section runs to less than six pages. The meat of the thesis lies in the compilation of a very solid body of data providing a rich evidence base.

Although the main focus throughout is on the overall profile of the elements selected for study, Jepson’s careful and thoughtful analysis offers some new insights into individual place-names. The traditional interpretation of Hoarwithy in Herefordshire as ‘whitebeam’ is challenged on the grounds that it is recorded in a charter where the first element *hār* also qualifies other generics, and should therefore be regarded as an adjective rather than as part of a fixed compound (p. 217). A good case is also made for the lost thirteenth-century field-name *le Ragappe* in the West Riding of Yorkshire as a reference to a deer-leap rather than to a boundary (p. 162). Even more convincing is the interpretation of the first part of a lost fourteenth-century field-name *Roliphirst* in the same county as a combination of an animal name and OE *\*hlēp* ‘place that can be crossed

by leaping' (p. 162 n. 19). This means that it can be added to the corpus of fifteen such names mentioned in my article 'Ælfric of Eynsham, Pucklechurch, and evidence for fallow deer in Anglo-Saxon England' in *Nomina* 35 (2012, 103–30, at 105).

Given the emphasis on historical semantics, the work would have benefited from closer reference to major dictionaries. The Bibliography lists the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), an integrated version of the first edition and its supplements much older than the publication date of 1989, but this is rapidly being superseded by the online third edition (<<http://www.oed.com/>>). The OED entry for *rain*, n.<sup>2</sup> cited on p. 126 n. 7 was updated in June 2008, as was the entry for *ra*<sup>1</sup> cited on p. 157 n.4 (now s.v. *rae*, n). The introductory section on OE (*ge*)*mǣre* (pp. 23–24) cites sources such as A. H. Smith's *English Place-Name Elements* (1956) and J. Wright's *The English Dialect Dictionary* (1898–1905), but does not mention the OED, although the relevant entry was revised in September 2001 (s.n. *mere*, n.<sup>2</sup>), and would be expected to form the starting point for further discussion. It would also have been useful to consult the ongoing *Toronto Dictionary of Old English* (1986–) for those letters so far published. For instance, whereas it is correct to state that 'OE *fæs* means "fringe of a garment"' (p. 18), the *Dictionary of Old English* definition 'fringe, border or hem (of a garment)' (s.v. *fæs*, *fasn*) makes clearer the link with the toponymic meaning 'boundary'.

Apart from some minor repetition and typos, the thesis is well written and clearly presented. It constitutes a sturdy paperback volume which seems likely to withstand a reasonable amount of wear and tear. However, it would be good to see some distribution maps, graphs or tables. The only illustration is a map of the historical counties of England, minimally adapted from Smith's map in *English Place-Name Elements* (1956) to indicate the areas covered by the study. This has a certain appropriateness, since *English Place-Name Elements* itself was dedicated to Eilert Ekwall, one of the first and greatest place-name scholars based at Lund. It nicely illustrates the symbiotic and productive relationship between England and Sweden in the field of place-name studies.

CAROLE HOUGH

Paul Cullen, Richard Jones, and David N. Parsons, *Thorps in a Changing Landscape*, Explorations in Local and Regional History 4 (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011). xviii + 224 pp. £14.99 pbk. ISBN 978-1-902806-82-2.

Published in 2011, this book is the first full-length study of a group of place-names sharing a single word-element which surveys the archaeological and topographical context of the settlements in question, and evaluates the linguistic significance of the place-names themselves. The Old Norse (ON) term *þorp* and its Old English (OE) cognate *þrop* have traditionally been regarded as denoting a small, secondary or outlying settlement dependent on a nearby larger place (Smith 1956, II, 208). Differing interpretations of the origins of the *thorps* and their possible role in Viking settlement were offered by successive place-name scholars throughout the twentieth century, culminating in the detailed analyses of Scandinavian place-names undertaken by Kenneth Cameron and Gillian Fellows-Jensen. Cameron studied the *thorps* of the East Midlands in their landscape and geological contexts in the 1970s, concluding that they represented a late phase of Scandinavian colonization in marginal areas of the English countryside which were still available for new settlement in the late Anglo-Saxon period—a hypothesis that established a lasting consensus. Subsequently, however, historians and archaeologists downplayed the role of environmental factors in determining the location of settlements, and revisionist scholars increasingly questioned the role of place-name evidence in gauging the chronologies and patterns of Viking settlement, warning against trying to ‘read too much between the dots’ of place-name distribution maps (Hadley 2002, 57).

