SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE - 1985

The XVIIth Annual Conference was held at Christ's College, Cambridge, from Friday 22 March to Monday 25 March 1985. The lecture-programme, arranged by Miss C. Clark, opened on the Friday evening with a paper by Professor John McNeal Dodgson on post-Conquest personal-name forms in Domesday Book. On the Saturday morning Mr O.J. Pedersen spoke on Cornish surnames in 1327, Mr R.I. Thomson on Manx personal names, Dr T. Kibye (Aarhus) on the adoption in Scandinavia of Ossianic personal names, and Dr T. Schmidt (Oulu) on Norwegian approaches to anthroponomy; in the afternoon Miss Clark gave a paper on the Liber Vitae of Thorney Abbey, Dr G. Fellows-Jensen considered, with special reference to Lincolnshire, the eonomist problems connected with identification of Domesday landholders, and Dr K. Sandred illustrated the survival in Norfolk place-names of OE terms for social groups. On the Sunday morning Dr G. Redmonds discussed some minor Yorkshire place-names formed on family-names, Dr D. M. Owen used toponymic by-names to throw light on the medieval peopling of King's Lynn, and Dr J. Inlay exhibited transitional features in the name-patterns of the bishop of Ely's tenants in 1261. (Articles based upon the papers by Miss Clark, Professor Dodgson, Dr Fellows-Jensen, Dr Kibye, Mr Pedersen, Dr Redmonds, Dr Sandred and Mr Thomson appear in this issue; owing to pressure of other duties, Dr Owen has elected to reserve her paper for NOMINA X, and Dr Inlay's paper has appeared elsewhere.)

As curtain-raiser to the afternoon's excursion, the Sunday-morning session concluded with a brief talk by Dr M. Gelling on Fenland place-names. This excursion, which Dr Gelling led, took the party through the territory between Neaveham and Ely; we admired the district, strolled along the not-very-diabolical Dyke, and gazed in our minds the distinction between a -dham and an -dæg. Proceedings concluded with the ritual cream-tea, taken at the Old Fire-Engine House, Ely. Back in Cambridge, we dined ceremonially in Hall; Dr Sandred proposed a vote of thanks to the organisers, who fittingly acknowledged his appreciation.

FROM THE KING'S RETAINERS TO UMBRELLA PEASANTS: SOME REFLEXES OF ANGLO-SAXON SOCIAL-CLASS GROUPS IN NORFOLK PLACE-NAME

If we look at the place-name research that has been carried out in Sweden in recent years, we find that a central field of interest at Upsala has been the relationship between place-names and the organisation of the society that gave rise to them. A great number of young researchers have been engaged in a project called 'Place-Names and Society' which has resulted in a series of publications, sämman och samhälle, edited by Professors T. Andersson and L. Hellberg (Upsala University: Upsala). 1 Most of the subjects treated have a historical bias. I mention this in order to give the current Swedish background to my talk, because in our own project 'The Place-Names of Norfolk' there has been a mutual exchange of views and sometimes lively discussions with members of the project 'Place-Names and Society'.

Turning to England, I would like to say that I have benefited from a great many works that could be ranged under the same title, and I am particularly grateful to the work of my colleague, Professor D. M. Owen: a detailed, well-researched, and largely unpublished monograph called Nomina: The Place Names of Norfolk. My own contribution to the field is small, as these notes show. The aim of the paper is to call attention to certain English place names which appear to be of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Now you may well ask what this has to do with the theme of this conference, which is personal names. The answer is that several of these place-names were until recently considered to contain personal names, or are still considered to do so, although their first elements can, more plausibly, I believe, be explained as terms for designating social groups which are known from other sources to have had important functions in Anglo-Saxon society. This paper is a discussion of onomastic evidence for two of these groups in the light of recent research. 2

NEATISHED

I should like to start by drawing attention to the place-name Neatished in Norfolk (see Map 1). This name was explained by Ekwall as OE genar 'household' (DEPP, s.n.), an explanation which still seems to be generally accepted. He thought it should be compared with Nottingham, where initial ge- has unquestionably been dropped due to Anglo-Norman influence. It is true that such alteration of initial consonant-combinations has taken place many times, as was made clear by Zachrisson in his study of Anglo-Norman influence on English place-names. 3 However, there are several reasons for not accepting this explanation in the present case. We have a fairly extensive set of Middle English spellings, but there is not a single spelling with initial ge- except for the one in Little Domesday Book (see Appendix, below). A comparison with Nottingham shows that for the latter we have a dozen spellings beginning with ge- (PMN 13). Ekwall's conclusion was probably based on limited material. It is far more likely that we are here dealing with a case of inverted spelling in Little Domesday Book. This was also Zachrisson's opinion. Moreover, it should be noted that, in Norfolk, initial gen- does not as a rule drop before n. It is preserved in a number of names, for instance Neettisham, Neeterton, Sinor, Snoredhill (DEPP, s.n.).

