At Sørensen’s Request: the Formation and Development of Patronymics and Metronymys in Late Medieval Leicestershire and Rutland

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1. Sørensen’s invitation

Sørensen has cogently confirmed that patronymic and metronymic bynames, compounded with the generic element -son, were characteristic of northern England. He further suggested that their predominance there resulted from the influence of Scandinavian settlement which obliquely reinstitutionalized the Old English suffix -sone, since there were approximations between Scandinavian and English patronymic systems, although the former had a greater honorific and heroic significance. In the south, compounded patronyms and metronymys in the vernacular form, with -son, failed to persist or develop until the later middle ages, perhaps when they were reintroduced by migration, since there was no Scandinavian promotion in that region. There, consequently, elided, appositional and genitival forms developed, sometimes, as in the English Surnames Survey at Leicester, categorized as bynames from personal names, but perhaps more truly being appositional patronyms or metronymys. Such forms in the south existed as either William (appositional) or Williams (genitival inflection).²

This is more or less the text of a paper read at the annual conference of the Society for Name Studies in Preston in April 1993, although the section on the borough of Leicester has been expanded. I am grateful for helpful suggestions by participants at the conference, especially by Gillian Fellows-Jensen. For permission to use the Merton College Muniments, I am grateful to the Warden and Fellows of the College and to their Librarian, John Burgess.

In 1983, Sørensen had perforce to rely on what few detailed area studies had yet been produced, such as those by Richard McKinley and George Redmonds at Leicester, that is their research into Norfolk and Suffolk, the West Riding of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Oxfordshire. Cautiously, therefore, Sørensen qualified his assertions by suggesting that "... more regional surveys are necessary before a clear picture can be gained of the geographical distribution of the 'son' names through the centuries." In particular, he requested a detailed study of Lincolnshire. With due regret for disappointing, since that study is not offered here, the next best is now placed on the table. Leicestershire and Rutland are seminally located for such research—within the region of East Midlands Middle English dialect, but not too far removed from Northern Middle English to prevent even some lexical terms from infiltrating. Moreover, part of the counties—particularly the north and east of Leicestershire—had been subjected to considerable Scandinavian influence, reflected in the generic place-name elements -by and -thorp and the Grimston-hybrid forms. The two counties fell largely within the area of the Five Boroughs.

The principal aspects of patronymic and metronymic developments in this investigation will comprise: the distribution of the forms; the chronology and processes of formation in the vernacular; the proportion of various taxable populations bearing these forms; and some continued instability of this form of byname by comparison with other forms. To avoid confusion, some terms of convenience are adopted here. 'Patronymics' and 'metronymics' refer to two forms: the Latinized form, such as John filius Wilhelmi and the vernacular form with the generic suffix -son. The former, Latinized forms, may have been transmuted in part into Middle English forms with -son, but they may equally have developed as other forms. There

1 Sørensen, *Patronyms*, pp. 7 and 17–20.
3 Sørensen, *Patronyms*, p. 17.

other forms, which consist of appositional or inflected forms, such as William or Williams, are here designated bynames from personal names, but only as a term of convenience.

2. Patronymics and metronymics in rural Leicestershire and Rutland

The overall development of all these forms is presented in Table 1 (p. 58), but some clarification and circumspection must be attached to the figures as absolute values. The data are all drawn from tax returns which comprehended different levels of the population, and the implications of this problem will be expounded further below. Throughout the table, the figures for patronymics and metronymics comprise forms both in Latin and the vernacular, but only vernacular forms are indicated in column seven ('son'). Thus, by way of clarification, in the Leicestershire lay subsidy of 1327 occurred 403 patronymics and thirteen metronymics; of this total of 416 only twelve contained the Middle English element -son, while the rest consisted of Latin or (a few) Anglo-Norman forms. Column seven thus denotes the number of vernacular forms occurring in columns three and five combined. It should also be emphasised that the figures denote numbers of individual taxpayers bearing these forms of bynames, not the number of different bynames of this type.

