English topographic surnames with fused Anglo-Norman preposition and article: myth or reality?

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INTRODUCTION

In his *Origin of English Surnames* (1967) P. H. Reaney notes that surnames from places of residence (topographic surnames) originally began with a Middle English (ME) prepositional element followed by a ME topographic term (as in *atte Wode* and *atte Watere*) but that medieval clerks often translated the preposition and definite article into Anglo-Norman (AN), thus *del Wode* and *de la Water*. By the time that these names became hereditary, which was normally before the end of the medieval period, the spoken prepositional elements had usually been dropped, giving WOOD and WATER, but they occasionally survived, giving rise to modern names like ATWOOD and ATTWATER.[1] My focus in this paper is on Reaney's claim that in a few surnames of this type it is the AN prepositional elements that survive in modern hereditary surnames. He identifies this in:

> *Delbridge*, *Delafield* and *Delahooke* (OE *hōc* 'bend' or 'hillspur'), and also in *Surtees* which varies between 'dweller by the Tees' (Ralph *sur teyse* 1243 AssDu) and 'dweller at a place called Surtees' (Nicholas *de Surtees* 1315 Riev) (Reaney 1967, 49).

Reaney had already published these explanations in his *Dictionary of British Surnames* (Reaney 1958), where he gives similar interpretations

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[1] Surnames in capital letters appear as head forms in one or more of the standard English surname dictionaries, specifically Reaney (1958), Reaney and Wilson (1991) and *FaNBI*.

of DELAHAYE, DELAMERE (and DALLIMORE), DALLICOTT (and DELICATE), DELLO(W), and DULEY. In the third edition, re-titled *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (Reaney and Wilson 1991), R. M. Wilson followed suit with his own etymologies for DELAWARE, DELFORD, DELLAWAY and DEL STROTHER. In this paper I am testing these explanations against evidence that Reaney and Wilson were unaware of or had no access to. The results are surprising. DELBRIDGE has an entirely different origin. DELAFIELD probably has two distinct origins, one of which Reaney almost got right, for it is not a topographic name but a toponymic one, i.e. it is formed not from a descriptive phrase but from an existing place-name. SURTEES, similarly, is a toponymic name (Reaney's second option), in which the locative preposition *de* has been dropped. DELAHOOKE is a modern invention. The other names have equally diverse and sometimes multiple origins. Etymologically they do not form the coherent category that Reaney had supposed.

Before embarking on detailed analyses, I must briefly outline the background to this piece of research. In the fifty years since Reaney wrote *Origin of English Surnames*, research into the family names of Yorkshire by Redmonds (1997; 2015) and of north Staffordshire by Tooth (2000–10) has taught us to be extremely wary of Reaney's and Wilson's methodology and conclusions. Reaney and Wilson usually derive the origin of a modern surname solely from its formal similarity to a medieval name, no matter where either of the names is located, and they tend not to provide post-medieval name-forms to link the modern name with relevant medieval name-forms. This method does not allow for the linguistic transformations that many surnames have undergone in the modern period as a result of dialect pronunciation, phonetic variation and the tendency to rationalise names to fit more familiar morphological patterns (McClure 2014). Nor does it recognise that most surnames have stayed quite close to where they first became established (Redmonds, King and Hey 2011, 84–5). The geographical locations of Reaney's and Wilson's medieval name evidence are often far removed from where the modern name has been concentrated for the last four centuries or more.

The true origins of many thousands of English surnames will only be known when the records of every county have been researched with the thoroughness and intelligence of a Redmonds or a Tooth. In the meantime we can begin to test out Reaney's and Wilson's explanations against the vast body of onomastic data that is now available on disk and online, especially Steve Archer's *Surname Atlas* (Archer 2015), which maps the surnames in the 1881 census, and the millions of dated, located name-forms from church registers and other official records that are listed in the new International Genealogical Index (IGI).[2]

The new data may not always give us definitive answers but it does enable us to examine more critically Reaney's and Wilson's explanations of individual names and Reaney's generalisations about English surname history. This has been one of the principal aims of the *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (Hanks, Coates and McClure 2016, hereafter abbreviated as *FaNBI*). It is the primary outcome of the Family Names of the United Kingdom project, based at University of the West of England, and funded from 2010–14 by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.[3] By no means every one of the 45,000 or so surnames in *FaNBI* could be fully researched within that time frame, and Reaney's and Wilson's explanations for all of the topographic surnames listed above were adopted largely unchanged. Thanks to an additional AHRC grant, which extended the project to the end of 2016 in order to include many rarer surnames, time was found to re-examine the historical evidence for the '*Delbridge* group' that I am discussing here, and to reach more informed opinions about their derivation. The new data and the modified explanations will appear in a second edition (*FaNBI 2*), which, like the first edition, is intended to appear online in due course. In this paper I want to show the method I

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[2]   In the present paper IGI refers to the Historical Record Collections on the FamilySearch website. The collections include new data added since 2010.

[3]   The project was led by Patrick Hanks and Richard Coates. For further details see the full project description below, pp. 116–30.

used in revising each of these surname entries and to draw some conclusions about AN influence on English topographic surnames.[4]

1. TOPOGRAPHIC OR TOPONYMIC? DELAMERE, DELAHAYE, SURTEES, DELAFIELD, (DEL OR DE) STROTHER, DELLO(W)

Of those modern surnames that retain an original French preposition, I will show (*pace* Reaney and Wilson) that most of them are toponymic; none of them, as far as I can tell, are topographic. The difference is not one of form but of function; was the name merely descriptive of the place where the person lived or was it toponymic, identifying the bearer with a specific place-name? The distinction is particularly relevant to surnames originating in England but it also applies to names that were introduced at different times to England from France (by Normans, Walloons and Huguenots) and from the Channel Islands. I am not suggesting that the distinction is always clear-cut. Any topographic description could be an embryonic place-name, and many simplex place-names, especially minor names, would have remained lexically transparent and topographically descriptive far into the late medieval period. In England, places called Ash, Field, Ford, Hay, Pool and Wick, which were often farms or hamlets, could be referred to both elliptically as 'Ash' and more fully as 'The Ash', and so on. This is evident in medieval place-name forms preceded by Middle English *the*, *atte*(*n*) or *atter* and by AN substitutions such as *la*, *del* and *de la*. Surname forms like *del Ashe*, *de la Feld* and *de la Haye* are therefore onomastically ambiguous, unless linguistic or extra-linguistic contexts enable us to assign the name firmly to one category rather than the other. Alternation of AN *de la* or *del* with AN or Latin *de*, for example, is a fairly reliable indication that the surname was perceived as toponymic.

The distinction matters because the circumstances in which a surname could have acquired a French prepositional element need to be compatible with the social class of the people who bore these names. Medieval surnames were coined in speech, and their continued currency from one generation to the next was primarily through oral transmission rather than the written record. If AN prepositional elements have survived in modern English surnames, these linguistically hybrid forms must have been coined and become hereditary in communities where both French and English were spoken, or where the family was sufficiently literate and of a high enough social standing to opt for the hybrid form in preference to the wholly English one. A name of this type carried a social cachet. The only people among whom some form of spoken French might have been customary as a social or professional accomplishment were the nobility and gentry, senior ecclesiastics, clerks, and some of the wealthier burgesses, especially merchants. Their surnames were commonly toponymic, not topographic.[5] Topographic surnames, by contrast, were especially characteristic of the unfree peasantry and minor freehold tenants,[6] among whom French was never a spoken language. The scribal practice of translating ME grammatical particles into Anglo-Norman obscures the improbability that the surnames of such people would normally have acquired French *sur*, *du*, *del* or *le*/*la* in spoken usage at any time in the medieval period.

The socio-onomastic distinctions between people at opposite ends of the social scale are quite well demarcated, but neither toponymic nor topographic surnames are absolutely predictive of an individual's status. Both could be borne by yeomen, men just below gentry status, who may have held offices within gentlemen's households where French was sometimes spoken. Particularly relevant may be some topographic names alluding to places of work, like *atte Halle* and *atte Court* ('at the

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[5] See Clark (1992), 572–3.

