

J. WITTICH, *Discovering London Street Names* (Shire Publications, Princes Risborough, 1977), 95pp., paperback, 70p. ISBN 0 85263 366 1.

A good idea badly done. There's no reason why a cheap, attractive, "popular" pocket dictionary shouldn't be based on good scholarship. This one is not. There's a biography of the author but no bibliography: that's characteristic. We're told he's a history graduate: I'd never have believed it. Anyone who wants to know about London street-names at a "popular" level will be better served by Gillian Bebbington, *London Street Names* (Batsford, London, 1972). Mr. Wittich ought to re-write his little book (I'd suggest an abridgement of hers, with proper acknowledgement).

I've perused the entries from A to H. Mr. Wittich often ignores (I think he is not ignorant of) Ekwall, Bebbington, and the E.P.N. Society's volumes on Middlesex, Surrey and Essex. He makes a mess of Addle Hill, Aldermanbury, Aldersgate, Aldgate, Aldwych, Avondale Pk., Barbican, Basinghall St., Battersea, Battle Bridge Rd., Bayswater Rd., Billingsgate, Bow La, Buckingham St., (the 'Of Alley' set is omitted!), Chancery La, Chelsea, Cornhill, Cowcross St., Craig's Ct., Croxted Rd. SE 21 (how does such matter get in?), Cursitor St., De Vere Gdns., Dowgate, Drury La., Ebury, Falcon Ct., Fenchurch, Fetter La., Finch La., Giltspur St., Gray's Inn Rd., Gt. Scotland Yd., Gutter La., Hanway St., and Haverstock Hill. He omits Finsbury. I also dipped into S and T: he can't cope with the difficulties of Seething La., Shoe La., Snow Hill; he's inept, nearly evasive, about Tothill St; he misses glorious opportunities with *Alsatia* at Tudor St.

Need one say more? Shire Publications does us a mischief with this one. It's cheap in the wrong way. Do, please, let them withdraw it forthwith and order a revise. Mr. Wittich may not be up to it; they *could* find somebody else.

JOHN McN. DODGSON

MARIANNE MULON, *L'Onomastique française: bibliographie des travaux publiés jusqu'en 1960*, with Preface by Jean Favier, Archives nationales: La Documentation Française, Paris 1977, xvi and 454 pp., 150 Fr.

For all students of Western Europe - not only onomasticians, but also archivists, archaeologists, genealogists, geographers and topographers, historians of all types, lexicographers, psychologists, sociologists - this book is a treasure-chest. Since *Onoma* started its running bibliographies, recent work on names has been easily traceable; but for older materials too much still depends on chance references. Given the wide influence exercised during the Middle Ages by French language and culture, French name-studies have been one of the areas where lack of systematic documentation has been especially frustrating. How welcome then this comprehensive bibliography compiled by Madame Marianne Mulon, the Keeper at the Archives nationales responsible for the Centre d'onomastique.

The bibliography is indeed designed as comprehensive and non-critical, in all awareness of the risks such a plan incurs, not so much by a scarcely avoidable falling-short of completeness as by inclusion of out-of-date and unreliable materials. On the latter score, assuredly, the compiler's anxiety (p. ix) is needless: even the most wrong-headed essay may one day be grist, if not to an onomastician's mill, then at least to that of an historian of ideas.

With onomastics so uneasily astraddle between philology and history (how many libraries shelve name-studies under 'History: Auxiliary Sciences?'), not to mention various other disciplines, a problem barely soluble is that

of definitions, and especially of how far philology, history, geography and archive-materials come within the onomastician's purview. Excluded here are: general dictionaries; maps; also linguistic atlases; dialect investigations not predominantly based on name-materials; modern name-lists unaccompanied by commentary; book-reviews. Editions of cartularies are, however, admitted, provided they contain relevant indexes or other apparatus; and terriers are the subject of a special recommendation (p. xii).

A question more specifically French is that of frontiers: in the event taken (as far as practical) politically, so that Belgium, Switzerland and Canada are omitted, the former two perhaps regrettably (but in an official publication such as this quite inevitably), and Alsace, Brittany and the Basque country most welcomingly brought in.

