recorded from a boring upon a nominally 'drift-free' area. In the Northumberland village of Edingley field work by the author in the area between the ancient church (with possible pre-Conquest walling) and a small castle (of late 16th C. origin) has revealed every gradation of soil from light gravelly drift to quite ferocious boulder clay and from sandy loam to water-logged peat - all within a twenty acre field. This could well be the 'site' of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Drift overlies the landscape in a variable and discontinuous film and even on the coalfield, where the quality of the data is excellent, drift maps have to be used with a cautious understanding of their nature. They represent one possible interpretation of discoverable drift conditions and the same may be said of soil and land-quality maps. Drift deposits do affect soils and settlement by providing varied parent materials, but any scholars seeking to understand settlement would do well to remember that for the Anglo-Saxons the husbanded soils of earlier centuries may have been of pre-eminent importance.

In the present author's view we can only attempt regional appraisals of siting factors and site qualities when many more detailed local studies are available. The topographical interpretation of place-names is fraught with dangers, but because place-names are so intimately associated with settlement and with man's perception of his environment, both natural and cultural, they constitute a vital ingredient of those integrative cross-disciplinary studies which are emerging as particularly productive. In this way the 'common thoughts about common things' of the earlier inhabitants may become rethinkable. There is, however, no more difficult exercise.

Notes

* A shortened version of a paper given on April 16th, 1978, at the tenth conference of the Council for Name Studies.

1. V. Watts, 'Comment on "The Evidence of Place-Names"', by Margaret Gelling, in Medieval Settlement ed. F. Sawyer (1976), 218, 219. See also the paper by Margaret Gelling, 200-211.
4. These points can be illustrated by reference to the following maps of the Geological Survey at a scale of 1:10,560 relating to Durham villages:

**NZ 12 SW** Cockfield village (NZ 1224): note drift free sandstone site (see also 1 inch Drift sheet No. 32), but there are nevertheless 'patches of residual drift' which at 122243 is five feet in thickness. The original focus of the settlement may have been at 129241 (where sandy drift is visible) with a field area centering at 127240. Later expansion (12th or E13thc?) is represented by the row centering on 128243 and from this the present village has grown.

**NZ 22 NW** Conden village (NZ 2329): nominally on a 'sandstone, medium grained and current bedded' but with a shaft showing 24 feet of drift at 242297.

**NZ 23 SE** Kirk Merrington (NZ 3126): a village of two plan elements. The E-W street occupies an exposed site on the ridge top, the NW-SE street (the settlement of Shelem) occupies a slight valley, facing SW but sheltered from the N and NE winds. This may have been the 'best site', and the inhabitants rendered the ancient rent of cornage. The former ponds found in both villages hint that the sites may not lie upon Magnesian Limestone but on a thin drift veneer.

**NZ 33 SW** Bishop Middleham (NZ 3331): this settlement of no great size sprawls across Magnesian Limestone overlain by 'glacial sand and gravel' and 'boulder clay with glacial drift - undifferentiated'.

**NZ 36 SE** East Bolden (NZ 3661): the village site embraces 'thin drift, Upper (Pelav) clay over Middle Magnesian Limestone, exposed Magnesian Limestone and boulder clay and drift, undifferentiated'.

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Thoughts on the French Connections of Middle-English Nicknames

... our je ne saurait tant écrire que on n'en trouveroit toûlis plus a escriper, qu'paue y voroît mettre; or ii envoies n'est mie klere et il pappiere est mouit dénommes ...

Le Livre des maistres de bruges, ed. J. Geeseler, p.81.

Middle-English bynames, especially nicknames, often involve French etymologies. Naturally, many of the Anglo-Norman feudal aristocracy took as bynames, which early evolved into hereditary surnames, either continental or Anglic. These, in the present context, will be disregarded. Less predictably, a French element also appears in the nicknames of English people, not only in the great metropolitan cities like Winchester, Canterbury, and London, but also, for instance, in the villages of West Norfolk.