These figures can therefore be used to make some broad generalizations about the trend of developments in the later middle ages, but, unfortunately again, with some caveats, the principal of which concerns the geographical coverage of the poll tax of 1381 for part of Leicestershire. In fact, the extant returns cover only Gartree Hundred in the east and south east. This area was subjected to some Scandinavian influence, but less than the north and east, so that it is probable that patronymics and metronymics with -son would have been higher in that other area of the county. By contrast, the lay subsidy of 1524–5 for the same county excludes Sparkenhoe Hundred in the south-west, where appositional and genitival forms may have been more prominent.

Nevertheless, some conclusions can be elicited from the figures. First, vernacular forms with -son were still only very incipient in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. Secondly, a large proportion of the Latinized forms must later have been translated into
Table 1. Proportions of taxpayers with patronyms, metonyms and
byses from personal names (elided or appositional patronyms or
metonyms) in Leicestershire and Rutland in the late middle ages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Leics Population</th>
<th>Patrons</th>
<th>Metonyms</th>
<th>-son Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N) N % N % N %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1327</td>
<td>4,128 403 9.8 13 0.3 12 746 18.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1381</td>
<td>2,476 106 4.3 17 0.7 87 466 18.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>2,683 164 6.2 3 0.1 167 426 15.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td>3,924 179 4.6 6 0.2 185 691 17.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Rutland | 1296 | 1,868 236 12.6 58 3.1 3 194 10.4 |
|         | 1377 | 917 39 4.3 6 0.7 6 115 12.5 |
|         | 1522 | 1,661 86 5.2 0 0 86 237 14.3 |
|         | 1524 | 1,401 89 6.4 0 0 89 201 14.4 |

Notes. 1. Needless to say, the datasets used here contain different levels of
data and thus the values are only roughly comparable, showing a trend. 2. The data for Leicestershire in 1327 and 1524–5 are from the lay subsidies and similarly for Rutland for 1296 and 1524, but those for Rutland for 1522 derive from a musters roll. The data for 1377 and 1481 relate to heads of households in the poll taxes. The poll tax for 1381 for Leics comprises only Garnett Hundred and enumerates 2476 persons who are attributed bynames (dependants and servants without a byname are excluded here). The same exclusions obtain in the data from the Rutland poll tax. 3. The data for Leicestershire in 1524–5 are incomplete, significantly omitting the south-west of the county (especially the Hundred of Sparkenhoe), where a higher proportion of appositional or genitival forms might be expected. The next lay subsidy which includes Sparkenhoe (1444–5) is very defective (PRO E179/133/133). 4. Sources are indicated in the footnotes to this article, but comprise additionally: PRO E179/133/35 (poll tax for Leicestershire, 1381); E179/165/21 (poll tax for Rutland, 1377); E179/133/104-124 (lay subsidy for Leicestershire, 1524–5); E179/165/1 (lay subsidy for Rutland, 1296); Julian Cornwall, Tudor Rutland: The County Community under Henry VIII (Oakham: Rutland Record Series, 1, 1982) (Rutland in 1522 and 1524). 5. For comments on the poll taxes for Leicestershire, see Caroline Penwick, 'The English poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1983), pp. 445–60.

by.names from personal names, not only forms with -son, since the Latinized forms in the earlier tax lists are a very much higher proportion of the taxable populations than the later vernacular forms with -son. The problem with this argument from the figures is that the proportion of bynes from personal names did not increase radically, so specific evidence is necessary to illustrate this argument, and some such data will be presented below. A further complication—the instability of patronymic and metronymic bynes—will be also elucidated below.

Returning to Sørensen's request, the figures in Table 1 allow some further contextualization of his own statements. Sørensen compared three counties in the later middle ages.9 To these data will now be added some further precise data, but again from lay subsidies, for some illustrative counties other than Leicestershire and Rutland. In the taxation for Northumberland in 1296, 23% of taxpayers bore patronyms and 3% metonyms, in either Latinized or vernacular form.9 The far north did indeed thus contain a substantially higher proportion of this form of byname. The figures for Leicestershire and Rutland are comparable with those for Staffordshire, situated in West Midlands dialect region, but bordering on NW Midlands Middle English dialect, and thus similarly situated to Leicestershire in relation to Northern Middle English and the northern onomastic areas. In the lay subsidy for Staffordshire in 1327, 7.8% of taxpayers (N = 360) bore patronyms and 1.2% (N = 57) metonyms (N of all taxpayers = 4600).10 This regional belt in the Midlands was thus a transitional area between the high incidence in the north and the virtual absence of patronyms and metonyms in the south and west.