The main classification is by *départements*, with two preliminary sections, for general works and for those treating of whole regions, all appropriate cross-references being given. Four indexes (authors; anonymous works; words; topics) allow finding of pieces not easily accessible under the geographical heads. Within each subdivision place-name and personal-name studies are listed separately (with a third category, 'Divers', proving devoted mainly to names for oxen - reassuring to anyone who had feared that to a Frenchman an ox was but an ambling *boeuf bourguignon*); this makes it only too plain that in the past the latter were hardly less neglected in France than they have been here (cf. p. xvi). A perhaps questionable decision was to arrange each list alphabetically rather than chronologically (as, for instance, in *New CBEL*), because the latter arrangement would have made development easier to apprehend.

But before so heroic a single-handed achievement any strictures whatsoever seem mean. We must not only congratulate Madame Mulon but also thank her most fervently for providing us all with such a sure basis for our future work.

To close on a frivolous note: to an eye superficially scanning these lists the topic most irresistibly suggested concerns the surnames characterizing workers in French onomastics ...

CECILY CLARK

V. D. BELENKAYA, *Ocherki Angloyazychnoy Toponimiki* ('Studies of English-Speaking Toponymy'): Moscow, 1977.

The appearance of any book in a foreign language dealing with English place-names is a most welcome event, and when the language is Russian it is so noteworthy that it is worth giving a thorough account of the contents. Dr. Belenkaya's book is concerned with the place-names, in whatever language, of the three main English-speaking countries (England, the U.S.A., and Australia), and the actual table of contents reads as follows. (I shall explain later some of the terms used; for the moment note that I have followed her use of the coined terms 'econyms' and 'eponymy' to refer to the names of settlements as opposed to those of natural features).

Preface; Introduction

Part I: The Eponymy of England.

Chapter I: The contemporary toponymic map of England in the light of other-language influences.

1. The Celtic toponymic stratum.
2. Latin elements.
3. The Scandinavian toponymic stratum.
4. French elements.

Chapter 2: Questions of the morphology and semantics of English designations.

1. Problems of the morphological classification of the toponymy.
2. The semantics of simple toponyms. 3. The semantics of the final elements of theoretically segmented, compound, and composite toponyms.
4. English toponymic suffixes. 5. Composite designations.

Chapter 3: Some problems of English toponymy in connection with peculiarities of the development of the designations of the country.

1. The principle of historicism as a basis for the semantic classification of names. 2. The process of re-interpretation of names. 3. Questions of the orthography and phonetics of toponyms. 4. Homonymy in English toponymy. 5. On the question of the secondary use of geographical designations.

Part II: The Eonymy of the United States of America.

Chapter I: The problem of division-into-districts of the toponymy of the USA.

The districts of other-language influences on the contemporary map.

1. The division-into-periods of the history of the American toponymy.
2. Homonymy in American toponymy. The borrowing of names as one of the sources of the toponymy of the USA. 3. Peculiarities of the eonyms of the south-west. The influence of the Spanish language. 4. The zones of the diffusion of French influence. 5. The distinctiveness of the toponymy of the north-east of the USA, as a result of Dutch influence. 6. Late other-language influences upon American toponymy. 7. Some problems of Indian toponymy.

Chapter 2: Problems of word-formation in American Eonymy.

1. The range of the group of simple designations. 2. Composite eonyms.
3. Compound eonyms. 4. Derivative eonyms. 5. Occasional eonyms.

Chapter 3: Peculiarities of the semantics of American eonyms.

1. The basic stages of the development of the eonymy. 2. The problem of the variation of eonyms. 3. The role of geographical terms in American eonymy.

Chapter 4: The toponymy of Alaska. A district of Russian-English linguistic contacts.

1. The division-into-periods of the toponymy of Alaska. The linguistic origin of designations. The basic toponymic sources. 2. Native toponymy. The first Russian names. 3. The types of settlements, and the terms relating to them. 4. Russian nouns in the composition of American toponyms, and the methods of borrowing them.

Chapter 5: The problem of regional characteristics and toponymic comparisons. The toponymy of the USA as a single system of designations.

Part III: The Eonymy of Australia.

Chapter 1: The division-into-periods of the history of Australian geographical designations.

1. The toponymy of the 19th century. 2. Contemporary tendencies in the development of designations.

Chapter 2: Terms in the composition of the English-language names of Australia.

1. Hydrographic terms in the composition of eonyms. 2. The role of other terms. The connection with English toponymy, and the difference from it.

Chapter 3: Questions of the word-formation and semantics of eonyms.