Written by two place-name scholars and a landscape historian, this book has adopted an interdisciplinary approach which combines the methodologies of onomastics, archaeology and landscape history. It systematically examines the name-forms, status and function, historical context and chronology, geographical distribution and landscape settings of the *thorps* located throughout the regions of the former Danelaw—and of those places found beyond the Danelaw in southern England, whose

names contain the Old English cognate element, *throp*. More specifically, the authors aim to re-evaluate Cameron's hypothesis that *thorps* were marginal settlements, to explore the relationship between the *thorps* and *throps*, and to suggest a historical context for the formation of these place-names in the rapidly developing landscape of late Anglo-Saxon England (pp. 5, 15–17).

The book presents the linguistic, archaeological and topographical evidence separately in successive chapters, starting with a comprehensive analysis of the corpus of 896 place-names in *thorp* and *throp* found across England. This reassesses the linguistic origins of both name-forms, and charts their formation from the late ninth century onwards, with dots on maps usefully deployed to illustrate *thorps* and *throps* dating from different periods and to show how the patterns of their overall distribution have evolved (although frustratingly these maps do not differentiate between the two). This survey is supplemented by a comprehensive appendix that provides, on a county-by-county basis, the early name-forms, key references and locations for all the currently known *thorps* and *throps* recorded in England before 1300. The specific name-forms of the Danelaw *thorps* are analysed in detail, showing how the frequent simplex forms and various types of compound qualifiers tend to reflect their usually insignificant status. Where personal names are used as qualifiers, these can usually be categorized as being either Old English, Old Norse, or post-Conquest 'Norman' in origin. A series of tables demonstrates that *thorps* were combined more frequently with personal-name qualifiers in the northern Danelaw than in the south, that a higher percentage of these were formed with Scandinavian personal names in the north and east of the Danelaw than in the south and west, and that this geographical divergence was particularly marked in the late eleventh century (as recorded in Domesday Book) but declined somewhat in the post-Conquest period. This is useful but complex information that intertwines several parameters of comparison, and perhaps one or two further maps might have been included here to make the geographical and chronological patterns of distribution more immediately apparent. An equivalent analysis of the *throp*-names in southern England outside the Danelaw shows that

personal-name qualifiers were used less here and Scandinavian personal names not at all, suggesting an intriguing linguistic continuum straddling the Danelaw boundary with evidence of Scandinavian influence gradually diminishing from north to south.

The evidence from archaeology regarding the origins of *thorp*-named settlements is presented as somewhat problematic and inconclusive so far, although it does suggest that most were formed in the late ninth and tenth centuries, and established in locations that apparently had not previously been occupied. A somewhat different picture emerges, however, from a complex analysis of *thorps* and *throps* in the context of their surrounding landscapes and the types of soil on which they are situated, following on from Cameron's earlier work. A detailed sequence of maps plots the distribution of *thorps* and *throps*, as well as *bȳ*-named settlements, against different types of soil which have been categorized into broad grades according to their suitability for agriculture. These maps provide a potential wealth of agricultural detail, but have suffered somewhat from the limitations of black-and-white printing. Varying shades of grey are used to represent the different grades and uses of soil-types, but it is hard to distinguish these at such a small scale beneath the clusters of abundant and rather thick-set black dots representing the overlying *thorps*, and little black triangles for the *bȳ*s. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the *thorps* in the Midlands and southern counties tend to be located on grade 3 agricultural soils which are—and probably were—not the best but still able to support arable farming, whereas the *bȳ*-named settlements tend to congregate in areas of poorer grade 2 soils suitable only for dairy farming and rearing, or livestock husbandry (p. 127). This contradicts Cameron's conclusions, suggesting that *thorps* and *bȳ*s performed different economic functions in the early medieval countryside, and that perhaps it was the type of farming associated with each that determined the names of the associated settlements, with *thorp* and *bȳ* becoming mutually exclusive terms. A further dimension to the connection between *thorps* and arable farming may be indicated by the fact that *thorps* are concentrated in those regions of England where open-field farming has been practised. The Anglo-Saxon origins of open-field farming have been much debated, but

it is generally believed that it required a communal re-organization of settlements around the newly laid-out arable fields, in which it is proposed here that *thorps* may have provided small hamlet clusters to house the temporary or seasonal ploughmen required to work the more distant crops.