Lay subsidies, however, omitted a large proportion of the global population: those whose movable goods not required for subsistence fell below taxable capacity. The lay subsidies may have embraced perhaps only 30–40% of the actual population of heads of households.11
This problem may be important if, as has been inferred in some areas at least, patronyms and metronymy were more closely associated with unfree and lower social groups. It is difficult to address this problem in Leicestershire and Rutland because of the difficulty of the sources, which by and large allow no clear perception of socio-legal status. Only inferences may be made. The custumal of Rothley, described further below, probably consisted mainly of customary tenants, in this case privileged villeins of ancient demesne status. The high proportion who bore patronyms and metronymy suggests that this form of byname may have had an association with this status, but a contributory cause is the early date of the survey, c. 1245. Customary tenants in the rental of Leicester Abbey in 1341, also further described below, held this form of byname too, but the data are not sufficient for proper quantitative analysis. Paradoxically, the rental of the Abbey’s estates in 1477 does allow statistical analysis of this problem. By that date, there is no significant association of patronyms and metronymy with unfree status, but the lack of differentiation could be explained by confusion of and changes in socio-legal status in the later middle ages. Interestingly, however, there seems to have been a continuing association between free status and toponymic bynames. (See Tables 2 and 3 below.)

It is equally possible that the relationship between patronyms and metronymy and socio-legal status was always less important in the north and east midlands, where such forms of byname may have been both more extensive and not so socially-specific, but there may remain a potential margin of error in the data extracted from the lay subsidies. In the lay subsidy of 1327 for Leicestershire, the mean level of taxation on those bearing patronyms was nearly 29d, on those bearing metronymy just under 40d, and on all taxpayers (N = 4128) just under 323d, with a large standard deviation in all cases; this does not support the general relationship of metronymy and exceptionally low status, at least in terms of economic position. In these circumstances, it is helpful to resort to other sources which, although also not comprehensive and which were furthermore static, may yet provide another perspective.

Survey-type documents encompass a wider population of heads of household, but still suffer from two difficulties. Their population is wider than that in lay subsidies, but still usually restricted to tenants and thus they often omit sub-tenants and the landless. Secondly, they do not, at least for manors in Leicestershire, survive in good series and provide only a static snapshot. For Leicestershire, reasonably good survey-type documents survive for two estates. A custumal of c. 1245 for the soke of Rothley, held by the Templars, provides data from the caput and about a dozen appurtenant manors of varying size in the north-east of the county. The so-called Novum Renteale of Leicester Abbey, compiled in the fifteenth century by William Charyte, a canon of the house, comprises the rental itself of 1477, but also incorporates an earlier one, called Geryn’s rental, of 1341. The Abbey’s estates were dispersed throughout the county and, although some properties were rather disparate, included several substantial ‘classical’ manors, where manor and vill were co-terminous and there were large numbers of unfree as well as free tenants, as, for example, at Stoughton and Lockington.

The custumal of Rothley reveals the widespread use of patronyms in Latinized form, antedating, however, the evolution of the vernacular form in -son. Although it comprises 559 tenants, the bynames of only 465 can be confidently analyzed, since many tenants were known by their relationship as brother (friare ieus) and co-partner because of the custom of patible inheritance. Of these 465, 33% (N = 155) bore patronyms or metronymy.

By 1341, the date of the earliest rental of the estates of Leicester Abbey, vernacular forms with -son had been introduced into written records, if they were not already in colloquial use. The raw data are