[6] See Clark (1992), 573–4; McKinley (1977), 41–4, 199–200; McKinley (1988), 11–13; McKinley (1990), 202; Clark (2002), 101.

courthouse'), which were probably occupational and were not necessarily indicative of lowly rank. Burgesses, too, occasionally bore topographic surnames of this type. According to Ekwall (1951, 332) John *atte Barre* ('at the town gate', 1319) alias *de la Barre* (1308), who looked after the gate at Billingsgate in London, was probably a corn monger. In assessing the origins of a modern surname we must also allow for the possibility that later members of upwardly mobile families of yeoman or peasant origins added a French element in order to gentrify the surname. Such events are not easy to identify in medieval or early modern records, but they might need to be invoked as hypothetical explanations, when no suitable toponym can be found.

Granted, therefore, that it is not always an entirely straightforward matter, it is desirable for the purposes of the present discussion to try and keep the two categories of topographic and toponymic surnames distinct, because by and large the socio-onomastic distinction aligns with a socio-linguistic one. This is trickier in regions of dispersed pastoral settlement, like Devon, where common topographic terms often formed the names of individual farms, but medieval family names derived from such places are nevertheless toponymic in function. Reaney and Wilson sometimes hedge their bets, offering both an English topographic and a Norman toponymic derivation, but in doing so they ignore the linguistic and social contexts of those who bore the surname. They also frequently omit the possibility of an English toponymic derivation, and they often miss the toponymic contributions to the modern name stock made by later migrants from France and the Low Countries.

First I will discuss some names which may be either French or English in origin (*Delamere*, *Delahaye*) and then some names where an English (or pre-English) generic is certain (*Surtees*, *del Strother*, *de la Pole*, *Delafield*, *Dellow*). I will include *Dello* here as well, although the current name with this spelling may have a different origin.

1.1 DELAMERE

The name has many variants, most of them now rare or extinct. Their modern distributions fall into roughly four areas. In the 1881 census

DELAMERE, DELAMORE, DALMER, DILLAMORE and DILMORE are mainly found in the north-west midlands and Lancashire; DALLAMORE, DALLIMORE and DOLAMORE in south-west England (especially Somerset, Wiltshire, the Isle of Wight and Sussex); DELAMERE, DOLAMORE, DOLLAMORE, DOLLEMORE, DOLLEYMORE and DOLLYMORE in the south midlands (Hertfordshire and Middlesex); and DE LA MARE in the Channel Islands. In his *Dictionary*, Reaney states:

> Early bearers of the name came from one of the numerous French places named La Mare 'pool'. Many later names are of English origin, 'dweller by the mere, lake, marsh or moor', OE *mere*, *mōr*, with common confusion of these words, see MOOR.

(OE is the standard abbreviation for Old English.) A French toponym is certainly to be considered. There are many places with this name in Normandy, Brittany, and Maine, and there are Normans named *de Mara* in Domesday Book, with possessions in Cheshire, Hertfordshire and Wiltshire. John *de la Mar'*, 1307 in *Subsidy Rolls* (Wymondley, Herts) may be a descendant of the Hertfordshire Domesday tenant, and Delamere House in Great Wymondley is probably named from his family (*EPNS Hertfordshire*, 149). In Wiltshire the manor of Leigh Delamere (locally pronounced [lai dælimɔr]) and recorded as *Leye* in 1236 and *Lye Dallamer* in the 16th century, was held by Adam *de la Mare* in 1236 (*EPNS Wiltshire*, 106). Fisherton de la Mere, recorded with the affix *Dalamare* in 1412 and *Dalamore* in the early seventeenth century, was held by John *de la Mare* in 1377 (*EPNS Wiltshire*, 161), while a Gunnora *de Mara* alias *de la Mare* (1250) is listed on TNA Discovery website in relation to the same county.

Formally these names are difficult to tell apart from names with an English etymon but for the reasons given above I am inclined to discount Reaney's topographic sense 'dweller by the mere, lake, marsh or moor', as well as 'dweller by the boundary' (OE (*ge*)*mǣre*), in favour of a toponymic sense from places named Mere (for example in Cheshire and Wiltshire), Meir (in Caverswall, Staffordshire), and Meare (in Somerset).

EPNS Cheshire (II, 51) records many instances of a family name from Mere, in Rostherne, with spellings like [... de] *la Mar*, about 1262, *del* (or *de le*) *Meer*(*e*), 1336, 1365, 1415, and [... de] *la Mera*, 1407. It seems highly likely that this is the principal source of modern *Delamere* in Cheshire and Lancashire. Derivation from Delamere Forest (Cheshire), recorded as *foresta de Mara* in 1153–60, *Delamere* in 1308, *Dalamere* in 1517, and *Dallamore* in 1690, is also formally possible. The name meant '(Forest) of the Mere', alluding to either of the lakes called Blakemere or Oakmere near Eddisbury, but there is no clear evidence of a derived surname from it.

One of my central contentions is that families whose surnames originally contained a French preposition moved in social or business circles where some form of French was spoken when the surname was coined and when it became hereditary. This takes us to no later than around 1400, by which time French had almost vanished from use even among the aristocracy (Baugh 1959, 179–81; Short 2013, 35–8). However, there are other speakers of French who have contributed to the modern English surname stock at later periods. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Walloons and Huguenots with the names *Delamer*, *Delamare* and *De la Mare* settled in England:

> Michel *Delamer*, 1582, Ester *Delamare*, 1707 in IGI (Walloon or Strangers' Church, Canterbury, Kent); Susanne *Delamare*, 1688, Louis *Delamarre*, 1694 in IGI (Huguenot Church, Threadneedle Street, London); Pierre *de la Mare*, 1698, Daniel *de la Mare*, 1711 in *Huguenot Society Quarto Series* (La Patente Huguenot Church, Spitalfields, Middx); Nicolas Jaques *De la Mare*, 1799 in IGI (Saint Jean Huguenot Church, Swanfields, Shoreditch, Middx).

Later bearers of the surname include Ernest *De la Mare*, born in Rouen, France, who is registered as a shoemaker in Marylebone, London, in the 1881 census. In the same census *De La Mare* has 378 bearers in all, the vast majority of whom lived not in England but in the Channel Islands, where Norman French had been spoken since the early eleventh century. It is primarily a Jersey surname, first recorded there in 1309:

Joh'nes *de la Mare* and Guill'm *de Mara* in *Assize Rolls, Jersey*. Francis *De La Marre* of Grouville, Jersey, and James *De La Mare* of St Peter Port, Guernsey, are typical entries in the 1841 Census. Whether this or the mainland French surname were from French places named La Mar or were topographic in origin is another matter, though I strongly suspect that the former is more probable. Either way they are wholly French and are not hybrid French-English formations.

1.2 DELAHAYE

This name, along with DE LA HAYE, DE LA HEY and DELHAY, presents a very similar pattern of origins and development to that of *Delamere*. Reaney's explanation of them is characteristically elliptic, offering a choice only between a Norman toponymic source and an English topographic one:

> Robert *de Haia* (1123), founder of Boxgrove Priory (Sussex), came from Haye-du-Puits (La Manche). The surname is commonly English in origin, 'dweller by the enclosure'. See HAY.

It may be that some modern families named *Delahay*, *Delhay*, and so forth are of AN origin but the modern surname is more usually from the Channel Islands, as illustrated by Abraham *De la Haye*, 1636 in IGI (St Martin, Jersey); Noel *De la Haye*, 1664 in IGI (Grouville, Jersey); Charles *De la Haye*, 1748 in IGI (Trinity, Jersey). These families probably took their name from one of the many places named La Haie or La Haye in Normandy. Alternatively the surname in England was brought in by Walloon and Huguenot migrants, in which case similarly named places in other parts of France could also be sources. The following are all listed in IGI:

> Abraham *De la Haye*, 1657 (Huguenot Church, Thorney, Cambs); Daniel *De la Haye*, 1619 (Walloon Church, Southampton, Hants); Daniel *Delhaie*, 1676 (Walloon or Strangers' Church, Canterbury, Kent); Isaac *Delahaye*, 1703, Jacques *Delahaie*, 1705 (Huguenot Church, Thread-needle Street, London); Jean *Delahay*, 1725, André *Delahay*, 1731 in (La Patente Huguenot Church, Spitalfields, Middx).