At first sight, French elements among the nicknames of twelfth- and thirteenth-century English townsmen may seem unremarkable, given the general French influence on the Middle-English language; necessarily, a gallicized vocabulary would generate some gallicized nicknames. Yet the background may be less simple. Often a French term occurs far earlier as a nickname than it does as a loanword in the extant English literary and sub-literary records. In itself such a situation is acceptable enough, for, on the one hand, nicknames are widely acknowledged to provide antedatings of purely native terms and, although thirteenth-century English records are far too sparse to allow us to dogmatize about the chronology of loanwords, beyond doubt some nicknames do offer the earliest extant records of French loans into English.

There are, however, further discrepancies between nicknames and general vocabulary. For one thing, early literary records such as, for instance, the Final Continuation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (c. 1155) and the Ormulum (late twelfth century) show French lexical influence as far less dominant and pervasive than would be suggested by the frequent French nicknames recorded at comparable dates among some groups of ordinary townsmen; even the vocabulary of the strongly gallicized Ancrene Wisse (c. 1225) shows a French element amounting to little more than 10% of the 40% or so which might apparently be deduced from some nicknames. As a further twist, some of the French nicknames commonest in medieval England involve terms apparently not figuring at all as loanwords in the extant literary records (and, although for colloquial Middle English we can barely speak, common sense warns against conceiving of it as richer in French loanwords than the literary language was); thus, Basset 'short-legged', Blanchard 'british', Blind and Blindel 'blind', Cornell 'basket', German 'mouistach', Nucleon 'sparrow', Poct 'pick-axe', Pinal 'small pine-tree', Poulyeg 'coat', Roussel 'redhead', others, like Chesper 'kid(-leather)', Cokin 'nog', Cordel 'rope', Garegat 'throat', Sorel 'redhead', involve terms rare in English, whose currency was either limited or specialized. So, did some Middle-English nicknames of French origin arise from something other than general lexical influence?

A few of the apparent 'nicknames', such as Pictou and Roussel, were in fact in use as independent, quasi-'baptismal' names so early, indeed well before the time of the Domesday Inquest, that they are best-classed as such. Their appearances as bynames may therefore be taken as patronymic rather than characteristic. The ambiguity involved is not unlike that posed by toponymists by elements potentially indistinguishable either as appellatives or as personal names.

More excitingly, most French nicknames recorded for townsmen in England find exact parallels among those current on the continent itself; thus, of French nicknames found in late-twelfth-century urban rentrolls from Canterbury cathedral priory, scarcely one fails to find an analogue among those collected from mid-reign record rolls of northern and north-eastern France. Much the same proves true of other districts and other social milieux, so far examined: for instance, for the nicknames current in West-Norfolk villages during the thirteenth century (as preserved in the bede-roll compiled c. 1300 for Gaywood hospital, near Lynn).

Admittedly, speaking so categorically of 'northern and north-eastern' France may seem rash, or unduly influenced by the geographical scope of the studies relating the medieval records of northern and north-eastern France. For instance, far from being circumscribed by geographical boundaries, followed a common West-European tradition. This appears very clearly in all modern work. Parentally, the categories used by Reaney in his Origin of English Surnames (1967) corresponds but to date, with the briefest comment in les noms de famille de France (1945). Moreover, time after time comparison between independent and narrowly localized studies reveals similarities of semantic range too great to be easily attributable just to the investigative traditions shared by the workers. For 'Romania' we may compare, for example, not only the studies of Michalison and others on the Parisian region, the series of papers by Carrez on names from the district round Dijon, the work of Fr Vallet and Marguerite Conon on the Forez and that of Marie-Thérèse Morlet and others on Picardy and on various individual towns of northern and eastern France, but also, of course, with names from the Rhineland, and even, in spite of some idiolectic features, the work of various scholars on Italian materials: "all share a fundamental pattern of meanings, which closely resembles that seen in medieval England in native forms as well as in borrowed ones." Moreover, and hardly less than in the recorded nicknames, whether native formations or loans from French, likewise conform to general semantic patterns - a consensus almost amounting to theorize about 'the West-European view of human nature'.

