

ween map-makers. Comparison with the findings of his projected study of the Highland area is likely to yield interesting results. Jacob King deals with river names, using forms provided by Taylor to offer Celtic etymologies for Endrick and Lunan. The proposed interpretations are respectively ‘bullish river’ and ‘shining like the moon’. James E. Fraser discusses the vexed question of whether *Eliuin m̄c Cuirp* in *Annals of Ulster* s.a. 673 is a personal name or a place-name, and concludes in favour of the former. In the first instalment of a two-part article, Matthew H. Hammond examines the by-name Scot in the Central Middle Ages, and argues that rather than identifying Gaelic speakers from north of Forth, it was mainly used in a foreign context for people south of Forth. The second part, on the meaning of the surname Scot, should also be worth reading.

The book reviews extend the scope of the journal beyond the Scottish onomasticon to include the Scots language (Susanne Kries, *Skandinavisch-schottische Sprachbeziehungen im Mittelalter: der altnordische Lehneinfluss*, reviewed by Margaret Scott), Manx place-names (George Broderick, *Place-names of the Isle of Man* and *A Dictionary of Manx Place-Names*, both reviewed by Jacob King), and the place-names of northern England (Stan Beckensall, *Place Names and Field Names of Northumberland*, reviewed by Peadar Morgan; Diana Whaley, *A Dictionary of Lake District Place-Names*, reviewed by Alison Grant). All reviews are thoughtful and well judged, but the editorial hand is a little heavy in places. A criticism of Broderick’s work made in Taylor’s article (f.n. 21) is reiterated and expanded in King’s review (pp. 164–65, where a book by Nicolaisen is rather oddly referred to as an ‘article’); and the penultimate paragraph of Grant’s review is interrupted by a discussion of terminology by the editor that runs to just over eight lines.

The volume is well produced and offers good value for money. It is to be hoped that future issues maintain the same high standards of scholarship and presentation that have been set here.

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HYWEL WYN OWEN AND RICHARD MORGAN, *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*. Llandysul: Gomer, 2007. lxxvii + 506 pp. £29.99. Hardback (ISBN 978-1-84323-901-7)

At last! The place-names of Wales have the full and authoritative study they deserve. It has been long in coming, in part because of the untimely death of

Melville Richards (1910-73). Despite publishing widely and collecting a vast bulk of material on Wales's toponyms, he did not live to produce a *magnum opus*. Fortunately, the archive (now housed at Bangor) that he assembled has made possible the present work, based largely upon it. So this dictionary is the late-flowering or posthumous triumph of a great Welsh scholar, to whose memory it is dedicated.

Its introduction gives a survey of Wales's toponyms, reasons for selection, and lists of elements. After this are five pages of bibliography, giving special place to the work of Professor Gwynedd O. Pierce. Since the compilers cite him so often, it is no surprise to find him describing the dictionary on its (attractive) jacket as 'a milestone in the history of Welsh place-name studies'; after that are five hundred pages analysing forms from Aber to Ystwyth. As with Watts's *Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*, we are given headword, map reference, selected attestations, and etymology. Yet this Welsh dictionary is more spacious than its English equivalents. Each page, with generous margins, usually discusses three to five toponyms, set out in short essays. Its style is discursive, not telegraphic.

In the cliché that publishers delight to read, this volume should be in every library worth the name. Yet it is not the last word. Its compilers give a lion's share of entries to settlements figuring on 1:250,000 maps. For many mountains, hills, rivers, streams, hamlets, and farms (often of great interest to philologists), readers must hence still go to older works, such as R. J. Thomas's *Enwau Anfonydd a Nentydd Cymru* or Ifor Williams's *Enwau Lleoedd*. There are also some colourful omissions, which include Fleur-de-Lys (rhyming with 'power' and 'hour') in Glamorgan, subject of an insouciant limerick by the poet Harri Webb. Nevertheless, the advantages of an expert and responsible account of Wales's toponymy in a single volume, in English, are obvious.

For Welsh scholars it will be vital, but it should be consulted as well by historians national and local, and by students of Irish, English, Norse, French, and Latin—languages also contributing to Wales's toponymic make-up. Its value will be increased if scholars note the following corrections, additions, and comparisons. First, there are some corrections. For Aran Benllyn and Aran Fawddwy, the interpretation 'little ridge' makes no sense. These are neither little nor ridges, but pocket Matterhorns. Welsh *Aranfagl* 'sharp stick' hence allows the sense 'point, peak; spike', as with the Isle of Arran in Scotland, also possessed of spectacular pinnacled summits. For Dyfed the *Dictionary* gives no explanation. Yet Welsh *medi* 'reap; slaughter' suggests an original ferocious tribal name meaning 'good cutters-down, expert killers' (in battle). It also explains the Elfed of Cynwyl Elfed as 'cutters-down of many'. On Moel Fama near Ruthin (and Mam Tor in Derbyshire), the British word meaning 'breast' cited is a ghost. Mam Tor (like Mamhead and Manchester) has a form equivalent to Welsh *mam* 'mother' applied

to a river; this may be the case for Moel Fama, the ‘mothers’ being streams rising below its summit. On the river Neath, the compilers rightly link it with the Nidd of Yorkshire, but the proposed meanings ‘shining’ or ‘river’ are baseless. The sense is ‘dropper, descender, sinker’, as with the Neden Brook of Monmouthshire. All three rivers disappear underground through soluble rock.

After corrections, there are some additions. For Buttington (near Welshpool) the form *Buttingtune* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 894 (*recte* 893) should be cited. It was the site of a Viking defeat by the English, an event underlined in 1839, when some 330 skulls of men aged between 20 and 45 were found in three pits by Buttington church. For Colfa (near Old Radnor) may be noted the variants *Coluan*, *Colguan*, and *Collan* in lives of St David and *Colan* in *Bewnans Ke*, the newly-discovered Cornish play on St Kea.

Finally, here are some comparisons or uses of this dictionary for scholars beyond Wales. Aran and the Scottish island of Arran have been mentioned. Arfon ‘by Anglesey’ and Argoed ‘by a wood’ imply that Arclid in Cheshire is not a Scandinavian form, as claimed, but a Brittonic one meaning ‘by (the river called) cleanser’ (and so perhaps the *Arecluta* of Gildas). Blaen-Gwrach ‘head of crone(-river)’ in Glamorgan suggests that Gourock in Scotland means ‘hag, old woman’, perhaps from the monolith of Granny Kempock’s Stone still to be seen there. Dyserth and neighbouring Mold (= *mont hault*), both with castles, indicate originals for the castle of Hautdesert in the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, written in nearby Cheshire. Another unexpected use comes for editors of Shakespeare, who should read the entry for Haverfordwest. They would then stop explaining ‘Barkloughly’ in *Richard II* as ‘Harlech’, which flies in the face of history, textual criticism, and common sense. Pentre Tafarn-y-fedw, ‘village by a tavern with a birch tree’ allows an emended British-Latin *Bannaventa Taberniae* ‘market on a summit with a tavern’, home of St Patrick, and possibly Banwell in Somerset/Avon. In short, this book can be employed in ways its authors probably did not envisage.

In condemning one book from Wales, the poet and classical scholar A. E. Housman (1859-1936), ever intolerant of inaccuracy and loose thinking, mentioned the ‘routine praises of the *Western Mail*’ it would still doubtless receive. This *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* deserves no such harshness. Nevertheless, it is no slight to say that it calls for further work, which is of the very nature of place-name studies. In words used by Sir Ifor Williams to close his own book on the subject, *Gwaith anorffen sydd gennym*, ‘Our task knows no end’.

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