The spellings certainly suggest that the second element is OE gena 'household'. To explain the first element as OE neat 'cattle', as has been suggested, 5 seems absurd to me. Instead I venture to explain this name as OE gena-rates 'the household of the gena- 'gena' being a term for a member of a class of retainers.
According to Smith (EPN I. 197), the prefix ge- normally disappears in place-names, although traces of it are occasionally found. As an illustrative example one could quote the oldest forms of names in which the first element is OE genēa 'a confluence of rivers', which seems always to lose its ge-.

**Myton Wa:** Myton 1033 (c.1200) ECD 751 (Sawyer 967), Maitone 1086 DB,

**Mitton Wo:** Myttun 841 (11th) BCS 433 (Sawyer 195), Maitone 11th Hening,

Maitone 1086 DB (DEPN, s.n.); PNA 254

For more examples, see DEPN, s.n.; Mitton and Mytt(t)on.

It should be noted that, among the examples mentioned by Smith where occasional traces of ge- can be seen, in all instances ge- belongs to the second element of the place-name, for instance:

**Cattawade St:** Cattiwad 1247 CI (OE gewed 'ford')

**Framilode G:** Framilode 1086 DB (OE golda 'passage')

See DEPN, s.n.

It is true that I have not found the OE term genēat in any other place-names, but I have not yet had time to make a thorough investigation either. At the same time, I would like to emphasize what Schram said about this part of Norfolk (Happing and Tustead Hundred): 'In many of the English formations of this area personal names and place-name elements occur of a very archaic type and of which there are no other traces, either in other areas in the county or in other English counties. The number of names for which no parallels can be found in England is remarkable.'

Exactly what type of retainer might have been referred to by this name is, of course, impossible to know. The status of a genēat is likely to have been higher in the early Anglo-Saxon period than later. This is the impression one gets from the little information there is about him in the Anglo-Saxon laws. According to the laws of Ine, the wergild of a King's genēat (cyninges genēat) amounted to 1,200 shillings, the same sum as that prescribed for a sceafburh man (i.e. a nobleman), and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle a King's genēat is mentioned alongside the King's reeve in a list of people fallen in battle. But although the sources suggest a lordly origin, it is also clear from both the laws of Ine and the so-called Rectitudines singularum personarum (an eleventh-century treatise which sets out the dues and services which a lord might expect to receive from his peasants) that an ordinary genēat could be of lower status, even a mere rent-and-service-paying peasant, though higher than a serf.

**Carleton**

The next place-name I am going to discuss is Carleton. It is found four times in Norfolk (see Map 1); in all four cases it refers to old villages which are recorded in the Domesday Survey (for a full series of old spellings, see Appendix, below).

It has occasionally been suggested in the past that a place-name Carleton contains the weak OScand personal name Karli in the genitive, i.e. Karlitōn. This is formally perfectly possible, as pointed out by Fellows Jensen with reference to Carlington in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire but, as he immediately adds, 'The very frequency of occurrence of the names, however, indicates that they are rather orig. Karla-tōn 'village of the karli', Id. Since her work focuses on the personal names in the place-names, there is no discussion of what function Scandinavian karlar could have had in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. In discussing the Carlingtons in Yorkshire, Smith noted that this is a common type of place-name in Yorkshire and 'in all probability a Scandinavian form of the common OE ceorl-tōn "farmstead of the churls or ordinary freeman".'
These Norfolk place-names belong to a type which is found all over England. Finberg called attention to it in an article in 1964. They appear as Charle[ton] in the South and West, but as Car[le]ton in the North and East, in the area which was in the hands of the Scandinavians in the Viking period. Finberg assumes (with a reference to Ekwall) that Scand kari has been subsumed for coe [or coe] as the first element. In seven cases the form of the name is Charleton, all in the North-West and West, which is to be explained as the result of shifting of stress in the OE diphthong, 12