As for Reaney's suggestion that the name 'is commonly English in origin', I have not been able find any evidence that the ME topographic *atte Hay*, translated as *del* or *de la Hay* by the clerks, ever became anything but HAY(E) as a hereditary surname. There could, however, be an English toponymic if, for example, William *Delahay*, 1558–79 in TNA (Merthyr Cynog, Breconshire), Henry *Delahaye alias Hayes*, 1584 in PROB 11 (Ryton on Dunsmore, Warwicks), Paul *Delahay*, 1636 in PROB 11 (Coleford, Gloucs), and Catherina *Delahay*, 1670 in IGI (Peterchurch, Herefs), were descendants of the medieval De la Haye family that owned Urishay Castle in Herefordshire, also known as Hay (Coplestone-Crow 2009, 182; Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre W85). This family, needless to say, moved in AN-speaking society.

1.3 SURTEES

The original sense of *Surtees* is not sometimes, as Reaney suggests, 'dweller by the Tees' but always and only 'dweller at a place called Surtees'. Reaney was misled by some early spellings where the preposition *de* is absent, but variation between forms with and without *de* is common in AN toponymic surnames, as Reaney himself was aware (Reaney and Wilson 1991, xvii). Here is the relevant evidence for *Surtees*:

> Randulf *de Super Teise*, 1174, Ricardus *super Teisam*, 1195, Ralph *de Supertay*, 1230 in *Pipe Rolls* (Northumb); Ralph *sur teyse*, 1243, Nicholas *de Surteys*, 1315 in *Assize Rolls* (Co. Durham); Sir Thomas *Suyrtayse*, knight, 1370–1400 in *Durham Liber Vitae*.

Given the dates and the types of document where they are recorded, it is likely that all these men belonged to the same family and that it was one of high social standing. The place-name from which they took their surname contains Old French (OF) *sur* (latinized as *super*), often meaning 'on' or 'at' but here perhaps meaning 'above', which has been prefixed to the English river name *Tees*, and denotes '(territory) at or above the Tees'. It was possibly the Norman name for Upper Teesdale (Co. Durham) or for the estate in Upper Teesdale that was in the

ownership of the Surtees family. They were overlords of the manor of Middleton on Tees in the thirteenth century and possibly earlier. The place-name and the derived surname are evidently AN coinages, not English ones, though they later passed into English usage.[7]

1.4 DELAFIELD

Reaney directs us to the entry for FIELD, which he explains as 'OE *feld*, but here, probably, with reference to cultivated land or the open fields', in other words a topographic name synonymous with ME *atte Feld*. I am sure that this is not so. The evidence suggests that *Delafield* probably has more than one etymology, one of which is toponymic and the other is unknown, possibly a different toponym or a nickname. The surname has a more complicated history than Reaney supposed.

The first thing to notice is that the distribution of Reaney's medieval examples is very different from that of the modern name; the second is that his medieval names are all late twelfth-century. They are from Gloucestershire (from *Templars Records*), Bedfordshire (from *Pipe Rolls*) and Suffolk (from the *Bury St Edmunds Kalendar*), and probably belonged to men of relatively high social status. The two main clusters on Archer's 1881 surname map are in Devon and the North Riding of Yorkshire, and the earliest evidence in IGI is from seventeenth-century Buckinghamshire. I was uncertain how to join up the dots, or if the dots had any relevance at all to each other, until I discovered a meticulously researched family history by an American lawyer, J. R. Delafield. He shows that the Devon family came from Buckinghamshire some time before 1711 (Delafield 1945, 315), and that the Buckinghamshire family took its name from a man named William *de la Felde* of Westcott, in Waddesdon (Bucks). The crucial information about William is that in a Fine Roll of 1394 he is said to have been born in Ireland and to have paid

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7   In about 1318 Thomas Surtays petitioned the King regarding the feoffment of the manor of Westwick, near Barnard Castle, and the manor of Middleton (on Tees), which was held by Robert de *Middilton* from Thomas Surtays 'by an older feoffment' (TNA SC 8/160/7972).

one mark for the king's licence to live in England. In painstaking detail Delafield shows that this William was probably a descendant of Richard *de Felda* or *de la Felde*, knight, a high-ranking member of the Anglo-Norman community of Dublin from the time of Henry II, and whose principal estate came to be known as *villa de Felda* or *Fieldstown*, in allusion to the surname (Delafield 1945, xxxii). In fifteenth-century Ireland the surname usually reduced to *Field*, as in the case of Thomas *Feld* of Feldeston (Fieldstown, Co. Dublin), who is recorded in 1435–6 (*Pipe Rolls*), but in England the descendants of William Delafeld of Westcott retained the AN form of the name.

At that level of society it is pretty safe to exclude a topographic origin in favour of a toponym, which the surname form *de Felda* seems to confirm. There are few simplex place-names from OE *feld* and the principal candidate is Field in Leigh, Staffordshire (*Felda*, 1144–8 in Horovitz 2005, 255). In 1297 John *de la Feld*, a great-grandson of the original Richard, came of age and had to recover his estate from his guardian Theobald de Verdun (Delafield 1945, 397). It may be coincidental that the Verdon family had major holdings in Staffordshire and in Buckinghamshire, or it could be part of the explanation as to why a branch of an Anglo-Irish family originating in Field (Staffs), ended up in Westcott (Bucks), but I do not know if the Verdon family had property or influence in either place. Here is a selection of name-forms from the *FaNBI 2* entry, which show the development of the surname in Ireland and then in England, where it undergoes a great variety of phonetic changes in the first and second syllables:

> **Ireland**: Richard *de Felda*, knight, about 1200 in Chartulary of St. John's without the New Gate, Dublin, Rawlinson, MS. B, 498, Bodleian Library, f. 162d; Richard *de la Feude*, 1213–14, Ricardus *de la Felda*, 1215, in *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*; Robert *de la Felde*, 1289–91 in *Pipe Rolls* (Dublin); John *de la Felde*, 1298–1300 in *Irish Justiciary Rolls* (Louth); William *de la Feelde*, 1299 in *Irish Justiciary Rolls* (Meath); William *de la Felde*, sheriff of Dublin, 1313–14 in *Pipe Rolls* (Dublin); Thomas *Feld* of Feldeston, 1435–6 in *Pipe Rolls* (Fieldstown,

Dublin); Tho. *Delafeld*, 1577 in *Fiants Elizabeth* §3136 (Painestown, Meath).

England: William *Delafeld*, juror, 1374 in Inquisitiones Post Mortem, TNA C 135/236/14 (Waddesdon, Bucks);[8] Willelmo *de la Felde* de Westcote, born in Ireland, licensed to live in England, 1394 in *Fine Rolls* (Westcott, in Waddesdon, Bucks); Robert *Dalafeld*, 1434 in *Patent Rolls* (Bucks); Thomas *Dalyfeild*, 1544, Thomas *Dalafeild*, 1604, Elizabeth *Delafield*, 1642, Daniel *Dolafield*, 1664 in IGI (Waddesdon, Bucks); Richard *Dalifeilde*, 1598 in IGI (Wantage, Berks); Hugh *Dallowfeild*, 1622 in IGI (Dinton, Bucks); Thomas *Dollafield*, 1653 in IGI (Quainton, Bucks); Mary *Dallowfeild*, 1665, Mary *Dollifield*, 1703, Susanna *Delafield*, 1728 in IGI (Saint Giles Cripplegate, London); Daniell *Dolofeld*, 1684, Daniel *Delifield*, 1702 in IGI (Aylesbury, Bucks); Thomas *Dillifield*, 1712 in IGI (Saint Sepulchre, London); Daniel *Delafield*, 1714, 1807 in IGI (Plympton Erle, Devon); John *Delafeild* or *Delafield*, leather seller of London , 1742 in PROB 11; James *Dolifield*, 1746, Jos. *Delafield*, 1752 in IGI (Great Kimble, Bucks); John *Dolefield*, 1752 in IGI (Oakley, Bucks).