The book's final chapter brings together the diverse strands of interdisciplinary evidence to question Cameron's orthodoxy that *thorps* were merely secondary settlements relating to the last wave of Scandinavian land colonization, and offers in its place a new explanatory model: that the ON *þorp* and OE *þrop* terms both referred to small, outlying settlements for housing the farmworkers required by the new and more efficient method of open-field arable farming which spread across southern England in the ninth century; that this expansion of agricultural innovation coincided with the first period of Viking settlement in eastern England, where some Scandinavian-speakers took up this type of farming and adopted the familiar Old Danish *þorp*-form for these settlements; that in the regions remaining under English control they became known as *þrops* (pp. 148–51).

However, the writers acknowledge that some ambiguities remain unresolved in this hypothesis, such as how *thorps* as dependent settlements fit into a new open-field farming regime that apparently swept away the old dispersed farmsteads. Also, the high incidence of Scandinavian personal-name qualifiers in the compound *thorps* of the Danelaw might imply a high degree of private, individual ownership which somehow contradicts the apparently more communal circumstances of the open-field system. So it is a pity that this anomaly is not explored further, as the careful differentiation between the various compound *thorp* qualifiers in the book's linguistic analysis is not followed through into the geographical section, where the maps represent *thorps* of all kinds as undifferentiated black dots. Recent work by the present writer on the *thorps* of East Anglia has indicated that those compounded with Scandinavian personal names are generally located in more favourable landscape settings and on better farming soils than the other compound or simplex *thorps*, with possible earlier origins suggested also by the shape of their parish boundaries—



another geographical dimension to *thorp* settlements that is not explored here.

Overall, this book embodies a valuable new interdisciplinary approach to the study of a particular place-name element that cumulatively brings together analytical techniques from different disciplines to construct an over-arching interpretative hypothesis for the origins of *thorp*- and *throp*-named settlements. As the authors acknowledge, however, there is no single story or universal explanation for the use of a place-name element that had currency for over a millennium, and some ambiguities remain that require further research and analysis. But this book clearly demonstrates the value of examining place-names in their landscape settings, showing that dots on maps still have an important role to play in studying place-name distributions in the twenty-first century, although perhaps where possible these maps should be in colour to explore, display and explain fully the geographical contexts of the place-names in question.

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DAVID BOULTON

Hugh Lenfestey, *Guernsey Place Names* (Weybridge: RoperPenberthy Publishing Ltd, 2014). 292 pp. £30.00, hbk. ISBN: 978-1-903905-79-1.

Hugh Lenfestey was Island Archivist of Guernsey and Archiviste de la Cour Royale from 1985 till his retirement in 1997. He used his peerless knowledge both as an archivist and as a Guernseyman from a long-established family to create a collection of traditional (i.e. Guernsey French) island place-names, which for the purposes of this book means a

complete collection of minor local names, including field-names, from every surviving *livre de perchage* (*perquage*) or terrier, reflecting a feudal system of landholding which was extant well into the twentieth century. The value of such a resource to toponymists should not need spelling out.

The book begins with a brief biography of the author, who sadly did not live to see his labours published, followed by a relatively short and rather disorderly introduction explaining the nature of the *livres de perchage*, the relation of local names to agricultural practices and local geography, palaeographical aspects of the texts, the anglicization of local names, a valuable brief discussion of the relation of place-names to surnames, which loom very large indeed in the local names, topographical names (which is about much else besides in its 22 lines), abbreviations for the parish-names used in the body of the book, an explanation of how to use the index (i.e. the body of the book), the nature of local land measurement, and finally bibliographical references and expressions of thanks. Then comes a section headed ‘Topographical descriptions’ which would have been better termed a glossary of words met in the place-names, or element-index, Guernsey French to English and English to Guernsey French. In this introduction, some systematic discussion of the phonological changes which have produced variation in name-forms, and, where appropriate, the dialect distribution of the variants, would have been welcome.