These names offer no serious problem as regards their formation. They are to be derived from ceorlatisum (OE coe, in the gen. plur. form coerl, plus OE -tun), which in the case of the Car[le]tons (assuming Smith and Ekwall are right) was Scandinavianised to kari, i.e., from the gen. plur. of the corresponding OScand kari and OE tun, the latter type being a hybrid, though of a different kind than the Grimston hybrids. The problem is the significance of coe and kari and the function of these place-names in the onomastic context. The meaning of OE coe is generally given as 'free peasant' but, as Nicolaisen et al. point out, a name with the meaning 'the farm of the peasants' would not seem a very good way of distinguishing a few villages from others at a time when all settlements were farmed mainly by men of the social class termed ceorl. 13

When, in Norfolk, the corresponding OScand designation is involved, it seems natural to discuss the Norfolk Car[le]tons in the light of a recent discussion of a corresponding group of Swedish and Danish names. Like the OE coe, the OScand kari is explained simply as 'man' and 'free peasant' in our dictionaries. 14 Finberg gives a short survey of the meanings given for OE coerl in dictionaries and other works by earlier scholars. Lexicographers are at one in ascribing the meaning 'free peasant' to the word coe[erl]. OE texts show that the basic meaning was 'man' and 'husband' as correlative to 'wife' and 'wife's household', to mean 'the head of a peasant household' or 'peasant husband'. In texts for which Latin counterparts are available it corresponds to Latin rusticus. Stanton, Ekwall and Smith all stress the freedom of the coeler.

Though Ekwall makes the reservation that the word also came to be used about a villein, 15 as Finberg emphasises, there is no etymological foundation for the notion 'free' in the meaning of the word. The root meaning implies no comutation of either freedom or unfreedom. Finberg quotes material which suggests that, in King Alfred's time, the coerl was not considered free, only half-free. He needed a further act of emancipation before he could enjoy the full status of a free man.

But quite possibly the coerl had been freer in earlier periods. In a recent article called 'Accelerating Social Mobility: the Case of Anglo-Daxon England', W. G. Runciman argues that both upward and downward social mobility increased in the Anglo-Daxon period. In this process the peasantry suffered, especially the ceorls. 16 According to the author, 'the once independent peasantry were reduced to serfs and cottagers'. Runciman moreover points out that, in King Alfred's time, the coerl was of a higher rank, also changed so that, from being a real warrior in the seventh century, he became not much above a serf in the eleventh century.

Irrespective of whether the Car[le]tons in Norfolk contain OE coerl in a Scandinavianised form or were from the start formed with the ODan kari plus OE -tun, a brief survey of a recent discussion of the corresponding East Scandinavian names and some comparisons will be of interest. Professor Lars Helberg of Upsala, who is engaged in research on place-name evidence for old Swedish administrative centres, i.e., centres in the territory of the king of the Svear, has recently drawn attention to the corresponding class of people in Sweden, evidenced especially in the place-names Karl[aby], in which the first element is the gen. plur. of OSw karl. Karlar seem to have formed an institution in old Swedish society which survived longer than in other parts of the Germanic speaking world. There are 35 Karl[abys] in Sweden itself and 7 in Swedish Finland. 17 In Denmark about a dozen examples are found. No examples have been found in Norway. In addition there are, as Helberg emphasises, many karla-names ending in -berg, -bøll, -by. Such names are not unknown in England, where we have a Carlford Hundred in Suffolk, explained by Angart as a Scandinavianised form of OE *Carlofæld. 18

One would assume that the Karla[by]-names are the counterparts of the English Charle[tons] and Carle[tons]. In Finberg's investigation it appears that the latter were royal retainers, probably deputizing for the king. His own husbands lived. The evidence emphasises the part played by such villages in the economy of the royal estates. According to Finberg, the ceorlas tilled 'the soil partly on their own account, but partly also, and perhaps chiefly for the king'. 19

In his investigation of the Swedish situation, Helberg has drawn special attention to the onomastic context in which the Karla[by]-names are found. He finds that such places form part of what he calls administrative centres and occur as appendages to estates which occupy central, strategically important positions in the administration of the king of the Svear. In most cases the nucleated settlements themselves have names in -tun, which is a pre-Viking element in Sweden. In some cases places with the name Rinkaby appear in connection with these centres. The first element of Rinkaby is OSw "rinner" 'warrior, soldier'. People of this category will have had military duties to perform, and the same undoubtedly applied to the karlar, who were thus, it seems, employed both in farming and in defence. Helberg thinks it is likely that these names reflect conditions as far back as the Migration and Merovingian periods.