The North Riding name is another matter. Delafield (1945, 435) found no evidence of any genealogical connection with the Anglo-Irish or Buckinghamshire name, and traced it back no further than Philip *Dellifield* of Urra in Bilsdale (NR Yorks), recorded in the Bilsdale parish register for 1692. I think that it may have originated in Co. Durham, where it is possibly the same name as *Delafule* or *Dilifoule*. IGI evidence appears to show this development, especially in Whorlton (NR Yorks) and Bilsdale:

Richard *Delafule*, 1630, 1638, Ann *Dilifoule*, 1655 in IGI (Bishopwearmouth, Durham); Ailice *Daliefield*, 1664 in IGI (Durham, Durham); Thos. *Delifull*, 1730 in IGI (Bilsdale Midcable, NR Yorks); Tho. *Dillifield*, 1768, Thos. *Dillifule*, 1770 in IGI (Whorlton, NR Yorks);

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[8] Transcribed in Delafield (1945, 123).

Joseph *Dillifield*, in Census 1841 (Bilsdale Midcable, Helmsley, NR
Yorks); Jane *Delafield*, in Census 1841 (Appleton Wiske, NR Yorks);
John *Dilifield*, in Census 1851 (Appleton Wiske, NR Yorks).

On the basis of the seventeenth-century spellings, it looks like a
nickname from ME *dil*(*e*) + *f*(*o*)*ul* 'dull, stupid bird', but without any
medieval evidence for it this interpretation is not safe.

An alternative possibility is that it is an altered form of the
Northumberland toponymic surname *Delaval*. This was borne by an
aristocratic Norman family from La Val in Marne, which from the
eleventh century held Callerton and Seaton Delaval, in Earsdon,
Northumberland (Mawer 1920, 173; Keats-Rohan 2002, 543). IGI shows
that the surname was current in Co. Durham from at least the middle of
the seventeenth century and was still there and in Northumberland in the
nineteenth century. Norman surnames in *-ville* commonly developed
to *-field* in the early modern period (for example, *D'Angerville* to
DANGERFIELD), often varying the vowel in the weakly stressed
syllable, so a development of *-val* to *-vil*(*le*), *-ful*, *-fill* and *-field* is not in
any way far-fetched. It could be coincidental that Mary *Delavil* (1665)
and Nathanael *Delavil* (1678) are listed in IGI in the same Bishop-
wearmouth registers as the earlier Richard *Delafule* and his daughter Ann
Dilifoule. If, however, they are different versions of the same family
name, their dates do not necessarily prove which of the two is
linguistically closer to the etymological form.

There is also some evidence for alternation between *-val* and *-field* in
the Devon surname. James *Delavall*, 1711 in IGI (Plympton Erle, Devon)
is almost certainly identical with James *Delafield*, 1720 in IGI (Plympton
Erle, Devon). The variation in the surname may have arisen through false
association of the recently arrived *Delafield* with a pre-existing surname
Delavill in nearby Plymouth: William *Dalavill*, 1614, William *Dallavell*,
1624 in IGI. I have no knowledge of the Northumberland Delaval family
holding property in Devon, and the Plymouth name may be an altered
form of another, but unidentified, name that was native to Devon. A
similar variation is recorded in *Phillips alias Delafield alias Delavall*,
1744 in TNA, a divorce case between Henrick Muilman, an Amsterdam

and London merchant, and the courtesan Teresia Constantia Delafield, née Phillips (*ODNB*, s.n. Phillips, Teresia Constantia). Her first husband was a professional bigamist, Francis *Delafield* or *Devall* (*sic*). His true identity is not known and his surname may have been assumed in order to disguise it.

1.5 (DEL OR DE) STROTHER

We shall see in 2.2 that modern *Del Strother* is a conscious revival of an obsolete medieval form of a Northumberland merchant-cum-gentry family name. The etymology of the word that lies behind the name is not in doubt but there remains a mystery about the name's meaning. Is it topographic or toponymic? Here is some of the evidence from *FaNBI 2*:

> William 'of Strother', 1315 or 1317 in *Laing Charters* (Lanton, Kirknewton, Northumb); William *de la Strother*, mayor of Newcastle, 1354 in *Close Rolls* (Northumb); William 'of Stroxer' (i.e. *de Stroþer*), burgess (selling wool to merchants from Bruges), 1355 in *Laing Charters* (Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumb); Henry *del Strother*, sheriff of Northumb, about 1358 in Northumberland Archives ZSW/3/12; Alan *de Strother*, warden of Roxburgh Castle, 1376 in TNA (Northumb).

Wilson explains it as either topographic, from northern ME *strother*, *struther*, *stroder* 'wooded marshland, marsh covered in brushwood' (OE *strōðer*), or as toponymic from Strother in Co. Durham, by which he means Strother House in Boldon. As a mercantile and gentry family, the Strothers almost certainly took their name from a named place but probably not from this one, for although there is a reference in Boldon to *le Estrother* (1153 × 95) there is no evidence of it having been a medieval settlement. Victor Watts suggests that the house may have been named from the surname, noting that William *de Strother*, probably a member of the Newcastle family, was a tenant in nearby Offerton (Co. Durham) in 1473 (Watts, 2002, 121). Chaucer seems to be having a joke at this family's expense in the Reeve's Tale when he says of the two poor university students, John and Aleyn, 'Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother, Fer in the north, I kan nat telle where' (*Canterbury Tales*,

I (A), lines 4014–15). Nor, unfortunately, can we. Some Chaucer scholars have supposed it to be the Strother family's fortified manor house at Lanton in Kirknewton (recorded as having a tower in 1415).[9] This is sometimes called Castle Strother by modern writers, but it is named from the surname, not the other way round.

There seems to be no place of any antiquity in Northumberland simply called Strother, but there is Cold Strother in Kirkheaton, recorded as *Caldestrother* in 1232, and Haughton Strother, recorded as *Haluton Strothir* in 1273 (Mawer 1920, 50, 191) The (del) Strother family owned estates near (but not actually in) both places from at least the late fourteenth century, and were in-laws of the lords of Haughton Strother.[10] A John *de Caldestrother* is on record in 1279 in *Assize Rolls* (Northumb). Perhaps he was a forebear of William *de Strother* of Kirknewton but I have no evidence to support this. Possibly 'The Strother' was a lost district name for the marshy area around Cold Strother (north of the North Tyne) or that around Haughton Strother (on the south bank of the North Tyne), but evidence is lacking. In southern Scotland, Struther in Lanarkshire and Struthers in Ayrshire and Fife are formal possibilities, but in the absence of any supporting evidence Black (1946) suggests that Scottish *Strother* is probably the Northumberland family name, whose bearers were major landholders on the Scottish border.

The uncertainty of where the Strother family originated is largely due to the patchy nature of medieval records for Northumberland, and I

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9 Northumberland Castles and Fortalices in 1415, at <gatehouse-gazetteer.info/numblis2.html>.

10 Estates included Sweethope in Thockrington and the manor of Hawick in Kirkharle (TNA E 199/33/24; Northumberland Archives ZSW/2/43). Cold Strother and Haughton Strother are adjacent to Capheaton, the chief estate of Alan de Heton, whose daughter Mary married John del Strother in 1351 (Northumberland Archives ZSW/4/29). Haughton Strother was occupied in the fourteenth century by the Swinburn family, who were lords of Capheaton from the thirteenth century (Northumberland Archives, ZSW), and John del Strother esq. is named as an uncle and 'next friend' of William de Swinburne, heir of Haughton Strother in 1410 (Northumberland Archives, ZSW/1/145, 147).

remain convinced that as a merchant-cum-gentry family name, *de*(*l*) *Strother* is best understood as toponymic. This variation between *de* and *del* (or *de la*), which also occurred in the early forms of *Delafield*, is characteristic of toponymic surnames derived from a simplex, lexically transparent place-name, where the definite article can be included or dropped at will.

