

marr ‘marsh, fen’) with a meaning of ‘wetland by the thing’. Additionally, he argues that the phonological development of /b/ 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 *Dingesmere*. 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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DAVID and LYNDA ROLLASON, eds, *The Durham Liber Vitae: London, British Library MS. Cotton Domitian A.VII*. 3 vols. London: British Library, 2007. 1596 pp. + CD-ROM, £195. (ISBN 978-0712349864)

The *Liber Vitae* or commemoration-book of Durham Cathedral Priory must be one of the most complex historical and onomastic sources in Britain. From the time of its creation in the earlier ninth century it received additions almost continuously for seven centuries, until the Reformation, though with periods of greater and lesser use. It has been disbound, reordered, and had some pages removed and many added, making it a codicological nightmare. Many of its pages have entries from a variety of periods, nearly all undated, so only careful palaeographical study can hope to indicate the approximate dates of the entries, let alone the structure of the blocks of text. Nearly all of its text consists of bare names, over 10,000 of them, virtually devoid of any context except for the other accompanying names—though even this total is small beer in comparison with the terrifying 38,232 names contained in the confraternity book of Reichenau (I, 9). It is no wonder that previous attempts at editions have been inadequate.

The present edition, virtually definitive, is therefore a magnificent achievement, and a notable contribution to medieval scholarship. No one person could hope for competence in all the areas necessary to do justice to the manuscript and its contents, so the two editors have assembled a team of leading scholars from all the relevant fields, to produce an edition which does justice to the varied importance of the manuscript, and which will last into the future. It was originally intended to be a purely electronic edition, whereby one could have

clicked one's way from facsimile to text to the various commentaries; but that proved technologically too ambitious in the time available, so a conventional book with an accompanying CD-ROM bearing the facsimile has been produced. The change may actually be a blessing for many, since the loss in hyper-textual interactivity is balanced by permanence and ease of overview.

The structure of the edition is as follows: Volume I contains introductory matter (80 pp.), text (150 pp.), brief commentary on the text (62 pp.) and the two indexes (193 pp.). The Introduction consists of several self-contained essays on essential aspects of the manuscript and its contents: primarily Lynda Rollason's on the history and codicology of the book, and on important aspects of its background—the history of the church of Durham; comparable *Libri Vitae* from England and the Continent; the use made of the book over the centuries; and the historical background to the various periods of its use. Other, shorter, essays cover the codicological make-up of the book (Michael Gullick) and its early script (Richard Gameson); the two eleventh-century manumissions contained in the book (David Pelteret); confraternity-agreements and charters contained in it (Janet Burton); and gifts mentioned in it (A. J. Piper). The textual commentary deals primarily with aspects of the manuscript or with the blocks of text as found on the page, including brief descriptions of the contents of each block; individuals or their names are mentioned here, but detailed treatment of these aspects is reserved for the other two volumes.

Of the two indexes of names, the first is a conversion-table of the manuscript forms to the standardised forms by which they are generally referred to in the edition (more on this below), the second an index of those standardised forms and of known individuals, with references to their occurrences in the introductory essays, in the text, and in the linguistic and prosopographical commentaries in the other two volumes. Finally there is a chronological list of all the men known to have held any office in the Cathedral Priory or its cells, from its foundation in 1083 to its dissolution in 1539. The relevance of this list becomes clear in the third volume, for the members of that community form a significant section of those commemorated in the *Liber Vitae*. The pre-Norman history of the book—its ninth-century origin (probably at Lindisfarne, though a case has been made for Monkwearmouth or Jarrow) and how it came to Durham—is discussed by Lynda Rollason in her treatment of its historical background.

Volume II contains the Linguistic Commentary. (The volumes are not available individually, since none would be usable without the others.) No better choices could have been made of scholars in the various fields to provide this commentary; although it is clear that all have worked closely with each other, specific responsibilities were allotted to Paul Russell for the names of various

Celtic origins, John Insley for the Old English and Scandinavian names, and Peter McClure for all aspects of post-Conquest names (both forenames and surnames), with the assistance of George Redmonds and David Rollason on certain aspects of this, the largest dimension. The volume contains short separate introductory chapters on the particular categories of names, plus 320 pages of detailed commentary on all the individual names, arranged alphabetically in sections according to type (Celtic names, Continental Germanic names, Dithematic and Monothematic Old English names, and so on), with each author responsible, or jointly so, for a section of the detailed commentary.

