PAPERS FROM THE TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL FOR NAME STUDIES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Twelfth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland was held at the University of Keele from March 21st to March 24th 1980 by the kind invitation of Prof. A.L.F. Rivet, who also organized a programme of papers chiefly concerned with Celtic and Romano-British names. The speakers were: on March 21st, Prof. A.L.F. Rivet, 'Celtic Names and Roman Places'; on March 22nd, Mr G.B. Adams, 'Place-Names from Pre-Celtic Languages in Ireland'; Prof. D. Ellis Evans, 'The Significance of Early Celtic Personal Names'; Prof. Kenneth Jackson, 'The Twenty-Eight Cities of Nennius Reconsidered'; Dr M.L. Faulk, 'Place-Names and the Kingdom of Elmet'; and on March 23rd, Mrs Joan Stevens, 'Jersey Place-Names', Mrs Deirdre Flanagan, 'Place-Names in Early Irish Documentation: Structure and Composition'. Prof. Colin Smith, 'The Survival of Romano-British Toponymy', and Prof. Kenneth Cameron, 'The Meaning and Significance of Old English Wulf in English Place-Names'. During the afternoon of the 22nd, Prof. Rivet led a coach excursion into the Staffordshire-Cheshire Peak District, 'in the steps of Gawain', including a visit to one of the most remarkable of all black-and-white timbered houses, Little Moreton Hall.

In the following pages will be found six of the conference papers, either in summary or in revised form, and the Editor would like to thank the contributors for permission to publish them. Prof. Cameron's paper has already been published in the Journal of the English Place-Name Society, 12 (1979-80).

CELTIC NAMES AND ROMAN PLACES*

The intention is to explore the implications of Romano-British place-names like Durobrivae (Water Newton) where, although the name is Celtic, the elements must refer to the early Roman fort and the River Nene. This raises the whole question of what effect conquest by an external power has on the place-names of a country. Some norms may be established by considering what happened elsewhere in both the ancient and the modern world.

In the ancient world Greek colonisation, though not truly analogous to Roman expansion, produced names which, while apparently Greek, turn out to be of old indigenous origin (e.g., Antipolis, Olbia, Iurocis, Citharista, as interpreted by Dauzat and Benoit); later, the imperialism of Alexander and his successors scattered the whole of the Near East with the personal names of themselves and their consorts (Alexandria, Berenice etc.) without adapting them to local circumstances.

In the modern world the best example is provided by East Africa, where imperial names were conferred on major natural features (Lake Victoria etc.): this was something which the Romans never did, while early forts in Uganda and Kenya took the personal names of administrators or commanders (though only three of these names throughout the whole period of British colonial rule -- which was, by Roman standards, very brief indeed) -- and a useful analogy for a Roman road is provided by the Kenya and Uganda Railway, where stations bear both personal names (e.g., Sultan Hamud, commemorating a visit by the Sultan of Zanzibar while the line was being built) and constructional names (e.g., Parayatia, 'At the bridge') and the latter tend to be in the vernacular (Kiswahili) rather than in English. The "Alexander effect" is best illustrated in the modern world by the U.S.S.R., and two points need to be noted here: (a), many revolutionary names replaced names especially evocative of the old order (e.g., Stalingrad replaced Saratov and Sverdlovsk replaced Ekaterinburg); and (b), unlike the Alexandrian examples, these names were adapted to suit local languages (e.g. in Central Asia, Tashkent, not Tashkent).

In the Roman Empire itself a typical mix of names is again provided by southern Gaul -- native names (Ligurian and Celtic), Latinisations of them, the addition of Latin epithets (e.g., Telo Martius, Toulon) and personal names of consuls and governors applied to new Roman constructions (e.g., Fosse Passages for Marius's canal and then the town of Fos). In northern Gaul and Britain some constructional Latin names still occur (Ad Pontem etc.), but the personal names are, of course, exclusively imperial (Cambridge, Augustata etc.). On the slight evidence available it is suggested that these may, as in the U.S.S.R., have replaced names of high prestige in the old order (e.g., Augustonemetum, 'the shrine of Augustus', replacing Celtic Nemosanum at Clermont Ferrand). Apart from a few cases of the straight Augusta, the imperial names are compounded with Celtic elements, -boca, -bog, -morg, -rutum, and especially -dunum and -dunum, both of which should imply fortification. Since few towns succeeded hill-forts and since only Augustodunum (Autun) had town walls in the Augustan period, it seems likely that many of these represent early Roman forts, with the Caesar- names possibly referring to the hierarchy of Julius Caesar. This may even be true of Caesaromagus (Cheilmsford) in Britain, where the other imperial name earlier than the fourth century (when Londinium became Auguste) is Pont Aeli (Newcastle), which reflects the visit of Hadrian.
When compounded with imperial names -dunum and -durus always appear as the second element and this is universally true of -durus in classical times when otherwise compounded. Besides -durus, however, we also have Duro- occurring as the first element. This is normal in Britain (where Lactodurus, Towcester, is the only known example of the other form); and on the Continent, with only two outlying examples, Duro- names are concentrated between the Rhine and the sea. This suggests that the form is a specifically Belgic development and this may have important implications for Britain.