Helberg also draws attention to the Swedish Karl[aby]-names in Finland. 21 They can be safely dated, for the great Swedish expansion into Finland took place in the early twelfth century, and this apparently led to the creation of a number of such place-names, which would seem to indicate that there was still a demand for the type of peasant soldier that the karl represented. According to Helberg, the Swedish place names in Finland at the time of the Swedish settlement there reflects a social organisation which had preserved a peculiar archaic character. Whereas karlar had otherwise been superseded in the military organs of the Snore, which had taken the place of professional warriors, in Finland they appear as settlers to whom land had been allotted in places which were at the same time settlements and centres for maintaining the rulers' power in the settled area.

The social status of the karlar would seem to have varied through the centuries. If we turn our attention to Denmark, we find that such informative settlement patterns around old administrative centres as can be seen in Sweden have not been discovered in studies of the Danish Karla[by]-names. It is clear, however, that the karlar had a particular social role to play in Denmark also. This is shown by the Danish use of the term huskari in the Viking period. That this is a peculiar Danish development, probably at the Danish-English court, has been shown by Lindow in a study of North Germanic institutional vocabulary. 22 In Helberg's opinion, the eleventh-century use of ODan huskari arose among the Danes in England from the distinction of the Danish karlar, who was a member of the comitatus with a position among the king's closest retainers, and thus had a personal relationship to his lord, from the English ceorl, who had a much lower status. The Danish huskari was a member of the corps of retainers in the service of the king or of a leading
nobleman. It is worth noting that huskari also appears as a personal name, apparently among the Danish aristocracy in England, recently exemplified by Insley. This may be compared with the earlier adoption of the simple karl as a personal name among the Franks, the earliest known bearer of which is Karl Martell (d. 741), grandfather of Charlemagne (Karl der Grosse), and of course in Scandinavia, where Karl seems to have been more common in the East originally, especially Sweden.

The above background would seem necessary for a discussion of the carlato-names in the Danelaw, and I am here only concerned with these names in Norfolk. A comparison with the situation in Anglo-Saxon England shows that the word ceorl had a military role to play also. This is clear from both the Anglo-Saxon laws and a passage in Bede. In the seventh century there appear to have been soldiers of two classes in the forces, judging by the way Bede describes the fate of a soldier taken prisoner, the two classes being called ceorla (Bede cemerygae ingarum) and rustici (Bede follice men). The latter undoubtedly belonged to the class of ceorla. According to the laws of Ine, military service was compulsory not only for a person classed as a geceorl man (i.e. a nobleman) but also for a cierlisc man. The law states that, if the former neglects his military service, he is fined 120 shillings and loses his land; if such a person does not hold any land, he shall pay 60 shillings. In case of non-appearance for military service, a commoner (cierlisc man) is fined 30 shillings.

A man can rise in rank, by acquiring five hides of land under the king (pat he hebbe V hides landes to cynges utware). In the same connection it is stressed that, if he possesses a helmet, a coat of mail and a sword ornamented with gold, but does not have the land, it will not be enough to raise him from the rank of ceorl (he biio ceorl swa peah) in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle we read in the entry about the Viking army in the year 992 that the Viking here came up into the estuary of the river Lymne in 250 ships and landed four miles up river when they reached the forest of Aundred. They captured a fort in which there were a few cierlisc men, but the fort was not more than half-completed. One would like to assume that these cierlisc men were part of the garrison and were supposed to defend the fort, perhaps while they were working to complete it.

In concluding these observations about Carleton-names in Norfolk, we have to return to the question whether the places with this name really functioned as settlements of Danish karlak, which we would expect if they were real Grimston hybrids, or if they are simply Scandinavianised pre-Viking Charletons, settlements of English ceorla playing an important role in the distribution of real Anglo-Saxon estates, as outlined above. A few views of the even distribution of Charletons and Carletons all over England, I think we have to accept the latter viewpoint. They are probably Scandinavianised names which reflect a pre-Viking Anglo-Saxon institution, though their exact age would seem difficult to determine from onomastic evidence alone. The fact that not a single Karlaby-name has been found in the Danelaw in England, although there are so many other names in -by, also speaks in favour of this view. UNIVERSITY OF UPPSALA

APPENDIX OF SPELLINGS

The abbreviations for sources are the standard EPNs ones (except that LDB is used for Little Domesday Book). The following are specific to Norfolk:
ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY


EPNS = English Place-Name Society.