Volume III contains the Prosopographical Commentary. Again it consists of a series of introductory essays on the different categories of persons appearing in the book, followed by a detailed commentary on each identifiable individual, arranged by categories: the original ninth-century core, and the later ecclesiastical figures (both monks of Durham and others), and lay persons (royalty, aristocracy and gentry, and others). Individuals named in the text who have entirely eluded identification are not discussed in this volume. Again the choice of scholars is ideal for the purpose: in addition to the two editors themselves, John Moore (all aspects of post-Conquest prosopography), Andrew Wareham (the laity, both pre- and post-Conquest), A. J. Piper (the monks of Durham), and, sadly, Elizabeth Briggs, who had made a special study of the persons named in the ninth-century core before her premature death in 2006. However, I was puzzled by a remark in one chapter of the introduction (III, 25), that the author had ‘not been able to consult’ the *Biographical Register* of cathedral priories in southern England (the province of Canterbury), since that standard reference-work appeared in 1997.

Much the largest part of this third volume consists of Piper’s and Lynda Rollason’s ‘Biographical register of Durham Cathedral Priory (1083–1539)’ (308 pp.). It goes without saying that the biographical work contained in this volume often constitutes essential background for the linguistic analysis of the names contained in Volume II, since the name-forms cannot be confidently analysed without knowledge of their dates and referents, much of which can be obtained only by the detailed work on the specific persons mentioned. The reverse is of course equally true, that the biographical work is often dependent upon linguistic confirmation that a particular name-form can refer to the person (or occasionally place, in a surname) suggested by the biographical detail.

The CD-ROM contains the images of the manuscript, and much more besides. The viewer can switch from an ordinary image of each page to one on which each stint (separate episode of scribal activity—as many as 49 on a single page, in the case of fol. 55v.) is distinguished by superimposed lines. Just to produce this invaluable enhancement of the facsimile must have taken

many weeks of painstaking work, and it is a wonderful achievement. The disc also contains the printed text of the book, but it seems unlikely that this will be used in preference to the paper version, except under special circumstances. There is an obvious gain in being able to place the printed text side-by-side with the image of a page showing the different stints.

It is naturally the linguistic work contained in Volume II which is of the most immediate interest to readers of *Nomina*; the two introductory chapters in Volume III, entitled, somewhat misleadingly, 'Anglo-Norman names (1083–1300)' (John Moore) and 'The significance of the names from c.1300' (Lynda Rollason), are not actually concerned with the names, but with persons who were entered in the book in those periods. However, this third volume does contain matter of onomastic interest, for Piper's chapter on 'Producing a chronological list of the monks of Durham' (III, 62–75; i.e. from other sources in addition to this one) discusses important changes in naming-practices among the community, both in the late thirteenth century, when it became normal for surnames of monks to be used as well as their forenames, and after 1539, when some monks adopted new surnames on emerging into the wider community.

The purpose of the detailed linguistic commentary is twofold: to provide an etymology and account of each name, and from that to provide a standardised form, by which the name is indexed and referred to elsewhere in the three volumes. The division of the names into separate categories for discussion (namely 'Celtic', Continental Germanic, [Old] English Dithematic, [Old] English Monothematic, 'Latin', and Scandinavian, plus unassigned and incomplete names, and the various types of surnames) has meant that the varied, uncertain, and perhaps mangled or linguistically-adapted forms of the manuscript have had to be pushed into these categories for purposes of classification and standardisation. Naturally there is cross-referencing between the sections in cases of doubt, but I do not think that this entirely overcomes the drawbacks of such categorisation. A remark made under the problematical twelfth-century woman's forename *Bedoch*, that although circumstantially Scottish, it is 'not, *however*, obviously Celtic in form' (my italics), tellingly reveals some of the unconscious assumptions that can affect this kind of classification. In fact, I found myself reading these sections with a growing sense of unease, not at the excellent philological scholarship which they incorporate, but at the shape of the task which it has been required to perform. It may seem ungrateful, especially in this journal, to complain that philology has been prioritised over the names themselves and their historical usage (as is openly acknowledged, I, xv), but that seems to be the essence of the problem.