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13 G. T. Clark, ‘The Customary of the Manor of Soke of Rothley in the County of Leicester’, *Archaeologia*, 47 (1882), 89–130; the date is obtained by comparison with Public Record Office, MS C260/86.
14 Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. 623.
provided in Table 2 (p. 63). In this rental, a considerable proportion of
patronymics and metronymics were written in the vernacular form with
-son; fourteen of the twenty-seven tenants bearing this form of byname
had Middle English -son (eight at Stoughton and four at Thurby, both
vills situated east of Leicester). By the rental of 1477, however, the
proportion of patronyms had diminished considerably, as at Stoughton
where only two tenants bore patronyms, both Saunreson. Demographic decline may have been a contributory cause, but the
overall decline suggests other influences. A number of Latinized
patronymics and metronymics may have become translated into bynames
from personal names. On the other hand, a large proportion of the
patronymics and metronymics in 1341 were already vernacular forms in
-son, so it seems reasonable to suggest that it was the inherent
instability of these forms in 1341 which engendered their decline, and
this problem may be reflected also in the changing nature of the
specific elements or protothemmes over the late middle ages.

The corpus of the earliest occurring patronyms and metronymics
can be compiled from the lay subsidies, survey-type documents, court
rolls of specific manors, and the poll taxes. The earliest compounds,
before c. 1350, contain a wider range of protothèmes than in the later
middle ages. About 63% of these earlier forms consisted of less usual
personal names, that is those which did not belong to the ten most
frequent forenames; this less usual corpus comprised Batesone, Duikynson, Hughesone, Iuesone, Juddeson, Kitteson, Mathesonone and
Tibbesone. Incidentally, the earliest written hypocoristic forms of
forenames occurred in these patronyms and metronymics, as in
Watteson, Mabbesone, Hobbesone and others. In only a few patronyms
was the element -son not compounded with a personal name,
unambiguously in le Reusone and le Smythbessone, less unequivocally in
Kingsone and Wodarsone alias Wodatsone, since the latter might have
either been an office (woodward) or a very uncommon Continental
Germanic personal name. At Owston, in the east of the county, some
unusual forms persisted into the early fifteenth century, however, such
as John Cusstose, Robert Colson and Richard Ameson. At Castle
Donington, a declining borough, in the mid fifteenth century occurred
William Gybberson, whose surname incorporates a French
hypocoristic and diminutive.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Rental of 1341</th>
<th>Rental of 1477</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pat + met</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfree</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>2  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottagers</td>
<td>10  9</td>
<td>15 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37  15</td>
<td>42 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N of all tenants: unfree in 1341 = 121 and in 1477 = 139; free in 1341 = 7 and in 1477 = 109; cottagers in 1341 = 114 and in 1477 = 26. Precise
definition of the status of tenants of smallholdings in 1341 is hindered
by inadequate description in the rental. In 1341, unfree comprises both tenentes
in villenagio and natio. In 1477, the Abbey had 338 tenants throughout the
county, but the bynames of only 274 are analysed here since many tenants
were of indeterminate status. Although the rental differentiated between
tenentes ad voluntatem and tenentes libere (or liber), confusion between
personal status and the status of land was created by many customary tenants
holding free land. For example, six of the twenty-one tenants at will in
Lockington also held small parcels of free land.

Source: Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 625.

All these compounds with less common personal names were
transient in their communities. Their ephemeral nature is epitomized
by the metronymic byname Pelleson in Barkby. Petronilla de Thorp
was mentioned in the court rolls for that manor between 1340 and
1348, twice by her full description, once as Felle de Thorp and once

Harcourt and Barkby); see also Cecily Howell, Land, Family and Inheritance
in Transition. Kibworth Harcourt 1280–1700 (Cambridge, 1983); PRO
SC2/183/87–88 and PRO DL 30/80/1090 (Owston and Castle Donington).

For Wodard, see Thorvald Forssner, Continental-Germanic Personal Names in

18 Merton College, Oxford, MSS MM 6376–6406 and 6556–6573 (Kibworth
Table 3 Chi-square analysis of the relationship between bynames and status in the rental of Leicester Abbey in 1477.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observed count</th>
<th>Expected count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toponymic</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topographical</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patr/met</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nickname</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupational</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toponymic</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topographical</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>occupational</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square value = 12.602 with five degrees of freedom, significant at the 0.05 level.

simply by the hypocoristic form of her forename, Pelle. Her son, Richard, appeared between 1348 and 1353, having inherited her bovate in 1348:

Radulphus [sic] Pellesone de Thorp venit in plena Curia et de licencia domini petit se admitteri ad tenenciam unius mesuagii et unius bovate terre cum pertinentiis post decessum Pelle matris sue et admissus est... 19

This byname did not thereafter recur in the manor.