Fritzen, J., 1886-96, Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog, 3 vols.

Kristiansen: Den norske Forlagsförening.


OE Bede = see Bede.


Stenton, F.M., 1911, The Place-Names of Berkshire. Reading.


NOTES

* This is a shortened version of the paper given on March 23rd 1985 at the XVIIth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies held at Christ's College, Cambridge.


2. In my lecture at the conference I also discussed the first element Ing- in the place-names Ingham (in Norfolk and Suffolk) and Ingworth (in Norfolk). This part of my paper will be published separately.


4. 1910. 84.


6. Ibid. 221.

7. Ine's laws 19 (Liebmann I.96).

8. ASC, s.a. 897 (Earle and Plummer I.91: Elferða cynges geneat).


10. Fellows Jensen (1968), 162.

11. PNWY 11.71.

12. Finberg (1964), 144-160. For the shifting of stress, see Jordan (1934) § 84 Ann. 4 and Boman (1944), 143.


14. Söderwall (1884-1953), s.v.; Fritzen (1886-96), s.v.
A correct identification of a personal name ideally requires establishment of a genealogy for it (Redmonds 1976). While the toponymist would hesitate to interpret a place-name unless he had a range of forms on which to base an etymology, the anthroponymist often has to attempt to explain a personal name on the basis of a single recorded form. This form may be unambiguous. There is no reason to doubt, for example, that the forms recorded in Great Domesday Book (GBD) of the names of the pre-Conquest tenants of Gate Burton LW, Domneuwe and Godric (347a; 12/1), represent Scandinavian unexpanded and Old English Godric respectively. Some other pre-Conquest tenants' names are, on the other hand, recorded in forms which could equally well represent two or more personal names. The name of one of the tenants of Hackthorn LW, for example, is recorded as Aluinus (GBD 339b; 2/17). Von Fellenitz notes that this could represent any of four OE names, Elfwine, Aelwine, Edwine or the rare Edwine (PNDB 156-60). Identity of name-form is not in itself, moreover, proof that Aluinus of Hackthorn is identical with, let us say, Aluinus of North Ormsby LN (GBD 360b; 30/21). In fact there is no reason to believe that he is, and an anthroponymist, aware that the name-elements El-, Ael-, Ed- and -wine are all very common, would never be tempted to identify the two tenants with each other simply because of the identity of name-form. Occasionally the recorded form simply defies interpretation. The name of the pre-Conquest tenant of Willingham by Stow LW, for example, is recorded as Deincora (GBD 353b; 20/4). Von Fellenitz, noting that this form is obscure, suggests that the first element might be Continental Germanic Thegon-, Degon- (PNDB 223). The cognate OE Areas- and Scand. (Ang-) are other possibilities. No suggestions have been made about the second element.

There is a further problem connected with the name-forms in DB that has hitherto not been fully appreciated. In the course of an analysis of the pre-Conquest landowners in Lincolnshire, Peter Sawyer became aware that the names of several identifiable individuals appear at different points in the text in forms so disparate that they have been treated as separate names by von Fellenitz in PNDB and, where relevant, by the present writer in SPLY. Sawyer discussed his identifications with me in 1982, and at my suggestion he submitted a draft note on them to Nomina. This draft was read and commented on by Cecily Clark, John Insley, Brian Levy, Peter McClure and Alexander Rumble and their comments were communicated to Sawyer for his consideration. Partly because he was pressed for time and partly because he felt that the philological problems involved would best be dealt with by a name-scholar, Sawyer then asked me to prepare this material for publication. The Cambridge conference seemed to be a suitable occasion at which to present it to an audience for whom Sawyer's arguments for applying prosopographical evidence to the study of the personal names in DB would obviously be of the utmost significance and who might well have comments of their own on some of the problems which remain unsolved. I am grateful to Peter Sawyer for entrusting me with his draft paper and allowing me to deal with the material as I have thought fit and to expand the scope of the original note, and also to the scholars consulted for giving me permission to incorporate their comments into this paper.

The Domesday inquiry was commissioned by William I at Christmas 1085 and the survey-work seems to have been completed within a year. Sawyer has described the compilation of Domesday Book as 'a remarkable achievement that depended as much on the English administrative apparatus as on the drive and efficiency with which the Normans manipulated it' (Sawyer 1978, 254). The process of compilation was complex and has been the subject of much