Since the method adopted in this edition thus raises fundamental questions about methods and aims in personal-name studies, it is appropriate to take this

opportunity to examine the matter further. Doing so is not a criticism of the Durham edition, since the sad fact is that personal names, as compared with place-names, pose such different problems, and so much more complex and varied ones, and have received so much less scholarly attention than place-names, that we still lack basic agreed methods, or even aims, in tackling them. It is not therefore the fault of this edition that it has adopted a method which I think is misguided, since there is effectively no precedent, at least in these islands, for tackling so complex a source. It would be presumptuous to suggest that a different approach would necessarily have been more successful, or have been free of its own problems; the hope is that voicing these worries may stimulate debate about anthroponymic aims and method. Meanwhile the discussions provided here for particular names will stand as authoritative individual contributions to anthroponymic scholarship in their own right.

My worries about the approach focus on two points. The first is my sense that the names should be analysed, not by being sorted into groups according to their language of etymology, but in the groups in which they actually occur in the book. This point was made very cogently by Insley in an earlier essay, 'The Scandinavian personal names in the later part of the Durham *Liber Vitae*' (in a collection of essays published in 2004: see below), but his remarks do not seem to have guided the allocation of work in the analysis appearing here. A problematical name illustrates the difficulty. Four individuals were entered, on different pages of the manuscript, simply as *Dolfin*, with no surname, all in the twelfth century; and one as *Dolphin. Languath*, where the punctuation suggests two separate names, but since *Languath* is unknown as a forename in any available language, McClure has reasonably taken it as a toponymic surname (II, 323–4), from one of various northern places called Langwath (although most toponymic surnames were formed with *de* at this early period). The forename *Dolfin* or *Dolphin* is more awkward: it occurs elsewhere as a personal name predominantly in the Danelaw counties, both in Domesday Book and through the twelfth century into the thirteenth. Here, following earlier authorities, it is classified as Scandinavian, and thus standardised as *Dolgfinnr*, although it is not attested in mainland Scandinavia, and 'Insley believes that we are concerned with a French name here' (II, 219; but there is no category of French names, and no cross-reference appears under 'Latin' names). What is relevant here is the ways in which the large number of well-preserved Norse names in the book (mostly entered in the twelfth century) were used alongside Norman and Old English names at the same period: consideration of that context might then offer some guidance as to whether *Dolfin* was likely to be a Norse or a

French name.¹ One immensely rewarding observation in this connection is McClure's remark that the shrinkage from the onomastic free-for-all of the twelfth century to the 'small, stable and relatively homogeneous' name-stock of the later Middle Ages 'seems to signify an element of closure in the ethnic, social and cultural divisions created by the Conquest and to symbolise a new sense of Englishness that is not only Christian but continental in outlook' (II, 14).

The basic problem is that personal names are so much more complex than place-names, since they depend so much more on individual choices, altering from generation to generation through fashion (local, chronological, class, or other), social pressure, and other factors, that it is even more misleading to study a personal name outside the immediate social and onomastic context in which it occurs, than it is to study a place-name without considering its location on the ground.

The second worry is that, with the more problematical or altered names, allotting them to a linguistic category and then standardising them according to that derivation is liable to remove them undesirably far from the manuscript forms, and to fossilise them into the spellings which they 'ought' to have, according to the interpretation adopted. Of course some kind of standardised form is essential for scholarly use; in the Germanic languages it has long been normal for philologists to standardise names of Old English derivation as West Saxon, and Scandinavian ones as Old (West) Norse. Whether forms suited to the needs of philologists will also suit the needs of historians (especially ones working in the various linguistic zones of these islands), and whether a compromise can or should be attempted, are questions which have not received much discussion.

These standardisations can result in some oddities, even with unproblematical names. The common post-Conquest personal name Alice is derived from Continental Germanic *Adalhaid*, so all the 81 examples of people called *Alicia* appearing in the text, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, are indexed under that etymological form (II, 45). (There are of course other women called *Adaliz*, *Adelasia*, etc., named in the twelfth century, where the heading seems appropriate.) Likewise the much larger number called *Robertus* (very occasionally *Rodbert(us)*, etc.) are indexed under *Rodbert* (II, 71–3). In fact the editors wisely have not taken this approach to its logical conclusion, and Index 2 contains cross-references and entries for (identifiable) Alices, as well as one Adal-

¹ On this name see now Fiona Edmonds, 'Personal names and the cult of Patrick in eleventh-century Strathclyde and Northumbria', in *Saints' Cults in the Celtic World*, edited by S. Boardman (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 42–65 (pp. 43, 56 and 58).

