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1. A prize of £50 will be awarded annually for the best essay on any topic relating to the place-names and/or personal names of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Man or the Channel Islands.
2. Submissions are invited from all students and young researchers. The prize will normally be awarded to those who have not hitherto had work in onomastics published.
3. Essays should be about 5,000 words in length.
4. Entries should in some way make an original contribution to the subject.
5. One copy of the essay should be submitted to the Secretary of the Society in clear typescript, double-spaced, and including a bibliography of source-material used and of books and authors cited.
6. Entries will be judged by a panel appointed by the Chairman of the Society, and may be considered for publication in *Nomina*.
7. Entries must be submitted by 31st May each year. Provided an essay of sufficient merit is forthcoming, the winner will be announced at the Annual Study Conference in the spring of the following year.

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The *Worthy*-Names of Devon

Örjan Svensson
University of Lund

Of the 7,500 place-names dealt with in the EPNS survey of Devon,¹ some 200 end in *-worthy*, which is derived from the OE elements **word**, **wordig** or **wordign**. It is cognate with OLG *wurð* 'soil', MLG *wurt* 'homestead' and LG *wort*, *wurt* 'open place in a village'. Like OE *tūn*, it seems to have meant originally 'fence', then 'enclosure', 'enclosure round a homestead' and eventually 'homestead'. It is used of places which vary in assessment from four to 120 hides, and occasionally of a small vill.² The element was obviously in use early in the OE period, since it is recorded in such place-names as Isleworth, Middx (*Gislheresuuyrth* 695 (late copy) BCS 87, Sawyer 1246), Hillborough, Warks (*Hildeburhwrthe* 710 (14th) BCS 127, Sawyer 81), and Ashmansworth, Hants (*Æscmeres wierð* 909 (12th) BCS 624, Sawyer 378). The very high proportion of personal names with which it is compounded (c.75%) indicates that the enclosures or homesteads were individual and personal possessions. In many cases the *word*s have become parish names and are recorded in Domesday Book. No doubt this element remained prolific for several centuries, but the lack of instances compounded with post-Conquest personal names makes it

ABBREVIATIONS

Apart from the following, the abbreviations used are those listed *ante*, 10 (1986), 212-15, and 11 (1987), 212-13.

LG, OLG, MLG: Low German, Old Low German, Middle Low German.

ModE: Modern English.

TDA: *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* (London).

TRE: *tempore Regis Edwardi* (before 1066).

TRW: *tempore Regis Willelmi* (after 1066).

¹ J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Devon*, 2 vols, EPNS VIII-IX (Cambridge, 1931-32) [hereafter *PNDevon*].

² *EPN*, II, 273.

doubtful whether it continued in living use in the ME period. In the South-West and in the West Midlands its place was largely taken by OE *wordig* and *wordign* respectively. Particularly in Devon a large-scale replacement of *-worth* by *-worthi* (< OE *wordig*) seems to have taken place in the medieval period.

Like *word*, the derivative *wordig* was undoubtedly in use early in the OE period, as it frequently occurs in OE texts. Its primary sense seems to have been 'enclosure', as appears from the Laws of King Ine where it is provided that 'a ceorl's *weordig* or *wurdig* shall be fenced in (*betyned*) summer and winter'. The place-names containing this element are, like those in *-word*, to a very large extent compounded with personal names. As a productive element, *wordig* must have survived longer than *word*, since there are many *wordig*-names compounded with the names of tenants found in ExonDB and consequently alive TRE or TRW. Through the early ModE loss of initial [w] after consonants and the weakening of *o* > [ə] in atonic syllables, the ending *-worthi* in Devon place-names developed into *-ery* [əri].³ This development is clearly manifested by two parallel *worthy*-names: Thornworthy in Lynton (*PND Devon*, 65: *Thornwurthy* 1275, *Thorenworth* 1281, *Thorneworth* 1285) and Thornery in Clovelly (*PND Devon*, 71: *Thornwurthi* 1330). Both the names are pronounced [θɔ:nəri] in the modern colloquial speech of the region, a pronunciation represented by the modern spelling of the second name. The heavy reduction of ME *-worthy* to ModE *-ery* often led to confusion with other elements, particularly OE *ford* and OE *byrig* (dative singular of OE *burh*). The element *-ford* was strongly reduced to *-ver* [vər] in final position and was confused with *-ery* [əri] in such place-names as Wallover in Challacombe (*PND Devon*, 60: *Waleurda* 1086, *Walleworth* 1242, *Waleworthy* 1244, *Waleworth* 1291, *Walworth(y)* 1346, *Walliford alias Wallworthy alias Wooliford* 1673) and Honeyford in Cheriton Bishop (*PND Devon*, 430: *Honyworthi* 1330). The element *-byrig* was in its modern form [bəri] confused with [əri] in, e.g., Butterberry in Petertavy (*PND Devon*, 232: *Boterworthi* 1330, 1408, *temp.* Henry VI, *-ie* 1488, *Butreworthy* 1342) and Clubworthy in North Petherwin (*PND Devon*, 159: *Clobiry* 1322, 1330, *-bury* 1333, *Clowbery* 1639, *Clobbery* 1807). The last two developments are best described as