Yet, even though forms collected in Burgundy or in the Massif Central may furnish semantic analogues to the French nicknames collected from England, they quite clearly cannot represent their sources, for dialectal differences are patent both in sound-systems and in vocabularies. In fact, and far from unexpectedly, the dialectal features of most French nicknames found in England point to derivations from North France; but also, from elsewhere in the continent, the language of the Parisian region, or else specifically from Norman and Picard forms. Luckily, secondary work on the personal names of these districts is advanced enough to allow expedient checking of continental parallels and analogues for the religious domains. Such checks as have so far been made show high levels of coincidence; and further work among the materials preserved for both sides of the Channel may well reinforce this impression.

Natural enough though it seems for French nicknames recorded in England to find parallels in parts of France which were not only the handiest geographies but also had close commercial ties with England, the problems are not solved. The question remains: how exactly did French nicknames become so very common in England, far commoner, that is, than general lexical influence would have suggested? Answering this question is hampered by our ignorance about the distribution of the hearers. Half of the French nicknames, and many of them were of French birth, how many of descent at least partly French, and how many purely English. Certainly French nicknames now and then qualify baptismal names which look distinctively English; but by the later twelfth century baptismal names of continental types were in such regular use among all the inhabitants of England as no longer to afford any basis for distinguishing the 'nations'. We are thrown back on hypothesis.
The possibilities are various. Scribal translation might be alleged, and no doubt was responsible for some forms recorded; but the constant exact coincidences between the forms current in England and the continental ones tell against adducing this as a general explanation. Perhaps French/English bilingualism was widespread, at least among the merchant class, that French nicknames were freely bandied about in English market-places; that might well account for the occasional combinations of French nicknames with English forenames. A bilingualism so widespread would, however, seem itself to be in need of some explanation. Now, though we are about individual townspeople, we do know, from Domomday Book and from other sources, that in the immediate post-Conquest period many English towns and cities contained fair proportions of continental immigrants. North-eastern France would have been a likely source for these immigrants, some of whom would have arrived already equipped with nicknames and all of whom would have been imbued with the well-established nicknaming traditions of their homeland. That movement of population would explain not only the Anglo-French nicknames exactly paralleled on the continent but also the probable tendencies to bilingualism just postulated.

To some extent the frequent French nicknames found in England may, then, afford evidence of immigration. How far quantitative interpretation of them may ever be possible needs deeper consideration. Certainly the introduction of the French tradition might imply a substantial French presence, with all that would mean for language and for culture in general. Yet, owing to the prestige of all things French, such nicknames, once introduced, would have been likely enough to have been taken up by native English people, just as forenames and general vocabulary were – for, as we have already seen, the English thesaurus was indeed regarded as wholly comprehensible to the French. The thesis was originally a strong French presence in town after town cannot, I think, be doubted, and it gives a more mercantile cast to the concept of 'coming over with the Conqueror'.

II

Perusing a whole corpus of byname-studies ought to produce more than just a card-index full of parallels and analogues; more even than hypotheses about migration-patterns. So, have French anthropomorphies any wider lessons for us, about attitudes and techniques?

Speaking of French' studies is in a sense misleading, because work on French personal names, like that on English ones, has so largely been done by the great Swedish schools of anthropomorphy, so that Michællson's pioneering study of names current in medieval Paris correspond to Ewak's on London. Nonetheless, the two bodies of work betray some differences in emphasis.

The collocation of Michællson, whose first volume on Paris appeared in 1927, with Ewak, whose Early London Personal Names came out twenty years later, suggests that students of French personal names were rather earlier than those of English ones to base their work on geographical or archive units rather than on topics; even more strikingly, Longnon's work on the Polignac genealogy at Paris and the Polignac genealogy of the Palaeography and Documents of the Middle Ages in England and France dates by over forty years his Palaeography and Documents of the Middle Ages in England and France Book. This may partly have been because with English personal names the complex interweaving of so many strands – Scandinavian, Continental-Germanic, and 'Christian', as well as the assorted native formations – demanded much larger and more dedicated paper; a fifth of a regional corpus of names could be carved out of the Société française d'onomastique founded by Daucat in 1947 (originally as Société internationale d'onomastique) for the Journal of the English Place-Name Society which is what its title suggests and our own Nomina is in its infancy. Certainly, it scarcely matters that we have never had any official organization comparable with the unhappily short-lived Commission nationale de Toponymie et Anthropomorphie set up in 1939; but it is a real lack to have no English centre comparable with the Centre d'Onomastique established in 1961 at the Archives de France, where both a bibliography and a bibliography library are maintained for personal-name studies as well as for place-names (although computer storage is as yet restricted to the latter). In French academic circles, that is to say, personal names usually figure alongside place-names, if not on terms of personal equality; and a person could even be about an English corpus of names (e.g. the A History of English Names compiled in 1966) for the Société française d'onomastique concern anthropomorphie), at least more prominently than they have usually done among us. At the Durham conference a colleague said to me: 'You're speaking to me, aren't you?' Concerning the miasma of sound, it might be better to be less 'special': and, in so far as French scholars come nearer to us than we do to treating both categories of name on equal footing, they may well have something to teach us.