haid, and for many Roberts (I, 352, 347, 455–7); but if we wish to track down all the people called Alice in the text, we have to go to the entry for *Adalhaid* in the Linguistic Commentary (II, 44–5). Latinised surnames are standardised to their Modern English translations; so most people surnamed *filius Decani* are indexed under *T* (for ‘(son of) The Dean’, I, 471; II, 278), with no cross-reference under *D* for Dean, although *Iohannes filius decani*, and deans in their own right, are indexed there (I, 383). By contrast, *Bernardus Nanus* is indexed under *D* (for Dwarf, not The Dwarf; I, 387). However, such inevitable anomalies are readily surmounted by reference to Index 1, which provides the correct word to seek in the standardised Index 2.

When it comes to the names of various Celtic origins, these attempts at standardisation have wisely been abandoned in many cases, though some signs of the policy appear: the common Anglo-Norman name *Brian* has been standardised as *Brían* (I, 368; II, 36), apparently because of a theory (not adopted here) that it is derived ultimately from the Irish name *Brían*. Russell rightly doubts that theory when it comes to the name used in twelfth-century England, where it was ultimately of Breton derivation instead. But by the time it came to England it was really a Norman-French name, whatever its ultimate derivation among their name-stock; so its use in the Durham manuscript really needs to be considered in that context, rather than among the names of Irish, Pictish and Welsh linguistic origins. The name *Uoenan* appearing among the *Reges vel duces* in the Original Core (fol. 15v.) has been standardised to Old Irish *Éoganán* in the Prosopographical Commentary (III, 82; with a non-existent cross-reference?), because it probably refers to a Pictish king; but not in the Linguistic Commentary (II, 43), where Russell has more cautiously retained the form of the name, pointing out (II, 7) the difficulties involved in interpreting a Pictish king’s name as Old Irish.

It is fair to say that the problems of categorisation and the prioritisation of etymology over usage are more apparent in the indexing than in the actual commentaries. It does not really matter where the etymology of a name such as Robert is discussed, provided the indexes lead us to both the discussion and the examples, and mostly they do so quickly and efficiently. However, the tenth-century man who appears as *Pureð eorl* on fol. 47v. in a memorandum of gifts of land made to St Cuthbert seems not to be indexed at all, so I do not know whether his name is analysed in the volumes; is he, for example, another *Pórðr*, though not mentioned in the discussion of that name (II, 240)? His absence is partly due to the fact that these two memoranda of tenth-century gifts of land (fol. 47v.; Sawyer, nos. 1659–60) seem not to be discussed anywhere in the three volumes (omitted from both Burton’s essay on the charters, and Piper’s

on the gifts), so the place-names in them are also ignored, except for being identified in the textual commentary (I, 254).

What is lost sight of in this treatment of personal names is the makeup of the groups of names entered in particular stints, and the analysis of the individual names as part of those groups. Although it is of great importance to know that names such as Alice and Robert are etymologically Continental Germanic in origin, it is equally important that they were names introduced into England at the Norman Conquest, and that they spread, and were used, as such. Therefore rather than (or in addition to) chapters discussing the names classified according to their linguistic origins, I should have wished for chapters such as 'The forenames in use in the twelfth-century stints', discussing the relationship of Scandinavian names, Old English names and Norman names among the population at that crucial period. What is at issue, therefore, is not whether philology is prioritised over prosopography, or vice versa, but that the philological investigation of each name should take place in the context of its companions within its group in the book, and that part of the aim of the philological investigation should be to understand the usages current among the different communities at various dates. To some extent the brief descriptions of the individual stints in the commentary on the text (I, 233–94), and likewise the introductory chapters to the Linguistic Commentary, do make a good start in that direction, and the editors might legitimately say that taking this approach further would have involved too much additional work, and that they have at least provided a secure basis for such future analysis.