The implication of the data presented above is that patronyms and metynomys with the element -son did not occur in Leicestershire before the 1340s. This inference can be confirmed by evidence from the court rolls for two manors of Merton College, Oxford, at Barkby and Kibworth Harcourt. Both commences in the 1270s, but there is a gap in the early fourteenth century for Kibworth, although the series recommences fully from 1324. The vernacular forms in -son first appeared in written form in the Barkby rolls and rentals in the 1340s. The earliest references, occurring in 1341, referred to Henry Daunky companions and John Harryson alias Harrison, and were followed by Henry Skyeson (1346), William Amysson (1347), Henry Ansteson (1349), John Iuson (1349), William Dyson (1354), and Roger Deneson (1359). A similar chronology is revealed in the rolls for Kibworth: Adam Iueson (1338); John Watton(e) (1338–44); John Hugheson (1343); Robert Sibileson (1343); John Heynes (1343–8); John Iueson (1343–8); William Wodardson alias Wodatson (1344–6); Robert Tibbeson (1345); John Johnesson (1346); John Youngrobynson (1346–8); Henry Niccolson (1348); and William Emmeson (1348).

Some interesting characteristics emerge from prosopographical detail of the bearers of these bynames, since they were mainly, although not exclusively, drawn from the margins of their local societies. By and large, they did not belong to the core families within their communities. Their bynames were transient within the formal records of their communities, disappearing from the court rolls quite quickly after their initial appearance. By contrast, those patronymic bynames which both became established and belonged to core families were formed only later. The principal example at Barkby was Jonson and its variants. Henry filius Johannis continued to be known as such in the records from 1349 to 1381, although from 1371 he was also designated Henry Jonson (1371–99). This kinship group later comprised several other core tenants, such as Ivo Johnson alias Jackon (1420–44), Thomas Jackon (1450–78), John Johnson (1390–1437) and Robert Jonson alias Jankynson (1420–40). Also core, but less influential, were the Richardsons, whose antecessor, John filius Ricardi, was described in this form in the court rolls from 1346 to 1359 (18 references), although in four instances as John Richardson. He was succeeded by William Rycharson (1391–1413). Stable patronyms thus seem to have been formed only later and then in association with core families. Patronyms and metynomys formed at an earlier time seem to
have related to marginal individuals, were transient and unstable, and had a wider and less common range of protothermes.

Additional data from other manors confirm the patterns described here. In Kibworth Beauchamp, adjacent to Harcourt, patronyms and metronymy seem to have occurred first in 1348–9 (John Iueson, John Moldesson, Robert Tymneson, and Isabella filia Rogeri Maggeson). In Breedon on the Hill, in the north–west of the county, Isolda Hulleson was involved in a case of trespass in c. 1339, at about the time when John filius Roberti Watton was a nativus and fugitivus from the same manor.20

These processes were complicated by the development of Latinized patronyms and metronymy into bynames from personal names. For example, although there are isolated examples of Sibleston in Kibworth, the byname from filius Sible was almost consistently Sible, pertaining to the core family there. The homonymous Sible was a widow in the late thirteenth century. The same process can be perceived in north-east Leicestershire, where most Latin forms stabilized into vernacular forms with -son. Thus at Gaddesby filius Alexander became Saundeson, and there too occurred Hanson (1366), Styanesdon (1392–1412) and Willeynson (1421). Roger (1399), Peyson (1399), and Jankynson (mid-fifteenth century) existed at nearby Wartnaby. At adjacent Frisby-on-the-Wreake, from the 1390s through into the fifteenth century, occurred Hoplynson, Thomason, Rowesone, Heyneson and Wilkeksen. By contrast Henry filius Jordan, who was involved in many charters relating to lands in Gaddesby in the late thirteenth century, was also known, as in 1275, as Henry Jordan, which byname persisted in Gaddesby through to the fifteenth century.21 More evidence is available in the court rolls of Kibworth Harcourt, where, for example, filius Alexandri (1277–98) seems to have become Saundor, as filius Reginald (1289–98) became Reynald. There also an important kinship group, the Scolaces, succeeded Scolase or Scolastea, who was a widow in the late thirteenth century. Her sons were known as Thomas filius Scolace, John filius Scolace, and Hugh filius Scolase or Scolastice (1277–99), but the surname of the family became stabilized as Scolace alias Scolas. Similarly, at Barkby, the
descendants of a Milicent assumed the surname Milisent.22