³ E. Ekwall, *Historische neuenglische Laut- und Formenlehre* (Berlin, 1965), §§ 106 and 134.

instances of hyper-correction or re-interpretation (folk-etymology).⁴ In Colesworthy in Ilsington (*PND Devon*, 475: *Chaulesweye*, *Cawlesweye* c. 1200 (15th), *Caulesweye* 1330, 1333, *Coleswey* 1566, *Colswaye* 1726) the modern form is spurious. This name goes back to OE *Cāfeles-weg* 'Cāfel's way' and the *worthy*-form is obviously a recent corruption here.

OE *wordign* 'enclosure', an extended form of OE *wordig*, is particularly common in the West Midlands, where it frequently develops to ModE *-wardine*.⁵ In Devon only twelve place-names are found that unequivocally go back to OE *wordign*, but isolated *-wordign*-spellings are found in many names interchanging with forms in *-word* and *-wordig*.

The gradual settlement of Devon by English-speaking people and the later expansion of such settlement can be conveniently divided into four phases.⁶ The first phase (c.675-835) was a military conquest during which the Saxons succeeded in subjugating or expelling the people they conquered. The second phase (c.905-1065), separated from the first by the Viking raids in the ninth century, was an occupation of the most strategic and attractive positions of the county. The third phase (c.1165-1325), which was separated from the second phase by the Norman Conquest and the anarchy in the reign of Stephen, involved the gradual penetration and settlement of the areas not at first occupied by immigrants from other districts held by the conquerors. The fourth phase, separated from the third by disastrous events such as the Black Death, began in the late fourteenth century and lasted into modern times. It was a continuation of the process begun in the third phase. Judging from the available documentary evidence, some 20% of the *worthy*-names of Devon are first recorded by Domesday Book, c.5% by twelfth-century sources, c.35% by thirteenth-century sources, c.25% by fourteenth-century sources, and c.5% by fifteenth-century sources. Only about 10% of the names are first found in ModE sources. Even if

⁴ Cf. O. J. Padel, *A Popular Dictionary of Cornish Place-Names* (Penzance, 1988), pp. 42-45.

⁵ R. Jordan (translated and revised by E. J. Crook), *Handbook of Middle English Grammar: Phonology* (The Hague/Paris, 1974), §35, remark 1; G. Kristensson, *A Survey of Middle English Dialects, 1290-1350: the West Midland Counties* (Lund, 1987), pp. 67-69.

⁶ J. J. Alexander, 'East and North Devon place-names', *TDA* 65 (1933), 353-77.

allowance must be made for the fact that a name could have been created long before it was first mentioned in a medieval source, the message of the available documents cannot be ignored. It tells us that c.25% of the places with names in *-worthy* probably came into existence in the second phase, while as many as some 65% of these places could date from the interval between the second and third phases or from the third phase. Despite emphatic statements to the contrary,⁷ it seems quite obvious that the element *wordig* was prolific in the ME period and that many new farms bearing *worthy*-names then came into being. The bulk of these farms seem to be products of the great colonization movement of the third phase which began after the charter of disafforestation in 1205 and culminated in the years preceding the Black Death. The colonization consisted partly in enclosure from heath and moor (mainly represented by *worthy*-names), partly in the reduction of the wooded area (chiefly represented by *leah*-names). The distribution of the two elements, which are complementary in their occurrence, reflects the topographical differences of the county. In the hundred-group termed the North-Western Group by Alexander, which consists of the hundreds of North Tawton, Fremington, Shebbear, Hartland and Black Torrington, no less than 80 *worthy*-names are found, but only 55 *leah*-names.⁸ The adjacent North-Central Group (the hundreds of Crediton, Witheridge, South Molton, Shirwell and Braunton) contains 45 *worthy*-names and 70 *leah*-names. In the South-Western Group (the hundreds of Stanborough, Ermington, Plympton, Roborough and Lifton with Tavistock) there are 45 *worthy*-names and 70 *leah*-names. The South-Central Group (the hundreds of Wonford, Exminster, Teignbridge, Haytor and Coleridge) contains 20 *worthy*-names and 60 *leah*-names. The Eastern Group (the ten hundreds of Hemyock, Hayridge, Halberton, Tiverton, Bampton, Axminster, Colyton, Ottery, East Budleigh and Cliston) has the smallest number of *worthy*-names (ten), but as many as 55 *leah*-names. Consequently, the great home of the *worthy*-names is the north-western corner of Devon, where there is plenty of heath and moorland. The *leah*-names,