The bilingual nicknaming of the Flemish/French borderlands offers a parallel of some potential interest for Middle English usage, see, for instance; Bouard and Gysseling, L’Impét royal en Artois; M. Gysseling and P. Bouard, L’onomastique calaisienne à la fin du XIIIe siècle. Anthroponymica XIII (Louvain and Brussels 1963); and the work of P. Debrabandere on Courtrai, especially Personnamen in het Kortrijkse (1300 - 1350), Anthroponymica XIX (Louvain and Brussels 1977).


16. See Clark and Owen, 'Lexicographical Notes', and Clark, 'Quelques exemples'.


21. I am grateful to Madame Marianne Moulin, of the Archives de France for sending me offprints of her two articles, 'La Société française d'Onomastique, Onoma, XVIII (1974), 554-8, and 'Le Centre d'Onomastique des Archives nationales', Revue historique, CCXL (1976), 237-43, as well as for the reference to the article by B. Kremer cited in n.5.

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PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF IRISH PLACENAMES

The notes which follow are intended mainly for the information of persons outside Ireland for whom the subject of Irish placenames is unfamiliar but they may be of some use to Irish people who have grown up among the names and who take them for granted without knowing much about how they originated or what they represent. The subject will be discussed under eight heads:

1. Languages of origin and transmission
2. Territorial units named
3. New territorial divisions and minor placenames
4. Documentation of placenames
5. The spelling and pronunciation of Irish words
6. Anglicized spelling of Irish placenames
7. The shape of Irish townland names
8. The shape of population names and of Irish barony names.

1. LANGUAGE: Placenames are part of language. To a large degree they are a fossilized part of language, to which they are related in two ways: the language of origin in which the name first arose and the language of transmission through which the name has come down to us in its now familiar form.

1.1 Languages or origin: There are four known languages of origin: Irish, Latin, Norse and English.

1.1 Irish: The vast majority of Irish placenames, over 90 per cent, arose in the Irish language, which we know from six periods:

(a) Proto-Irish, 4th to 6th centuries, known from inscriptions in the ogham script and names in early Latin documents;

(b) Archaic Irish, 6th/7th centuries, known from early glosses on Latin texts and the earliest portions of the ancient Irish laws;

(c) Old Irish, 8th/9th centuries, known from a considerable corpus of literature, some of it altered in later transmission;

(d) Middle Irish, 10th to 12th centuries, known from an expanding corpus of literature contained in the earliest surviving codices and later manuscripts;

(e) Classical or Early Modern Irish, 13th to 17th centuries, the language of the bardic schools and later literature down to the eclipse and the earliest portions of traditional Irish society by the Tudor and Stuart conquests: it was current also in Scotland;

(f) Recent Modern Irish, since the 18th century, the language of the surviving spoken dialects and modern literature; in this period Scottish Gaelic and Manx have gone their own way as separate languages.

Placenames can have arisen during any of these periods, and some that arose during the earlier periods have since died out and are known only from literary sources.

1.12 Latin: The source of a tiny proportion of ecclesiastical names, e.g. Sanctus Bosnas, now known in English translation as Holywood (Co. Down).

1.13 Norse: The source of a tiny proportion of mainly coastal names dating from the Viking settlements of the 10th/11th centuries and now surviving in