

21. Cf. above n. 3.

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ONOMASTIC NOTES AND QUERIES

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH NICKNAME KEPEHARM

While presuming, in a review published in *NOMINA* III, 113-14, to set right the author of a book, I myself perpetuated an untenable interpretation of the by-name Kepeharm (cf. also *Journal of Medieval History* II, 20), alleging in its support inappropriate references to MED.

The better dictionary to have taken as base would have been *Bosworth-Toller*, which cites, s.v. cēpan, several *Ælfrician* and other instances of an OE idiom hearmes cēpan 'to intend injury (to someone)'. Similar meanings of this verb continued into ME, but with such shifts of construction as were necessitated by the disuse of synthetic genitives as verbal objects (cf. T. Mustanoja, *A Middle English Syntax*, I (Helsinki, 1960), 87-8): therefore, kepe harm, instead of older h(e)armes. Being datable approximately to the early twelfth century, this syntactic change marks the bynames found in twelfth-century records as recent formations.

This revised interpretation squares well with the *Canterbury* interchange, for the same name-bearer, between the simplex H(e)arm and the phrasal Kipeharm, that is, 'injury' as short for 'intend injury' (the i-spelling for OE ē found in the *Black Book of St. Augustine's* is paralleled elsewhere in *Kentish* usage).

I apologize to the author I so arrogantly presumed to correct, and to any readers whom I may have vexed or misled.

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THE INTERPRETATION OF MIDDLE ENGLISH NICKNAMES

A review of JAN JÖNSJÖ, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames, I Compounds*, *Lund Studies in English* 55, CWK Gleerup: Lund, 1979, 227 pp., no price stated.

Students of Middle English have long been indebted to research by scholars associated with the English Department of the University of Lund, particularly through the publication of doctoral dissertations and other projects as volumes in the series *Lund Studies in English* (founded by Eilert Ekwall). In the most recent volume, which maintains the series' very high standard of printing and production, Dr Jan Jönsjö examines a collection of over 1000 compounded nicknames found in the six northern counties and Lincolnshire between 1100 and 1400. The names are presented in dictionary form, following the format and methods established by Fransson, Löfvenberg, Thuresson, and Seltén in earlier volumes. Entries consist of: a headform; citations, organised by county, and accompanied by date and source of document; and explanations, etymological, denotative, and connotative. The material is drawn from a mixture of printed and manuscript sources. Besides the Dictionary we are provided with a List of Elements, a Bibliography, and an Introduction of thirty-five pages in which are discussed the formal and semantic categorisation of the names, the non-native elements, and the use and inheritance of the nicknames as bynames.

It should be evident from this brief description that Jönsjö, in line with his eminent predecessors at Lund, has performed an important service in gathering together in one publication such a large and valuable body of material. This is not the first study of Middle English bynames from nicknames, but it is the first to take comprehensive monograph form, as Jönsjö acknowledges (Introduction, p.14). It is therefore the most substantial, and in prospect the most ambitious, undertaking on this topic, particularly in its attempt to make general statements about the formal and semantic patterns of this extraordinarily difficult class of names. Furthermore, the monograph is meant to be not only a basic work of reference but also, one presumes, a model for research into the medieval nicknames of other regions of England. For these reasons it is worth looking beyond the obvious, immediate usefulness of this study and subjecting it to a more taxing analysis, in order to test how far the methods and approaches adopted here constitute a standard for others to follow.

We may begin with the formal aspects. At first glance, the size of this collection of nicknames seems sufficient to give substance to the statistical comparison of morphological types set out in the Introduction, pp. 30-35. Almost half the compounds are composed of adjective + noun; more than a third are evenly distributed among the types verb + noun and noun + noun; the remaining twenty-five categories provide less than a fifth of the total number of names. However, Jönsjö has deliberately incorporated in his figures many names that do not indubitably qualify as compound nicknames or whose morphological interpretation is questionable (see the Introduction, p.29). These include a quantity of names like Cristenmes, Monenday, Pacok, Lemman, Styrop, and Lord, which, as 'obscured' lexical compounds, are not, properly speaking, onomastic compounds, and also names which could, and in most instances probably did, derive from the patronymic or metronymic use of lexically transparent Christian names: Colbain, Derman,