

PAUL CAVILL and GEORGE BRODERICK, eds, *Language Contact in the Place-Names of Britain and Ireland*, EPNS Extra Series, vol. 3. English Place-Name Society: Nottingham, 2007. 183 pp., £25 (ISBN 9780904889789)

This volume comprises nine papers from the *International Conference on Language Contact in the Place-Names of Britain and Ireland*, jointly organised by the Institute of Name Studies, University of Nottingham, and the Centre for Manx Studies, held in Douglas, Isle of Man, 17–18 September 2004. The papers cover a broad chronological spectrum, from Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel's discussion of the pre-Celtic and early Celtic place-names in Ireland to Doreen Waugh's examination of the loss of the Norn language in Shetland and its influence on insular Scots in the post-Norn era. The wide geographical range encompasses Ireland, Man, Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles, eastern Scotland and a sizeable part of England. This is an important collection of papers with appeal to linguists and onomasts alike. The only (rather minor) quibble is that the volume is somewhat austere in its outer appearance, and although there are a few maps, photos and tables within, these are all black and white with the exception of some coloured wording on a map and a chart in De Bernardo Stempel's paper.

Richard Coates' article *Invisible Britons: the view from toponomastics* provides a useful overview of the place-name evidence for the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon settlers in Britain and the indigenous Celtic-speaking population. He argues that the number of surviving Celtic place-names has been underestimated, as the "default" policy in early scholarship was to seek a Germanic etymology for the majority of place-names in England, and many toponyms such as Leatherhead in Surrey can now be more satisfactorily explained within a Celtic linguistic context. Yet whilst existing Celtic names may have been adopted by the Anglo-Saxons, Coates highlights the lack of onomastic evidence for significant linguistic interaction between the two speech communities. He argues that few of the Celtic place-name elements which were borrowed into Old English gained full lexical status, which points towards limited linguistic contact and rapid linguistic shift rather than protracted bilingualism and interaction.

Doreen Waugh's paper examines the place-name evidence for language contact, language shift and language death in the Sand and Garderhouse regions of Shetland. She highlights the problem of indigenous sentimentality towards the Norn language, and offers a refreshing native perspective on the importance of separating language from perceived linguistic identity, and provides grammatical evidence that any Norn lexical items and toponymic ele-

ments which remain in active use in the present day have been fully integrated into the Shetland dialect of Scots.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen's paper on the shift from Pictish to Gaelic in Scotland firstly summarises his structural framework for analysing the various processes of place-name development in language-contact situations, including translation, phonological adaptation and outright replacement. Secondly, he applies these principles specifically to the shift from Pictish to Gaelic, examining names including those in *pett* and *aber* to illustrate the integration and adaptation of Pictish elements into the Gaelic onomasticon.

Gillian Fellows-Jensen discusses the history of English influence on the nomenclature of the Isle of Man, from runic inscriptions featuring an Old English personal name to the administrative influence of the Stanley era. She offers an interesting revision of her earlier theory that some of the Manx names in *-by* might have been fifteenth or sixteenth century imports from England, concluding that the historical forms probably reflect only influence from English orthographic convention, rather than the large-scale transference of the place-names themselves at such a late period.

Berit Sandnes examines Norn-Scots contact in Orkney, focusing on place-names which have been simplistically described as "hybrids" and systematically re-defining them using a language-contact model to separate them into categories including names formed from loan words, secondary names, and phonological, morphological and lexematic adaptations. George Broderick discusses Gaelic-Scandinavian contact on the Isle of Man, and using a list of key toponymic elements as examples, he traces the gradual Gaelicisation of Old Norse place-names, and the borrowing of Old Norse place-name elements into Manx Gaelic.

Richard Cox's paper examines the various Gaelic reflexes of the Old Norse consonant cluster *-rð(-)*, and whilst the discussion is phonologically dense, Cox does supply a useful appendix of place-names from Old Norse masculine accusative *-fjqrð* (nominative *fjqrðr*). Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel examines the names recorded by Ptolemy for ancient Ireland, and offers a helpful categorization of the various linguistic strata complete with lists of the names in each group presented in tabular form.

Paul Cavill's paper is an in-depth exploration of a single place-name: *Dingesmere*, which is only recorded in the Old English poem *The Battle of Brunanburh*. Arguing that *Dingesmere* is indeed a toponym rather than either a descriptive phrase referring to a noisy sea, or a figurative reference to the Irish Sea, he suggests that the name may contain Old Norse *þing* 'assembly, meeting' in the genitive singular form *þings* and Old English *mere* referring to a wetland, rather than in the poetic sense of 'sea' (possibly replacing Old Norse

*marr* ‘marsh, fen’) with a meaning of ‘wetland by the thing’. Additionally, he argues that the phonological development of /*p*/ to /*d*/ is consistent with a Gaelic-Scandinavian linguistic context, and identifies the wetland immediately to the south of Thingwall on the Wirral peninsula as the likely location of *Dingemere*. This paper highlights one of the key themes of the volume as a whole: the limitations of seeking to account for toponyms within a single linguistic framework, and the importance of looking instead for solutions across a broader multilingual and multicultural context. This collection of papers makes a significant contribution towards a broader understanding of the types of language contact occurring within the British Isles and Ireland, from the very limited contact between Old English and Celtic speakers in the south-east of England to the peaceful and sustained bilingualism between Norn and Scots in the Northern Isles.

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