THE Earliest ANGLIAN NAMES IN DURHAM

The documentary history of Durham in the early Anglo-Saxon period is in practice largely the history of the community of St. Cuthbert and its land holdings as recorded in the eleventh century Historia de Sancto Cuthberto. Lindisfarne was founded with royal endowment in 635. The princess Hild was settled by Aidan on a hide of land on the north side of the Wear in 648. About the same time Helu founded Hartlepool on an iron-age site. Tynemouth, another Romano-British site, was probably founded before 651, Gateshead by 653. Benedict Biscop founded Monkwearmouth with a royal endowment of 70 hides in 674 and Jarrow Conferenda misteriact Done mape 794) followed in 681 with a further 40 hides. Pagan burial is rare in Durham and there was probably no permanent English settlement before the victory of Catterick in 598. These, therefore, are the earliest surviving Anglo-Saxon names in the county.

Ninth-century endowments of the community included Gainford and its dependencies between Tees and Wear and Dere street and the mountain in the west (830-845), and Billingham in Hartness (the Harmes or lordship of Hart, perhaps the former endowment of the Hartlepool monastery which had since been destroyed by the Danes). In 876 Halfdan "shared out the lands of the Northumbrians" but his successor returned two of these estates, viz. all the land between Tyne and Wear as far west as Dere street (an area including the original Monkwearmouth/Jarrow endowments and later known as Weraleshore, from Wear and hálh), and a coastal estate including Sel econ, Horden, N. S. Eden, Hulam, Hutton and Rainham.

Tenth-century leases and acquisitions continue the history of these estates. They include an itemization of the fourteen villas of the Gainford estate, and mention several new estates - the royal vill of S. Wearmouth and its eleven dependencies, Darlington and various territories, Norton, Escome and its territories, and an estate centred on Auckland. Finally c.1031 Crut gave Staindrop and its eleven dependencies.

Comparison with the geomorphological regions of the county show that the earliest endowments lie in excellent situations in the Tees and Wear lowlands, while the Gainford and Staindrop estates extend across both areas of the best agricultural land and areas of the harsher Pennine uplands.

Some of these estates or shires consisting of a central caput to which services were rendered by the dependent appendicea, are documented from the ninth century. Later evidence allows us to add shires based on Heighington, Quarrington and Billingham, but it the arguments of Professor G. K. J. Jones and others are accepted, the origins of some of these estates must antedate the seventh century.

Among the distinguishing features of these estates is (1) the possession of a refuge, such as Hamsterley Castles in Auklandshire (dating perhaps from c.700 A.D.); sites which may have been refuges for Staindropshire and Heighingtonshire await confirmation by excavation; (2) an estate church, such as Gainford with its many pre-conquest fragments and reference to an abbas in 801; Staindrop which preserves eighth-century fabric, and Auklandshire with the famous seventh-century church at Escome as well as Anglo-Saxon sculpture at St. Andrew's; (3) geographical separation of the lord's court and the church settlement as at North and South Auckland, Town and Church Kelloc, and Stockton and Norton; (4) late fusion of original unitary estates, as at Seaham and Dalton, originally in South Wearmouth; (5) settlement names referring to estate offices (Ryehope in S. Wearmouth, "reeve's valley"), preserving British names (Auckland, Eden), mentioning British population (Walworth in Heighingtonshire), or recalling estate geography (Norton; Weston in S. Wearmouth; Middleton between Sedgefield and Cornforth; Middle toen in Staindropshire).
If the antiquity posited for this kind of estate is justified, their names must be among the earliest stratum of English names in the county. They, and the names of the earliest monastic foundations, are almost exclusively topographical, *Hermitia* (later Harptree, 'stag island'); *Tynemouth, Wearmouth, Dunmow, Gateshead* (Hailes 'headland'); *Sedgefield; Staindrop* (hay 'valley'); *Gateshead, Wearmouth* specifically mentioned as a third century Roman settlement, the centre of an extensive parish at the convergence of three Roman roads, close to a villa at Old Durham, to recent Roman finds on the Durham peninsula, and to long term promotion of Staindrop at Hadrian's Wall, perhaps also *Elvet* with its pre-conquest sculptural remains (Sefute, *Sæ 'swan stream' or *Sæ 'island'). By contrast only four, Billingham, Darlington, Heighington and Stockton are mentioned (and the first of these was originally a constituent part of the earlier estate of Hartness).

Members of this audience will be familiar with the very important technique developed by Professor Cameron more than a decade ago for the study of Scandinavian place-name types. No correlation between the names occurring on good sites and the boulder clay in the Wear lowlands, an area where we would expect early Anglian settlement, name types on which an account is given. The boulder clay is 1. The problem of an abbaye at Gainford does not necessarily imply the existence of a monastery in the Benedictine sense; it may have been a ministerial foundation with a hereditary right to the title of abbaye, or a non-monastic group of secular clergy living a semi-copu-mural, exactly the kind of community which Professor Jones envisaged as serving the needs of a multiple estate. Cf. C. W. O. Addleshaw, *The pastoral organisation of the medieval dioceses of Durham and Newcastle in the time of Bede*, Jarrold Lectures, 1963, 9-9, Jones loc.cit. 266.


4. ibid. 219, 221.

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This rather unhelpful result may, of course, be due to too narrow an interpretation of the geological evidence, and there is no substitution for personal examination of sites 'in the field'. It certainly demonstrates the inadequacy of relying simply on the geological information contained in the 1st Ordnance Survey sheets available for Durham, and the need to use soil classification maps such as Margaret Faul's used for Yorkshire in *British Archaeological Report* 37. A good instance is Staindropshire, much of which lies on a vast expanse of boulder clay. Yet the 1950 soil survey made by the North East Development Association emphasises the excellence of the soil around Staindrop for agricultural purposes. This can only mean that the drift information mapped is insufficiently refined to be used alone for name and site correlation purposes.

In any case, the criteria for site selection by the earliest Anglian settlers in Durham and elsewhere were more complex and multifarious than this sort of relatively crude correlation with drift geology can always reveal. This is something which Dr. Brian Roberts has been recently reminding us of, and it is perhaps time now for us to turn to his paper on "Site and Situation: some hairs for splitting".

Notes

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


2. The presence of an abbaye at Gainford does not necessarily imply the existence of a monastery in the Benedictine sense; it may have been a ministerial foundation with a hereditary right to the title of abbaye, or a non-monastic group of secular clergy living a semi-copu-mural, exactly the kind of community which Professor Jones envisaged as serving the needs of a multiple estate. Cf. C. W. O. Addleshaw, *The pastoral organisation of the medieval dioceses of Durham and Newcastle in the time of Bede*, Jarrold Lectures, 1963, 9-9, Jones loc.cit. 266.


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