It has been suggested above that patronyms and metronymy were initially more unstable than other forms of byname. There is, in fact, evidence to suggest that some patronyms in Leicestershire still had a degree of instability even in the late middle ages. A clear example concerned the manumission of several nativis of one kinship group at Anstey in 1420. Those manumitted comprised William Edson and his sons who were named John Wylson, Thomas Wylson, Richard Wilson and William Wilson, reflecting the changes in patronymic forms over generations.


This case was undoubtedly exceptional, since most patronyms and metronymy had become fixed by this late date, but it reflects the potentially greater instability of patronyms and metronymy. It might be speculated that the latter—metronymy—were the most unstable, but no evidence is available for Leicestershire and Rutland to illustrate this point.

3. Patronyms and metronymy in -son in the borough of Leicester

The development of these forms of byname in the borough of Leicester represents some similarities with and some differences from the rural pattern.24 Table 4 reveals the overall progress in the urban

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20 PRO SC2/183/51–52 and 76.
21 Bodleian Library, MS Wood empl., fols 107v–126v, 129v–131r, 137r, 146r–v and 170r–182v.
22 Merton College MSS MM 6376–6406.
23 Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 625, fol. 14r.
context, showing that these forms were exotic in 1318 and 1354, embracing less than 1% of burgesses who contributed to tallages. In previous taxations, between the loan of 1252-3 and the tallage of 1311, no such bynames had occurred. These earlier lists, with the numbers of burgesses assessed in parenthesis, comprise the loan of 1252-3 (93), which was obviously very selective, and the tallages of 1271 (685), 1286 (404), 1307 (187), and 1311 (242). By the subsidy of 1492, however, 5.1% of contributing burgesses bore patronyms or metonyms, increasing to 5.5% in that of 1497, and 7.5% in the brokerage roll of 1505. The rental of Leicester Abbey in 1477, the Novum Rentale, comprised properties from which the abbey drew rents in parts of the borough, mainly St Leonard's parish and the area adjacent to the abbey. Of the tenants enumerated in the rental, 4.7% bore patronyms.

Forms in *son* were thus unusual in the borough before the fifteenth century and seem to have been introduced into the urban enceinte much later. Nevertheless, entries to the gild merchant from the earliest time had included a large number of Latin patronymic descriptions of freemen because of the emphasis on inherited freedoms or patrimony (*labem sedem patris*), one of the methods of admission.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Document</th>
<th>'Population'</th>
<th>Patr. or metr.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1318</td>
<td>tallage</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1354</td>
<td>tallage</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1492</td>
<td>subsidy</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>1497</td>
<td>subsidy</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1505</td>
<td>brokerage</td>
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<td>24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes. 'Population' relates to the number of those assessed or to tenants. Figures in column 4 relate to the number of bearers, and in column 5 indicate the number of bearers as a percentage of the total 'population'. The rental of 1477 comprehended only part of the borough.

Such forms in Latin failed to materialise in the vernacular, which may suggest that they lacked dignity and were not considered to be commensurate with burghal status. Entries to the gild merchant allow a quite precise chronology of the introduction of surnames in *son* into the borough for this selective social group which comprehended only part of the burghal population. A few unusual entries occurred in the fourteenth century: Adam Huggesone in 1336; Adam Sareson in 1342; William Pelson of Groby (explicitly from outside) in 1363; and Thomas Kyngson in 1378. The real influx did not occur until the mid-fifteenth century: in 1466, Thomas Jacon, William Colynson and William Gybson were admitted. In subsequent years, new freemen with this form of surname were recorded as follows: 1467 (1); 1474 (4); 1475 (2); 1476 (1); 1480 (1); 1481 (1); 1482 (1); 1483 (1); 1488 (1); 1490 (2); 1491 (1); 1492 (1); 1493 (2); 1499 (3); 1500 (1); 1501 (1); 1503 (4); 1505 (1); 1508 (10) and 1509 (1). Surnames in *son* thus gained a foothold in the borough much later than in the rural areas of the north-east and east of the county and, equally, they seem to have been exogenous rather than endogenous forms. In support of the latter notion, Pelson was evidently introduced from Groby, Oliver Cobesone was a denizen of Melton when admitted to the gild merchant in 1505, Walter Dyatson was a clerk and perhaps from outside the borough, and so also was Mr Walter Gibson.