The same point applies to *de la Pole*, literally 'of the pool', the name of a rich merchant family of Kingston upon Hull. The brothers Richard *de la Pole* or *de Pole* (who died in 1345) and William *de la Pole* or *de Pole* (who died in 1366) were wool merchants, wine merchants and bankers. William lent money to Edward II and Edward III, and his descendants were rewarded with the Dukedom of Suffolk. Their surname would be expected to be toponymic, in which case Poole in Dorset (recorded as *la Pole* in 1220, *EPNS Dorset*, II, 41) and Welshpool in Montgomeryshire (*la Pole*, 1197, Owen and Morgan 2007) are prime candidates, but it has not been possible to establish any firm connection with either town, nor with any other of the merchant families in Devon, Derbyshire and Middlesex bearing a similar name (Horrox 1983, 3–7). *De la Pole* has not survived as a modern surname, not only because the Hull family died out, but also because they, like other de (la) Pole families in the medieval records, were also known as *Pole*, and it is the un-prefixed form of the toponymic surname that will have survived, if at all, as POOL(E) and POLE.

1.6 DELLO(W)

DELLOW and DELLO are explained by Reaney as 'dweller by the ridge or hill' (OE *hōh* or *hlāw*), citing

> Walter *Delho*, 1275 in *Hundred Rolls* (Herts); William *Dellowe*, 1275 in *Hundred Rolls* (Wilts); William *Delhou*, 1279 in *Hundred Rolls* (Oxon).

The Oxfordshire and Wiltshire names are probably not relevant to the modern name *Dellow*, which in the 1881 Census and in the IGI from the sixteenth century onwards is concentrated in Hertfordshire, especially in Great Hormead. A Hertfordshire origin is reinforced by the mention of a

Philip *de la Hoo* in connection with Great Gaddesden in the 1255 *Assize Rolls* for Hertfordshire. This name is clearly derived from OE *hōh* 'hill spur' (or its ME reflex) but it is not a topographic name, as Reaney supposed, but toponymic, alluding to a minor settlement in Great Gaddesden called The Hoo (recorded as *la Hoo* in 1325, *EPNS Hertfordshire*, 35). Here is a selection of the evidence that will appear in *FaNBI 2*:

> Philip *de la Hoo*, 1255 in Assize Rolls (Great Gaddesden, Herts); Walter *Delho*, 1275 in *Hundred Rolls* (Herts); William *Dellowe*, draper, 1474 in PROB 11 (London); Joanna *Dellowe*, 1540, Clemence *Dellow*, 1561 in IGI (Great Hormead, Herts); William *Dellowe* of Hormead, 1596 in TNA (Herts); Annise *Dellow*, 1615 in IGI (Barkway, Herts); Joseph *Delloe*, 1619, Joseph *Deloe*, 1629 in IGI (Hitchin, Herts); Henry *Dello*, 1651 in IGI (Ware, Herts); Daniel *Delow*, 1706 in IGI (Braughing, Herts); Daniel *Dello*, 1712, Joanna *Dellow*, 1788 in IGI (Barley, Herts).

A link between *de la Hoo* and *Dellow* looks extremely promising but is not proven. I have not found any evidence for a genealogical relationship between the Great Gaddesden and the Great Hormead families, and the villages themselves lie on opposite sides of Hertfordshire (west and east respectively).

   Linguistic similarities can be misleading. Reaney naturally assumed that modern DELLO is another spelling of *Dellow*, and this seems to be supported by the eighteenth-century forms cited above, but the truth is more complex. There are only four people listed as *Dello* in the 1881 Census, all children of a man oddly surnamed *Donnior*, from Galway in Ireland, and living in Warrington, Lancashire. In the 1871 census the same father's name is given as *Donelan* (a *bona fide* Irish surname) and other members of the family are surnamed with *Do.*, the common abbreviation of *Ditto* 'the same'. *Donnior* and *Dello* in the 1881 census are presumably the enumerator's mis-readings of *Donnelan* and *Ditto*, which may have been indistinctly written in the original schedule.

   Dello as an occasional spelling of *Dellow* may have died out, but it was also a Walloon and Huguenot name, which may survive in its more

common spelling DELO. This could have several etymologies, including perhaps French *Deleu*, '(son) of Leu', a personal name derived from *leu*, a Picard form of OF *loup* 'wolf' (Morlet 1991, s.n. Deleu). The following all appear in IGI:

> Jacques *De Leu*, 1596, Jean *Delo*, 1715, Pierre *Delo*, 1717 (Walloon or Strangers' Church, Canterbury, Kent); Abraham *De Lo*, 1618, Jacob *Delo*, 1733 (Huguenot Church, Threadneedle Street, London); Michel *de Lo*, 1662 (Huguenot Church, Thorney, Cambs); Isaac *De Loe*, 1716 (Conington, Hunts); Peter *Dello*, 1719 (Canterbury, Kent); James *Deloe*, 1780 (Saint Alphege, Canterbury, Kent).

2. MODERN CREATIONS: DELAHOOKE AND DEL STROTHER

Modern alterations to surnames can give a misleading impression of uninterrupted antiquity.

2.1 DELAHOOKE

This is a rare name. It is absent from the IGI and the 1881 Census. Reaney assumes that it is a survival of medieval *de la Hoke*, which he cites from a Devon entry in the 1242 *Book of Fees*. He derives it from OE *hōc* 'bend in a river' or 'hill spur'. In fact this particular reference is probably to one of several minor place-names called Hook in Devon. Examples of this name and its fully ME form *atte Hoke* certainly survive as modern HOOK(E), which is frequent in Devon in IGI and the 1881 Census, and also in Kent, where it may derive from the place called Hook. I have not found evidence of *Delahook* in post-medieval records until the nineteenth century. William *de la Hooke* of Plympton Erle, surgeon, appears in a property deed dated 1838, relating to Plympton St Maurice, near Plymouth (West Devon Record Office, MS 710/141). IGI records *Hooke* and *Hook* in Plymouth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1839 the Reverend James *Hooke* or *De la Hooke* of Gravenhurst Inferior (Beds) is recorded as having an interest in property in Wembury, near Plymouth (West Devon Record Office, MS 234/10). *Hook* occurs as a surname in Wembury somewhat earlier: Ann *Hooke*, 1747, James *Hook*,

father of James *Hook*, 1794, both in IGI. *De la Hooke* looks like a nineteenth-century gentrification of the Devon family name *Hook*(*e*) but this form of it seems not to have survived to the present day.

In the 1911 Census, there is a single family with the name, that of Arthur Edmund *DelaHooke*, aged 54 (though I think it should say 55). He is said there to have been born in Canterbury, is now living in Hampstead as a house and estate agent, and is married with two children (eldest aged 7). He married Marie Stuart in January–March 1904 and according to the England & Wales, Death Index, 1916–2007, died aged 67 in December 1921 (recorded as Arthur E. De La Hooke). I thought it odd that I could not find him under this name in earlier censuses, so I searched instead for the name *Hook* and in the 1881 Census found Edmund Arthur Hook, who had been born in Canterbury, was currently unmarried, aged 25, and earned his living in Canterbury as a silk mercer and draper. The Ancestry website that I was using to search the Death Index and the Censuses directed me to the Criminal Registers of 1791–1892. In 1891 Edmund Arthur Hook was sentenced to five years imprisonment for attempted arson. That would explain why his name is absent from the 1891 Census. I cannot find his name in the 1901 Census or later censuses. It looks as though Edmund Arthur Hook may have changed his name to Arthur Edmund DelaHooke but this needs confirmation.

2.2 DEL STROTHER

At the end of the medieval period the Northumberland surname *del* (or *de le*) *Strother* (see 1.5 above) was reduced to STROTHER, as illustrated in these name-bearers listed in *FaNBI 2*:

> Sir John *de le Strother*, identical with Sir John *Strother*, knight, 1374 in Northumberland Archives, MS ZSW/2/43 (manor of Hawick, Northumb); Robert *Strother*, customs controller on wool, hides and wool fells, 1423 in *Patent Rolls* (Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumb); Robert *Strother*, 1581 in IGI (Berwick upon Tweed, Northumb); Thomas *Struther*, 1639 in IGI (Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumb); John *Strother*, 1647 in IGI (Alnwick, Northumb); Arthur *Strother*, 1831 in IGI (Stockton on Tees, Co. Durham).