1. Descriptiveness as a characteristic property of Australian eonymy.
2. The basic word-forming groups of names. 3. The function of the article in the composition of designations.

Chapter 4: The Aboriginal toponymy of Australia.

Conclusion

From the contents it will be clear that Dr. Belenkaya's range is extremely wide; it should also be clear that her interest is very different from that of the EPNS one of analysing the philological origins of place-names: she is concerned in the synchronic study of them - the ways in which they are used by people, and what they signify to those people. There is no clash between the two studies, as she makes clear: they can happily coexist. She also acknowledges the value of historical, diachronic, study, in that it can show the historical influences which are behind the contemporary names, and several sections are concerned with the historical causes which created the modern systems. For the USA and Australia this involves an account of the settlement of the two countries by the Europeans, which is well given; for England it is mainly a matter of summarising the historical work of the EPNS, particularly in terms of the manifestations on modern maps of the different historical strata. I find this section less satisfactory, though it is more a matter of emphasis than of errors of fact, which are few. Some words are included in the lists even though they must be extremely rare in place-names (*gable, gullet, heck*, for example), particularly in names of settlements, while other common ones (such as *church*) are omitted. The section on Celtic names is somewhat confused in parts, but English toponymists must despair at times of satisfying Celticists in that respect. The rather loose system of reference makes it hard to check statements: counties are not quoted for most names cited, and elements are given in modern forms; very few sources are cited in the text, but there is a bibliography at the end of the book. It includes Ekwall's *Dictionary*, Smith's *Elements* and Gelling, Nicolaisen and Richards, *The Names of Towns & Cities in Britain*, but not other works of historical studies, though the EPNS county volumes are referred to in passing, p. 10n.; so it is safe to assume that historical discussion of names and elements refers to those three works. Mostly the derivations in them are accurately reproduced, though there are a few lapses, and also a number of misprints in the spellings of names. They are not such as to mislead an English reader, though I remain baffled by *Penmarlago* and *Treysceck* (p. 27), in Wales and Herefordshire respectively, and I suppose that *Ryon* (p. 40) is meant to be *Ryton*. Some errors may mislead Russian readers, however, to whom the names will not be familiar: *Helwyn* for *Welwyn* (p. 57), *Sane* for *Lane* (p. 58) and *Ilan* (twice) for *Llan* (p. 28) might cause difficulty, while *Trumplington* for *Trumpington* (p. 77), and *Bunbury* for *Banbury* (twice, p. 77: too much Oscar Wilde?) are pleasant, and hardly misleading. The attribution of Edinburgh New Town to the 17th century (p. 58) is also surprising.

Dr. Belenkaya recognises a different classification from the EPNS one of simplex (single-element) and compound names: her categories, in conformity with her interest in how names are perceived, are as follows; to some extent they overlap with one another, but they are not intended as rigid categories. 'Simple' names are either simplex ones in the EPNS sense, or names which have been simplified with time and are incomprehensible to modern users (e.g. *Tring, Iden*, p. 40). 'Compound' ones are those composed of two words, where at least one is understood (words like *beck, field, burn*); 'composite' names are those written nowadays as two or more words (e.g. *North X, Little Y*, etc.); and 'theoretically-segmented' ones are those where neither element is understood. In American she also recognises 'derivative' names, formed by adding to a word a 'toponymic suffix', which bears no meaning except as indicating that the resulting whole is a place-name (e.g. *-ton, -ia*), and 'occasional' names, consisting of exclamations or other, apparently arbitrary but comprehensible,

phrases. The groups, though not always clear-cut, serve her purposes well, and American and Australian names yield much more readily to this kind of synchronic analysis than do the obscure English ones. Even here there are a few errors of derivation: Killingworth (USA) is more likely to be named after the place of that name in Northumberland than to represent a spoken form of Kenilworth (p. 88); Blair Athol (sic) in Australia must be named after Blair Atholl in Scotland, and in any case cannot contain *atoll* 'coral reef' as it is a hundred miles inland (p. 188); the River Loddon (Dorset) is not near London (p. 176); and hickory is an American type of walnut, not hazel (p. 133); but these are quibbles of detail only, and do not affect her main arguments.