The rest of the book (pp. 27–292) is the ‘index’. It does indeed originate as an index to the *livres de perchage*, but as a published book it needs to be more than an index to documents to which only visitors to the island archives will be able to access. It is also an alphabetical register of every known historical local place-name (microtoponym), especially field-names. Each entry is categorized according to the type of place it denotes and the parish(es) in which it is situated. It will take an insider’s knowledge to identify some of the wordings as referring to a minor name or to a name’s location in a holding or property within a parish: the entry for **les Lohiers** reads ‘**Lohiers, les** [: ...] les Lohiers [+ parish name]; les Adams, les Sages [+ parish name]’. Variant spellings follow the location(s), and the entry is completed by an explanation of the name in terms of its elements, where achievable, and any relevant historical information. Many

entries are rather forbiddingly elliptical. **Bertran(d), de** is ‘fields: le Hamel, VdeIE; les Houmets, C; la Fallaize, Saints, la Fosse SM. Extant surname **de Bertrand**’. There is substantial cross-referencing. That said, the trouble of unpacking the information is worthwhile, in order to get a feel on the one hand for the diversity of the names and on the other for the consistency of the island’s toponymic practices. Disconcertingly many names are deemed ‘unexplained’—not the author’s fault, so far as I can tell, and much of the uncertainty probably stems from far back in the island’s linguistic history, though such names as **Cocagne** could easily have been connected to the concept of the *land of Cokaygne* ‘earthly paradise’, which has European roots.

Carping at a work to which so much professional expertise has been devoted and so much time (half a century) lavished is not comfortable for a reviewer. But the explanations and cross-referencing are not always perspicuous and sometimes stop short of being completely satisfying. Let one example do duty for both these points. The fields called **de Tourgis** are referenced to **Tourgis**, which is however buried within an entry for **la Tourgisse** ‘extinct surname **Tourgis** feminized’. No attempt is made to offer an etymology for **Tourgis**, which is from a well-known Norse male given name. Some comments demand elaboration because they do not ring true in the form of a bald statement: that the name of the fief of **Becquepés** is a misspelling of **Becquisses**, **Becquesses**, for example, or that **les Boutefèves** possibly means ‘incendiary’. On the face of it, the latter is a surname meaning ‘sieve beans’ (however weird) comparable with *Boutefleur*, *Boutflower*. **Lif**, said to be for ‘lily’, i.e. *lys*, looks more like *l’if* ‘the yew’. Some kind of supporting evidence for the more controversial pronouncements is expected but does not materialize. Some entries look a bit naïve: the field **de la Bonne Femme** is ‘[p]ossibly from a rente owed to a medieval church confraternity for women’, for which body no evidence is provided; an origin in the French expression corresponding to English *old wife* (as in *old wives’ tales*), i.e. a woman with experience of midwifery and herbal remedies, seems more likely. **Le Courtil à Paix** seems more likely to have to do with peas (Guernsey French *peis*) than peace. As for engagement with existing literature, **l’Ancresse** is glossed

‘anchorage’, as is customary, but an alternative involving anchorites has been proposed.

On the positive side, there are some convincing explanations of obscure-seeming names, for example **Felcomte**, **Friteaux**, **Ouets**, **Usées/Vusées**, and the author is particularly credible on the not always perspicuous derivation of local names from surnames.

Some place-name elements are introduced as entries in the ‘index’, and again the brevity of some in the face of unexplored complications is disconcerting. **Route**, for example, is ‘main road’ and exists in all parishes. But ‘[i]t appears to be a haphazard description, as many “routes” are minor roads’.

The book, by its concise title and lack of subtitle, promises or implies rather more than it delivers, but its greatest value is as a catalogue of the historical evidence and a resource for locating the places by parish. (Digitized mapping of the names is apparently ongoing, and that will be a very useful development.) That value is in what it is rather than in what the reviewer might wish it to be. Toponymists will have reason to be very grateful for its existence despite the thinness of its philological content, and every future study of Guernsey local names must be based on the cadastral information it contains. The publisher can also take some plaudits. The book is a pleasure to view. It uses a clear sans-serif font (Calibri) and is printed on good quality paper.

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