Del Strother only re-appears in the nineteenth century. According to the 1881 Census 'William G. Del Strother' was a solicitor's articled clerk, aged 22, who lived in Ormesby (NR Yorks), and who was born in Stockton on Tees, Co. Durham. His marriage certificate, dated 1880, records his name as William Greeve *Del Strother* but his father is named in the same document as Francis Thomas *Strother*,[11] and in the 1861 and 1871 censuses William himself is recorded as 'William G Strother'. For some reason, perhaps influenced by antiquarian local histories, he restored *Del* to his surname.

3. Nᴀᴍᴇs ᴅɪsɢᴜɪsᴇᴅ ʙʏ ᴘʜᴏɴᴇᴛɪᴄ ᴄʜᴀɴɢᴇs ᴏʀ ᴍᴏʀᴘʜᴏʟᴏɢɪᴄᴀʟ ᴀᴍʙɪɢᴜɪᴛʏ: Dᴇʟʙʀɪᴅɢᴇ, Dᴇʟғᴏʀᴅ, Dᴇʟɪᴄᴀᴛᴇ, Dᴇʟʟᴀᴡᴀʏ, Dᴇʟᴀᴡᴀʀᴇ, Dᴜʟᴇʏ

3.1 DELBRIDGE

For an explanation of this name Reaney directs us to the entry for BRIDGE, where he records Nicholas *de la Brugge*, 1275 in the Worcestershire *Subsidy Rolls*, and Roger *dil Brigge*, 1327 in the Suffolk *Subsidy Rolls*, as evidence for the sense 'dweller near or keeper of the bridge'. Modern *Delbridge*, however, is heavily concentrated in Devon and Cornwall, with 130 bearers in Devon in Archer's mapping of the 1881 Census surnames and 92 in Cornwall. When I consulted the IGI, it was apparent that Devon and Cornwall had been its exclusive location from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century,

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[11] *Bristol, England, Select Church of England Parish Registers, 1720–1933* at <ancestry.co.uk>. The parish register location (St John, Bedminster, Somerset) is puzzling and may be an indexing error. William Greeve Del Strother's bride was Ellen Richardson, who according to the census returns was born in Middlesborough in about 1858, was living with her grandfather William Weatherill (another solicitor) in Guisborough in 1861, and was at a boarding school in London in 1871.

after which a few instances turn up in Kent. Here is a selection of the IGI evidence:

> Richard *Delbridge*, 1569 (Barnstaple, Devon); Thomas *Delbridge*, 1577 (Newlyn East, Cornwall); William *Delbridge*, 1633 (Cubert, Cornwall); John *Dellbridge*, 1649 (Roborough by Torrington, Devon); Andrew *Delbridge*, 1754 (Chatham, Kent); George *Dealbridge*, 1769 (Perranzabuloe, Cornwall); John *Dellbridge*, 1787 (Deptford, Kent); John *Delbridge*, 1802 (North Molton, Devon).

The earliest example I could find for this name was not in the IGI but in an edition of the sixteenth-century Devon *Subsidy Rolls* (Stoate 2004), where Nicholas *Delbrugge* of Bishops Tawton was assessed for taxation in 1524. In the 1525 subsidy the same man appears as Nicholas *Thelbrygge*, at which point the true origin of the surname became clear. There are three places called Thelbridge in Devon, two of which are significant settlements. One is the parish of Thelbridge Barton and the other is Thelbridge in the parish of Roborough. Both place-names are derived from OE *þelbrycg* 'plank bridge' and have a sixteenth-century spelling *Delbridge*, reflecting the common interchange of *Th-* and *D-* in early modern Devon dialect (*EPNS Devon*, I, xxxv). The one in Roborough is attested as *Thelbrigg* in 1318 and *Delbridge* in 1558–79, and this is the most probable source of the surname. *EPNS Devon* (I, 119), records a medieval surname *Thelbrigg* there in 1310. It was still there in the seventeenth century: John *Dellbridge*, 1649 in IGI (Roborough by Torrington, Devon). The *Th-/D-*variation is also explicit in IGI listings of Richard *Thelbrydge* (1563) and Richard *Delbridge* (1569) in Barnstaple, and of William *Thelbridge* (1717) and John *Delbridge* (1802) in North Molton, all close to Roborough. This name is not, as Reaney supposed, a topographic surname with AN *del* prefixed to ME *brigge* but a toponymic surname, a dialect pronunciation of a Devon place-name.

3.2 DELFORD

Wilson cites a Lancashire man, John *Delforde, del Forde* (1324) in support of his explanation 'dweller by the ford'. John's surname could

alternatively be toponymic, alluding to the place-name Ford, in Sefton parish (Lancs), which is recorded as *la Forde* in 1323 and *the Forde* in 1408 (Ekwall 1922, 117). Either way, as a hereditary name it would normally be reduced to FORD, an exceptionally common name in Lancashire in 1881, with 2,220 bearers. *Ford* is also common in south-west England (also often from places called Ford) and elsewhere across England but *Delford* is rare in the 1881 Census Returns, limited to Surrey (8 bearers) and Glamorgan (2). I would not completely rule out the possibility that some examples of *Delford* could derive from one of the places called (The) Ford, but what little evidence there is for the surname in the IGI suggests that it is a variant of TELFORD with voicing of the initial consonant. *Tailford*, *Telford* and *Telforth* are frequent variants of TELFER, from the AN nickname *taille fer* 'cut iron'. In the IGI they are especially common in Scotland (whence came Thomas Telford, the eighteenth-century engineer, after whom Telford in Shropshire is named) and in northern England, where the earliest examples of *Delford* and *Delforth* are also found. William *Delforth*, 1627, William *Delford*, 1629, and Willyam *Telforth*, 1643 in IGI (Bishopwearmouth, Co. Durham), probably refer to the same man, named as the father of a number of baptized children in the parish. *Delford* appears less frequently in southern England, mainly around London. According to the 1881 Census the Delford family that resided in Southwark (Surrey) came from Whitechapel (Middx). A John *Delford* is recorded in Whitechapel in the 1841 Census and Timothy and Mary *Delford* appear as parents of a baptised daughter in the 1736 Whitechapel parish register (IGI). Since *Timothy* was not a common forename in eighteenth-century England, it is possible that this couple were identical with Timothy *Telford* and Mary *Bozwell*, who were married in Whitechapel in 1727,[12] and had their first child baptised there in 1728 (IGI). Timothy may have been a descendant of George *Telford*, 1621 in IGI (Saint Mary Whitechapel, Stepney), and

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[12] London Metropolitan Archives, St Mary, Whitechapel, Composite register: baptisms Apr 1711 – Jul 1733, marriages Apr 1713 – Oct 1733, P93/MRY1/007.

perhaps of John *Tailford*, 1597 in IGI (Saint Dunstan, Stepney). The voicing of initial /t/ is a sporadic sound change, not a regular one.[13]

3.3 DELICATE

This is another example of how easily colloquial pronunciation can disguise a name's true identity. Reaney lists the name along with DALLICOAT and DALLICOTT (which are not in the 1881 census) as a variant of COTE (from ME *cot* 'hut, cottage'), with prefixed AN *de la*. A similar name, *Dellicott*, does occur in the 1881 census. Apart from *Cote*, these are all west midlands names, attested in IGI as:

> William *Dallicott*, 1719 (Shifnal, Shrops); Samuel *Dillicate*, 1770, Marlborough [*sic*] *Delicate*, 1788 (Kidderminster, Worcs); Simon *Delicate*, 1794 (Shareshill, Staffs).

Unlike COATES, neither *Cote* nor COAT(E) is an established west midlands name, so it is more fruitful to search for a different source for *Dallicoat*, *Delicate*, etc. They look more like a toponymic surname from Dallicote, in Claverley, Shropshire.[14] Alternatively they might be local pronunciations of *Derricott*, with /l/ substituted for /r/. In Shropshire and Staffordshire *Derricott* is probably a variant of *Darracott* (Tooth 2000–10, I, 153), a post-medieval pronunciation of Dodcott in Audlem, Cheshire (*EPNS Cheshire*, III, 92). Examples of these names in IGI include:

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[13] Its best known example is *Dunstall*, which occurs as a ME and Modern English variant of *Tunstall* (OE *tūnsteall* 'farmstead') in place-names and field-names in counties as far apart as Staffordshire, Sussex and Cambridgeshire. See Horovitz 2005, 240, 546; *EPNS Sussex*, II, 476; *EPNS Cambridgeshire*, 348. The motivation is unclear. A similar variation is evidenced in the surname *Dunnicliffe*, which appears to be a variant of *Tunnicliffe*. See *FaNBI*, s.nn. TUNNICLIFFE, TUNSTALL, DUNNICLIFFE.