A more serious criticism might be made against the figures that are quoted from time to time. Obviously in such a wide study there has had to be a drastic selection of names in the first place, to limit the number of names studied, but we are not told how the corpus was obtained. In my own area, Cornwall, we are told (p. 27) that there are 'more than 70' instances of names starting with *Tre-*. Since the one-inch map shows several hundred and the six-inch map about a thousand such names, the scale used must have been either the quarter-inch or half-inch maps. It does not matter: the total corpus of names would have been unworkable if taken on such a large scale over the whole English-speaking world; but what does matter is that we should know how the corpus was obtained, since the scale of map used affects both the absolute figures, and the proportions of different types of names.

A similar objection, perhaps also unrealistic, might be made about the limitation of the study to three countries. Canada is dismissed, rather unconvincingly, in a footnote (p. 12: 'The toponymy of Canada is not included in the range of matters considered, by virtue of its specific French orientation, caused by the distinctive features of Canadian bilingualism'.) By the exclusion of English names in a number of other countries, not only Canada, material has been lost which might have provided interesting comparisons with the names of the settlement periods in the USA and Australia. However, the range of the book is wide enough as it is, and it would be wrong to object that it is not something which it does not set out to be.

Dr. Belenkaya is also interested in the 'meta-toponymic' aspect of place-names - the associations belonging to the names beyond the primary one of referring to a place on the ground. This is a very tricky topic: the associations of any particular place-names may vary between small groups of people with different interests, or even between private individuals possessing different connections with it. Wisely, she stays clear of these, and confines herself mainly to the occurrences of place-names in catch phrases, proverbs, and the like. Some of these are rather curious: they are culled from dictionaries and works of fiction, and most of them were new to me. A few I was unable to trace in any source: 'as big as Dorchester butt' (p. 78), 'neither in Cheshire nor in Chawbent' (p. 79), etc. Brewer's Dictionary, one of the best sources for such phrases, is not referred to. There is no indication as to how much currency the phrases may ever have had, and the danger of taking them from written sources is that they may not be very close to actual usage. Most people nowadays would associate 'newcastle' with a type of beer, rather than a disease of chickens (p. 75). Nonetheless, it is a fine collection, making an interesting chapter which certainly deserves a place in any discussion of how place-names are used in language.

Another of the questions receiving discussion is that of 'historicism' in toponymy. This is, of course, the philosophy which says that there are certain necessary successive stages in the development of human society (and thus also perhaps of its culture, including such manifestations as place-names). The answer one gives to this, or even whether or not one cares about the question, is a matter of personal preference. Certainly it is clear that different types

of names are popular at different periods, and this is well demonstrated by Dr. Belenkaya (Part I, chapter 3, section 1 for England, and again in the Conclusion, pp. 215 ff., for the systems of the three countries as a whole); but the changes in the more recent centuries could be due just as much to fashion as to necessary historical development. Certainly in its broader form the thesis is not in doubt: a tribal people without towns will have tribe-names, but not town-names. In the same way there is a chapter (Part II, 5) on the question of whether the nomenclature of the USA, with all its diversity, can be considered as a 'single toponymic system' (the conclusion being that it can); to me this is really a non-question, an irrelevancy, but there are plenty of useful and interesting observations in the course of the discussion.

It is an interesting, very stimulating, book to read, even if (as in my case) one is not very interested in the theoretical, almost philosophical, questions with which it is partly concerned. In its primary aim, of enabling Russian readers to understand how the place-names of the main English-speaking countries work, and what they mean to us, the users, it must be entirely successful. We should be very grateful that Dr. Belenkaya takes such an interest in English place-names. Perhaps we may hope for a visit by her to one of the Council's conferences, for an exchange of views and methods would be very profitable on both sides.

O. J. PADEL

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## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

The Editor and Editorial Board are most grateful to the University of Hull for generously providing facilities for the production of NOMINA and to the Department of English in the same institution for many kinds of help, including a grant towards the cost of typing expenses. Special thanks are due to the following: Mr. Colin Rush (University Administration), Mrs. Betty Brundrett (who did the printing), Mrs. Margery Dickinson (Secretary to the Linguistics Department, who did the typing), Professor E. C. Fudge (Linguistics Department), Professors A. Pollard and J. A. V. Chapple (English Department), Miss Helen Parker (who set the inside front and back covers), and Mr. Gary Sargeant (who assisted with the design of the front cover). Dr. O. E. Manasse gave his kind permission to use the cover photograph of part of an estate map of Ashendon, Bucks, dated 1641.

## ENGLISH NAME STUDIES

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