⁷ e.g. *PND*Devon, p. 676, and J. J. Alexander, 'Address of the President: the Saxon conquest and settlement', *TDA*, 64 (1932), 75-112 (at p. 100).

⁸ Alexander, 'East and North Devon place-names', pp. 353 ff.

however, are most abundant on the fringes of the thick woodland belts in the north-central and south-western portions of the county.

Only rarely do the *worthy*-names of Devon refer to major places. Of the names of the 900 Domesday manors in the county, 35 end in *-word*, *-wordig* or *-wordign*, and of the 400 Domesday parishes only eleven have names containing *-word(ig)*. The bulk of these names refer to small, isolated farmsteads, often situated on hillsides near the edges of upland wastes at levels of c.600 feet. Alexander characterizes this type of name as follows:⁹

Worthig ('farm') names seem to represent land brought into cultivation and worked by single individuals, in contrast to *tun* names which often (as in Gerston and Galmpton) represented land shared amongst several people. Hence the personal percentage of *worthig* names (72) is considerably higher than that for *tun* names.

In a few cases it is possible to identify the enterprising individuals who carved out small enclosures or farms for themselves from undeveloped land. Gulworthy in Tavistock thus owes its name to a certain Roger *Golle*, who is mentioned under Tavistock in the 1333 Lay Subsidy Roll, or to his family.¹⁰ Hexworthy in Lydford is another case in point. This farm probably took its name from a fourteenth-century ancestor of William *Hexta* of *Hextesworthy* and Robert *Hexte* of *Hexteworthy*, who are mentioned in court rolls of 1417 and 1481 respectively.¹¹ What, then, was the social position of Roger *Golle* and other industrious pioneers who established *wordigs* for themselves? It is impossible to give an unequivocal answer to that question. But it is reasonable to believe that they occupied a position intermediate in status between that of the lords of the prosperous *tuns* and that of the lowly *gebūras* or *cotsetlan* trembling on the brink of servitude. In the manor of Tavistock, whose topography and nomenclature illustrate a pattern of rural settlement that is typical of Devon as a whole, the conditions of tenure at Kilworthy closely resemble those at Milemead and Colmestor, two freeholds held by ancient tenure since the early Middle Ages. Moreover, Kilworthy was one of the seven tithings that represented the parish of Tavistock in the abbot's hundred court.¹² In

⁹ J. J. Alexander, 'South Devon place-names', *TDA*, 66 (1934), 287.

¹⁰ *PND*Devon, p. 218.

¹¹ *PND*Devon, p. 194.

¹² H. P. R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 52 and 68.

the large and important manor of Hartland, in the north-western corner of the county, an inquisition was held in 1258 on the death of Geoffrey de Dynham, the lord of the manor. Among the jurors, consisting of free tenants of the manor, there appeared a certain Oliver de *Wymundesworthy* (Wembsworth).¹³ Forty-three years later another inquisition post mortem was held in the same manor, this time with a Henry de *Wymundesworthy*, probably a relative of Oliver, among the jurors.¹⁴ Consequently, it seems likely that the creators of the *wordigs* and their descendants were freemen, probably members of the newly-created class of franklins, who coloured the whole of the social and political life of Devon in later centuries. This class is described by Hoskins as follows:¹⁵

Thus, by the end of the 13th century, we find an extraordinary number of free tenants wherever we look in the county. We have no means of estimating what proportion of the total tenant-population they constituted, but that they held a very substantial proportion of the total acreage of most manors the 16th-century surveys leave us in no doubt. Indeed, we sometimes find small manors which had been entirely dismembered and sold off to the free tenants as early as the 14th century. In general the free tenants owned a considerably greater proportion of the land than their numbers would suggest, for the free tenements tended to be larger than the unfree. The free tenants also tended to become more numerous as one went westwards in Devon, and especially in the parishes on the moorland fringe, where their ancestors had been the first settlers on the 'waste'. By successive marriages with the heiresses of neighbouring ancient freeholds, they added farm to farm, generation after generation, and gradually raised themselves to the point at which their estates rivalled those of the old squirearchy, whose daughters they could aspire to marry.