[14] The place-name is first recorded as *Dalicot'* in 1261–2, and a surname derived from it is recorded in 1371; see *EPNS Shropshire*, VI, 16, where Gelling explains the name as a compound of OE *Deala + ing + cot* 'the cottage associated with a man named Deala'.

Thomas *Daricott*, 1669, Michael *Dorricott*, 1723 (Alberbury, Shrops); Patience *Dericott*, 1704 (Ludford, Shrops); Sam. *Derricott*, 1706 (Sedgley, Staffs); Jesse *Dericot*, 1744 (Much Wenlock, Shrops); Francis *Derricutt*, 1835 (Malpas, Cheshire); John *Derricutt*, 1868 (Ash, Shrops).

Audlem lies nine miles west of Aston (Staffs), where Margaret *Dellicott* is recorded as living in the 1881 census. Julia *Derricott*, 1876 in IGI (Tipton, Staffs) may have been a relative of Joseph *Dellicott*, who is recorded in the 1881 Census Returns as born and living in Tipton.

There are two other clusters of *Delicate* in the 1881 Census Returns. One is in the North Riding of Yorkshire, where it occurs in or near Richmond from the late seventeenth century. I have not been able to relate it to any earlier names in the area. The other is in Hampshire and Wiltshire, where it seems to be a variant of *Dalicote*, *Dillicutt* and possibly *Delacourt*. IGI records:

John *Dallicortte*, 1540 (Almer, Dorset); Nickolas *Dalicote*, 1576, Mary Ann *Delicate*, 1814 (Fareham, Hants); Arthur *Delacourt*, 1590, Charles *Delicate*, 1820 (Salisbury, Wilts); Henry *Delacourt*, 1681 (Tilshead, Wilts); Ann *Dilicut*, 1707 (Fugglestone Saint Peter, Wilts); George *Dillicut*, 1720, William *Delicate*, 1730 (Wilton, Wilts); Daniel *Delacourt*, 1756 (Wareham, Dorset); William *Delicate*, 1798 (Boarhunt, Hants); John *Delicourt*, 1816 (Mottisfont, Hants).

AN *de la Court* was probably a name for a retainer at a manor house or castle and is attested in medieval Shropshire and Sussex. It appears more commonly in the records as ME *atte C(o)urt* and survives as the modern surnames COURT and ACOURT. Neither *de la Court* nor *atte Court* have yet been found in the medieval records of Dorset, Hampshire or Wiltshire, so this explanation remains conjectural, and one must leave open the possibility that modern *Delacourt* might be an altered form of

Dalicote,[15] or that it represents the Jersey surname DE LA COUR or the similar Walloon or Huguenot surname.

3.4 DELLAWAY

In post-medieval records, surnames in *Del-* often ring the changes in the main vowel, giving *Dal-*, *Dil-* and *Dol-*. Such irregular developments are typical of modern surnames, which, having lost lexical meaningfulness, are prone to more radical phonetic alteration than is found in contemporary vocabulary and are subject to re-modelling through perceived resemblances to other names or words.[16] The commonness with which it occurs is a warning not to take *Del-* automatically at face value, as Wilson does with *Dellaway*. He treats it as it looks, as AN *de la* + ME *wey* (OE *weg*) 'road' or 'path'. It is not difficult to find medieval examples like Richard *de la Weye*, 1249 in *Book of Fees* (Devon), but the preposition and definite article seem always to disappear in the hereditary surname. WAY is in fact predominantly a Devon surname in Archer's *Atlas* and in the IGI, and it is more properly regarded as a toponymic, referring to one of the many minor places with this name in the county.[17] Wilson's only supporting examples are John *Delewey*, 1306 in Assize Rolls (Wilts) and Matthew *Deloway*, 1662 in Hearth Tax (Essex). In fact his 1306 name may belong with a different surname, DALLOWAY or

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[15] Alteration of *-cott* to *-court* is possibly illustrated in the name of Samuel *Derricourt* (1851 Census), who was born in Wigginton (Staffs), and lived with his wife and family in Weeford (Staffs). This is very likely another variant of the Staffordshire surname *Darracott*, *Derricott*.

[16] I have commented more fully on this phenomenon in McClure (2014). For similar observations relating to place-names see Clark (1991), §3.

[17] It has been suggested that Joel *de la Waye*, recorded in the 1244 Devon Assize Roll, may have lived at Waye in Ashburton, and that Richard *de la Weye*, who is recorded in the 1281 Assize Roll, may have lived at Way in Throwleigh (*EPNS Devon*, II, 464, 453). In Dorset the surname Way refers to the settlement we now know as Upwey, derived from the name of the river Wey and not from OE *weg* 'road, path' (*EPNS Dorset*, I, 245).

DALLAWAY, which he explains as 'dweller by the road in the dale', citing John *Daleway*, 1305 in the same Wiltshire Assize Rolls. The modern surname preserves the medial vowel. Whether this topographic explanation is the right one is difficult to say, as no forms of this surname have yet been found with a prepositional element, such as *atte* or *de*. An alternative possibility is that it derives from an unrecorded ME personal name *Dalwy*, *Dalewey*, representing an OE *Dealwīg* with an optional inorganic medial -*e*-.[18] Whatever its derivation, the modern surname has several epicentres. Spelled *Dallaway*, *Dalloway*, *Dellaway*, *Dillaway*, *Dilliway*, *Dilloway* and *Dolloway*, it appears in Hertfordshire and Essex, in Sussex, and in the west midlands (Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire).

3.5 DELAWARE

The record of Sarah *de la Ware*, 1201 in *Select Pleas* (Kent), led Wilson to explain DELAWARE either as a toponymic surname from Delaware in Brasted (Kent) or as a topographic name 'dweller by the weir' (OE *wer*). I believe that a toponymic source is more likely than a topographic one, but the immediate reason for questioning both explanations is a lack of continuous evidence for this name in Kent (as far as I am aware). Later bearers of the surname in IGI are rare and geographically scattered:

> Jane *Delawar*, 1554 (Saint Trinity the Less, London); Elsabeth *Delaware*, 1601 (Bury, Lancs); Ann *Dellaware*, 1646 (Saint Giles, Cripplegate, London); Samuel *Delaware*, 1815 (East Coker, Somerset).

The only bearers of this name in the 1881 Census are Margaretta *Delaware*, a dress maker who was born in and still lived in Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, and William *Delaware*, schoolmaster of Milton near Gravesend in Kent, but the Kent location is probably misleading, for William Delaware was born in Guernsey (Channel Islands). Perhaps his

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[18] The 1306 form *Delewey*, however, points to ME *dale* (OE *dæl*) + *wey*, with Wiltshire dialect *e* instead of *a* for OE *æ* (*EPNS Wiltshire*, xx).

name is Norman French. I have not found any earlier evidence of the name in the Channel Islands, but in Gloucestershire and Somerset *de la War(r)e* was an AN variant of Old Norman French *de la Wer(r)e*, *de la Wiere* (Central French and AN *de la Guerre*) 'of the war or combat', perhaps a name for a military leader or a combatant at tournaments. It was often reduced to *la War(r)e, le Wer(r)e, la Guerre*, and finally to WARR and WARE:

> John *la Werre, la Guerre*, 1187, 1195 in *Pipe Rolls* (Gloucs); Tomas *la Werre, la Guerre*, 1196 in *Pipe Rolls* (Somerset); Tomas *de la Warre*, 1199 in *Pipe Rolls* (Gloucs); Peter *le Werre, de Warre*, 1199, 1203 in *Pipe Rolls* (Gloucs), perhaps identical with Peter *le Ware*, 1218 in *Charter Rolls* (Gloucs); Rog. *de la Warre*, 1311 in *Feet of Fines* (Somerset); Johannes *le Ware*, 1313 in *Subsidy Rolls* (Bristol, Gloucs); John *de la Warre*, 1327 in *Subsidy Rolls* (Wickwar, Gloucs); Johanna *la Warre*, 1327 in *Subsidy Rolls* (Somerset); John *Ware*, 1554, Robert *Warr*, 1633 in IGI (Bristol, Gloucs); Roger *Ware*, 1611, Elizabeth *Warr*, 1691 in IGI (Pitminster, Somerset); Alice *Warr*, 1623 in IGI (Yatton, Somerset).[19]

The suffix in Wickwar (Gloucs) in the 1327 example is manorial, from the ownership of a place named Wick by the de la War(r)e family. It is the AN variant *ware* (perhaps with a lengthened vowel) for *warre* that is the source of the onomastic ambiguity, whereby it became homonymous with surnames from ME *wer(e), war(e)* 'weir' and from places named Ware. The fully prefixed form of the AN surname survived in the baronial title *De La Warr*, but it was popularly rendered as *Delaware*, and was acquired through marriage by the West family in the fifteenth century. Thomas West (1577–1618), Lord Delaware, was governor of the Jamestown Colony in America and it was after him that Delaware Bay

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[19] Note, however, that (*le*) *Ware* can have other origins; see *FaNBI*, s.n. WARE.

and Delaware River were named.[20] It is not known, however, if *Delaware* was ever used by members of the West family as a surname or if any of the post-medieval bearers of *Del(l)awar(e)* cited above from London, Lancashire and Somerset were descendants of the earlier Anglo-Norman family. Their names could alternatively be examples of gentrification through the addition of *Dela-* to the surname *Ware* (of various origins) at a later date.

3.6 DULEY

This is explained by Reaney solely as a topographic name 'dweller by the clearing', from OF *du* 'of the' + ME *le(y)*. In support he cites John *Deu Ley*, alias *del Le*, 1230 in *Pipe Rolls* (Lancs), John *Dulay*, 1279 in *Hundred Rolls* (Hunts), and John *du Lay*, 1327 in *Subsidy Rolls* (Suffolk). I think it more likely that the Lancashire man took his name from a local place-name, either Leigh, or Lea (in Preston parish), which had both an English community and a French one, following the granting of an estate there in 1189 to a Norman, Warin de Lancaster (Ekwall 1922, 100, 146). Surnames from either place normally became LEIGH, LEA or LEE, all common in Lancashire. The Huntingdonshire man, and perhaps the Suffolk one as well, was a member of the du Lay gentry family of Great Paxton (Hunts), who held the manor there in chief of the Honour of Huntingdon and whose property in Molesworth (Hunts) was known as Dulays Manor in 1398.[21] For a family of this social standing a topographic surname is not terribly likely, whether from ME *ley*, *lay* (OE *lēah*) 'clearing, fallow land, meadow' or from ME *laie* (OE *lagu*, AN *lai*) 'lake, pond, pool'. A toponymic origin is more plausible but difficult to

[20] In 1484 Thomas West, knight, lord de la Warre, was in dispute with the king regarding rights in Swineshead, Lincolnshire (Feet of Fines, TNA CP 25/1/145/163, no. 3). In the 1524 Devon *Subsidy Rolls* Lord Delaware was assessed for taxation as lord of the manor of Broadhempston (Devon). Thomas West, the principal tax-payer in Broadhempston in the 1332 *Subsidy Rolls*, was probably his ancestor.

[21] *VCH Huntingdonshire*, III, 92–6.

pin down, as there are no simplex place-names from OE *lēah* or *lagu* in the vicinity. Indeed, the persistent spelling *du Lay* in the surname suggests a wholly AN form, perhaps *du Lay* 'of the Law', for someone skilled in legal matters, or *du Lay* 'of the Lake', although neither derivation can be supported from extra-linguistic evidence.

As far as the modern surname is concerned, this may all be beside the point, since there is no obvious connection between these medieval names and the modern distribution of *Duley*. It has 209 bearers in the 1881 census, most of them living in Surrey and Sussex, with a smaller cluster in Warwickshire. A more probable source for the name in Surrey and Sussex is the AN toponymic name *D'Oilly*, which sometimes took the form *Duly*, as illustrated in Thomas *Duly*, 1327, Thomas *Doyllye*, 1332 in *Subsidy Rolls* (Warnham, Sussex). Thomas may be an ancestor of William *Duley*, 1769, and Sarah *Dewly*, 1806 in IGI (Herstmonceaux, Sussex). The founder of the family, Robert *de Oilgi*, held extensive estates in southern counties and in the midlands in 1086 and took his name from Ouilly-le-Basset in Calvados (Keats-Rohan 1999, 406; Keats-Rohan 2002, 620–2). It raises the possibility that in the Huntingdonshire name *Duly* alias *Doillye* might have been re-modelled, through syllabic mis-division and perhaps a retention of OF stress, as AN *du Lay*.

In the west midlands the lack of medieval name forms which could be linked to the modern name leaves one with little to go on. If it is not from AN *D'Oilly* it might be a post-medieval variant of *Dully*, a west midlands dialect form of DILLEY, from a ME personal name derived from OE **Dylla*. Alternatively it might be a variant pronunciation of the west midlands name DOWLEY. This seems to be a local pronunciation of DOOLER or DOWLER, an occupational name for name for a man who made felloes or wheel rims (from ME *doule*, *deul*, *dul*).[22] In north Staffordshire Tooth (2000–10, II, 228) notes that Peter *Dowley* (1617) is identical with Peter *Dowler* of Stowe by Chartley, Staffordshire (1618).

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[22] In *FaNBI 2* this replaces Reaney's explanation of Dowler, which is repeated in *FaNBI 1*, that a *dowler* made dowels or headless wooden pins; this sense of *dowel* is not recorded before 1794 in *OED*.

Cᴏɴᴄʟᴜsɪᴏɴs

Reaney and Wilson thought that modern surnames in *Del-*, *Dela-* and *Du-* formed a homogenous, etymologically coherent group, but clearly they do not. Their assumption was that the names could all be explained, solely or mainly, as an English topographic term with a fused AN preposition and article. Having looked at the available evidence, I have not found a single one that can be confidently explained in this way. The majority of them are either variants of quite different surnames (where *Del-*, *Dela-* and *Du-* are not prepositional) or they are English or French toponymic surnames with prefixed *del* or *de la*, reflecting the social status or origins of people for whom French was a spoken register. Most of Reaney's and Wilson's medieval examples have only an accidental similarity in form with the modern name; they are often in the wrong location historically and many are simply scribal translations of ME topographic names with *atte*. For two of these names Reaney offers an alternative explanation as an AN toponymic, from place-names in Normandy, but omits to mention their post-medieval reinforcement by similar names from Jersey and Guernsey and from the Continent by Walloon and Huguenot migrants.

Patterns of phonetic and morphological variation can be immensely helpful in forming hypotheses about the origins of surnames, but there is an abundance of formal ambiguity in modern surname development, and every hypothesis for every name has to be tested against the available historical evidence for that name. It turns out that the true stories of *Delbridge*, *Delafield*, *Delahooke*, *Surtees* or any of the others could not be safely predicted from any single linguistic pattern, medieval or modern. Each of them has a history of its own, which needed to be individually researched, especially, where possible, in their familial and social contexts. It was an alias that identified the true origin of *Delbridge*. It was the census data that revealed the origins of *Delahooke* and *Del Strother*. It was a meticulous piece of family history that showed that the Buckinghamshire and Devon name *Delafield* was not topographic but toponymic. For the Yorkshire *Delafield*, however, the necessary local, early evidence is missing and it is not safe to assume that it has the same

etymology or onomastic sense as the Buckinghamshire one. Several of these names, like *Delicate*, have multiple origins. I have said that I have found no evidence of any modern surnames in Reaney and Wilson's dictionary that are certainly topographic in origin with an original fused AN prepositional element. This is a statement based on the facts as I currently know them and is not a prediction that none will ever be found.

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