Assuming that at least one of these fortification names describe early Roman forts (later to be transferred to their successor towns), two questions arise: first, what were the forts called by the Romans when they were operative, and second, how did they acquire these secondary names? The answer suggested for the first question is that they were known by the name of the unit in garrison, since to apply the name of a commander would have been less majesté in imperial times and there is evidence elsewhere, notably on the upper Danube, of unit names for forts persisting. As for the second question, the name Durobrivae could be the result of an enquiry when a unit finally abandoned a fort ("We can't go on calling this Cohors III Nerviorum: what is its proper name?" "We call it the fort by the bridge").

While some Duro- and -dunum names (e.g. Camulodunum) are obviously of pre-Roman origin, the full paper of which this is a summary concludes by considering some two dozen names which may be considered secondary in this sense, including Durocarnonium (Mambruch, where the second element might even reflect garrisoning by the Cohors I Cornucriorum) and a few which may refer to Roman activity other than fortification. It is suggested that these conclusions have both toponymical and cultural implications.

NOTE

*This is a summary of a paper given at the Twelfth Conference of the Council for Name Studies on March 21st 1980. The paper originally formed part of the author's Presidential Address to the Roman Society, and is being published in full, with references, in Britannia XI (1980).

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PLACE- NAMES AND THE KINGDOM OF ELMET*

Place-names constitute almost the entire corpus of evidence for the nature of the kingdom of Elmet as the literary material is very slight. The only source which proves its existence as a kingdom is the Historia Brittonum, ch. 63, which records that Edwin occupied Elmet and expelled Ceretic, king of that region, presumably soon after Edwin became king of Northumbria in 617. Even after its incorporation into Northumbria, Elmet appears to have retained a separate regional identity for some considerable time, to judge from twelfth- and thirteenth-century references to it as a provincia, and from its use as a personal-name suffix, de Elmet, borne by people living in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The place-name evidence is relevant to identifying both the boundaries of Elmet and sites within the kingdom. The general area of Elmet is indicated by a concentration of surviving Celtic place-names, which extend north-westwards into Craven, which may also have been an unrecorded British kingdom. The eastern boundary of Elmet is defined by a line of some nine sites, whose names are recorded with the suffix 'in Elmet' in the period after the Norman Conquest. The distribution of these sites coincides with that of presumed early Anglo-Saxon place-names in the same area, and of seventh-century pagan Anglo-Saxon burials, and seems to be related to a system of eastward-facing defensive dykes, which probably date to the Dark Ages. This line follows the narrow Magnesian Limestone belt (approximately the course of the modern A1), which probably formed the eastern boundary of Elmet in the early seventh century at the time when the kingdom may have been coming under threat from Ethelfrith. The Magnesian Limestone zone in Yorkshire appears to have been cleared from at least as early as the Iron Age, in contrast to the area of Elmet to the west, whose heavily wooded nature is evidenced by the distribution of Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse place-names formed with elements referring to woodland, and by Bede's reference to the monastery of Abbot Thrythulf as being in silvis Elmetis.

The southern boundary of the kingdom was probably formed in part by a tributary of the Don, the river Sheaf, whose name comes from OE sceaf 'boundary'. The boundary probably continued along the line later followed by the boundary between Northumbria and Mercia and subsequently between the West Riding of Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Doris, which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entries of c. 840 and 942 show as on the northern boundary of Mercia, is formed from OE duru 'door, gate', referring to the entry into Northumbria and probably also earlier into Elmet. The southernmost of the group of ecclesium names within Elmet (see further below) are located in this southern corner of the kingdom, while the monastic foundation at Earl Warc near Hathersage, if, as seems likely, this is indeed Dark Age in date, may also relate to this southern boundary.

The north-western boundary of Elmet must simultaneously have been the south-eastern boundary of Craven, whose territory is much more clearly defined than is that of Elmet. Craven, the area which is now generally referred to as the Dales, was thought of as distinct region of that name until at least the mid-seventeenth century. The area which constituted Craven may be reconstructed by the plotting of the sites listed in Domesday Book as lying in the wapentake of Pravessele, of the fifty-three sites whose names are recorded in the Middle Ages with the suffix 'in Craven', of the thirty places recorded in the sixteenth-century Fountains Abbey lease book.