A summary of the most important conclusions that can be drawn from the previous discussion may find a place here. Some 200 instances of *worthy*-names are found in Devon, which go back to OE *-word*, *-wordig* or *-wordign*. The primary meaning of these three elements seems to have been 'enclosure', then 'enclosure round a homestead', and finally 'homestead'. The bulk of the Devon *worthy*-names were probably original formations in OE *-word* that was replaced by ME

¹³ R. Pearse Chope, 'The early history of the manor of Hartland', *TDA*, 34 (1902), 423.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 429.

¹⁵ W. G. Hoskins, *Devon* (Newton Abbot, 1978), pp. 78-79.

-worthi (< OE. *-wordig*) during the medieval period. In early ModE *-worthi* was heavily reduced to *-ery* [ɛrɪ], which led to confusion with other elements, particularly OE *ford* and *byrig* (dative singular of OE *burh*). Only twelve instances are unequivocally derived from OE *-wordign*, which is a typical West Midland form. Although allowance must be made for the fact that a name could have been created long before it was first recorded in a medieval source, the available documentary evidence points in one direction. It strongly supports the view that the majority of the Devon *worthy*-names were created in the ME period and that the element *wordig* was prolific in the county at that time. According to available statistics, the great home of the *worthy*-names is the north-western corner of the county, which abounds in heath and moorland.¹⁶ Most of the Devon *worthy*-names refer to small, isolated farmsteads, which are often situated on hillsides near the edges of upland wastes at levels of c.600 feet. The very high percentage (72%) of personal adjuncts of these names suggests that they represent land brought into cultivation and worked by single individuals. No doubt many *wordigs* were named after the enterprising countrymen who first established them. In a few cases, it is even possible to identify such individuals or their families. Roger *Golle* of Gulworthy in Tavistock is a case in point. Pioneers of his type were probably freemen and members of the newly-created class of franklins who coloured the whole of the social and political life of Devon for many centuries.

¹⁶ Alexander, 'East and North Devon place-names', pp. 353 ff.

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FOR nearly seventy years the English Place-Name Society has been issuing its yearly volumes on the place-names of the counties of England. These publications, prepared under the General Editorship of the Honorary Director of the Survey of English Place-Names, are recognised as authoritative by scholars in other disciplines, and have proved of great value in many fields of study.

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The Secretary
English Place-Name Society
Department of English Studies
University of Nottingham
NOTTINGHAM NG7 2RD

Lin in the Landscape

M. C. Higham

Clitheroe, Lancashire

Although archaeology has revealed that linen has been produced in north-west England for many centuries,¹ this textile and the processes necessary for its production have really received very little attention in the literature.² The basic raw material for linen is flax, *Linum usitatissimum*, which could have been grown almost anywhere in the country,³ difficulties being experienced only if there was a lengthy wet period in late summer when the flax should have been harvested. If top quality flax was required, it had to be harvested before the seed had ripened; if coarser yarn was acceptable, the flax could be left for up to two weeks so that the seeds were ripe before the crop was pulled up.

The flax would then have to be 'retted' (soaked in water) for between ten and fourteen days to make it easier to separate the bast fibres from the outside skin and the inner woody core. This process took place in retting pools, where the sheaves of flax ('beets') would be soaked and turned in slow-moving water. At the end of the retting process the sheaves would be raked out and put on banks to dry before being carted away for further processing.

This is a shortened and revised version of a paper given on 31 March 1990 at the 22nd Annual Study Conference organized by the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, held at the College of Ripon and York St John, Ripon.

¹ B. J. N. Edwards, Lancashire County Archaeologist, has informed me that a British Museum analysis of fragments of charred cloth found when the Bleasdale Stone Circle (probably Bronze Age in date) was excavated some years ago showed that the textile was linen.

² Diana Winterbotham, 'Flax—a forgotten crop', *Lancashire Local Historian*, 4 (1986), 2–5.

³ John Turner, *Linseed Law* (Suffolk, 1987), 1–19, gives details of the history of flax growing, demonstrating that it could be grown in all parts of Britain.