As in the county, however, the earliest forms were more exotic and transient, as in the unusual forms Huggesone, Sareson, and Pelson, which occurred in the admissions to the gild merchant in 1336, 1342 and 1363, and Leveson in the tallage of 1354. Some less usual forms also occurred in the late fifteenth century, such as Tyshon (1452 and 1475), Sibyon (1477), Goulson or Gouldston from 1477 onwards, Serleson (1482), Dyatson or Dytston in the 1490s, Hampson also in the 1490s, Gerrynson (1497), and Lawson (1505), but the corpus predominantly comprised the very common names Dawson, Jacon, Jonson, Tomson, Wilson, Robynson, and Rychardson.

By the late fifteenth century, these forms and their bearers had become accepted within the borough, reflected in office-holding. John

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Gouldson or Goulson, for example, was one of the chamberlains in 1477, an auditor of the accounts of the south quarter and swine market in 1481 and 1489, and meat or fish taster in various years between 1478 and 1492. Mr William Gibson, who entered the gild merchant in 1466 and was then described as a magister, is another example. In the subsidy of 1492, he resided in the south quarter and contributed 32d, described there as a notary. In the subsidy of 1492, he contributed 16d. for land and 10s. 8d. for goods, whilst he was assessed in 1505 for 4d. and 20d. respectively. He was elected mayor in 1492 and 1501, and was one of the auditors of the accounts for the south quarter in years between 1491 and 1507 (nine years). Less conspicuously, Hugh Tomson (occasionally Tomkyson, Tomkysson or Thomkysson) acted as chamberlain in 1493 and 1507, auditor for accounts of the north quarter in 1495, 1497 and 1503, and for the east quarter in 1509, as a leather tester in 1487–1505 (six years), held a tenement in the parish of St Margaret in 1477, and had entered the gild merchant in 1474. This prosopography suggests that surnames in -son were no longer alien to the urban community.

4. Conclusion

Leicestershire and Rutland were situated on the boundary of the area of stronger Scandinavian influence. The border nature of these counties is reflected in the translation of Latin patronyms and metonymies into vernacular forms in the later Middle Ages. Forms with -son were reinstitutionalized through Scandinavian influence in north and east Leicestershire, but appositional and genitival forms were even there just as important. Patronyms and metonymies with the suffix -son entered into the formal written record at the local level, that is, in court rolls and survey-type documents, in the early fourteenth century, commonly in the 1340s, but the earliest forms seem to have been inherently unstable and associated with marginal social groups. The later formations were stable, although an element of instability persisted in these forms of bynames even into the later middle ages.

The Smalls, Hats and Barrels:
Navigational and Toponymic Hazards

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The earliest surviving manuscript charts which include reasonably legible inscriptions around the more southerly coastlines of the British Isles are by Italian or Majorcan/Catalan cartographers of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The earliest surviving manuscript sailing directions including the same area are in Low German, Italian, French, Portuguese and English. They date from the fifteenth century, but undoubtedly contain some matter copied,

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2 Das Seebuch, edited by Karl Koppmann (Bremen 1876). (Contains a place-name glossary.)
3 Die italienischen Portolan des Mittelalters . . . , edited by Konrad Kretschmer (Berlin, 1909, reprinted Hildesheim, 1962). (Contains a place-name glossary.)
4 The Rutters of the Sea: the Sailing Directions of Pierre Garic, edited by D. W. Waters (New Haven and London, 1967). (Contains a place-name glossary.) The individual works reprinted are separately paginated in addition to Waters’ overall pagination.
5 Livro de marinheiros, edited by J. I. de Brito Rebeiro (Lisbon, 1903).