As a much lesser, but still important, point, the creation of topographical surnames as a fifth category of surname, outside the conventional four of Nicknames, Occupational, Relationship, and Local (here Toponymic) names, seems to complicate matters unnecessarily. Topographical surnames have always been a poor relation of toponymic ones, partly because it has never been easy to produce significant numbers of unequivocal examples of the category; indeed, under many of the names listed in this category (II, 291–5) we are either directed to a different category, for example '**Bell**, see **Bell** (Nicknames)' and '**Brock**, see **Brock** (Toponymic names)', or the name is discussed but with the caveat that it may actually be another type of name, such as **Hay**, which could alternatively be a toponymic, a nickname, or a patronymic (II, 283). Additionally, there can sometimes be difficulty in differentiating clearly between a topographical and a toponymic surname, partly owing to the philosophical problem, 'Does *the bridge* count as a place-name?' Persons called Walter *atte Beare* and Walter *atte Forde* (Pillaton parish, Cornwall, 1327 Subsidy) both have topographical-looking surnames, but when we find that there are farms called Beria and Ford in that parish, both attested (as places) in 1200, the surnames become

toponymic ones. Of course the validity of the category is not in doubt. But rather than elevating it into a fifth fundamental type of surname, when the other semantic categories usefully embrace a variety of sub-types and even of grammatical formations (nicknames, for instance, covering sub-types from physical, moral or mental descriptions to verbal expressions and oaths: III, 24), and especially in view of the difficulty sometimes in distinguishing toponymic from topographic surnames, it seems more appropriate to group toponymic and topographical surnames together as one of the four main semantic categories. Alluding to the places where people lived or worked, this category then sits comfortably alongside the other three, alluding to people's occupations, family relationships and other descriptive characteristics. If no better term is available for the category, 'locational' would serve. 'Locative' is rejected by some because of the technical meaning of that word, referring to a grammatical case; however, within the context of surname studies, and particularly in the British Isles, there is no danger of ambiguity, and as an English word 'locative' is actually attested earlier in this broader sense than as a technical grammatical term. Or perhaps Reaney's 'local' is best, being simplest.

Anyone who spends £195 on these three volumes will be well rewarded; but they might justifiably be highly unamused to learn, perhaps on first opening the book (I, xi), that an earlier volume of essays, *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context*, edited by the Rollasons and others (2004; still available at £60) 'should be regarded as an essential companion to the present edition'. To be fair, the essence of the essays in that book which are specifically concerned with the Durham manuscript is largely repeated here; so it may be the seven essays on comparative material in that earlier book (including Keynes on the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, and Keats-Rohan on the necrology of Mont Saint Michel) which are intended by that remark. But in order to see the wood, rather than the individual trees, of this remarkable manuscript, I have found the essays in that earlier book sometimes more helpful than the new ones, some of which have doubtless been written with an awareness that a broad outline of the topic was already printed in the earlier book.

The point is illustrated by asking the basic question of the overall number of names in the manuscript, for I cannot see that the approximate total is given here. In the earlier volume Elizabeth Briggs said (p. 83) that the Original Core contained 3,120 names, presumably a more accurate figure than that of 2,819 given here (I, 7a), citing a reckoning made in 1923. The number of laypersons and secular clergy entered between 1085 and 1315 is given as 5,509 (III, 20b); with a further 1,688 non-monks entered in c.1300–1539 (III, 20n., citing the earlier essays). This gives a sub-total of 10,317, but that does not include the small number of persons entered between the creation of the Original Core and

1085, nor the figures for monks entered from 1083 to 1539. It would be understandable, but nevertheless a pity, if the amount of detailed work necessary, over many years, to produce this fine edition has meant that the overall shape of the project was sometimes lost to sight.

However, the main and lasting achievement is there—a sound edition of this dauntingly complex text, in all its anthroponymic richness, with ample explanatory material to make possible further studies, onomastic and other. Since it was a ground-breaking venture, problems of method were perhaps inevitable, and lessons can be learnt for future work on this kind of source. The experience of this edition will hopefully ensure that any future projects on this kind of source will build into their plans enough time for full linkage between the prosopographical and philological studies, so as to analyse the names within the contexts in which they appear, and the usages apparent within the groups themselves. Meanwhile there is a great deal to welcome and appreciate in the volumes offered here.

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DAVE POSTLES, *The North Through Its Names*, English Surnames Survey, vol. 8. Oxford: Oxbow, 2007. xii + 243 pp., £35 (ISBN 978-1-84217-176-9)

Forty years ago, the founders of the English Surnames Survey expressed the hope that it would eventually form the basis of a general history of English families, at every level of the social scale. It was felt that the study of surnames would throw new light on genealogy and social history, particularly on matters such as population movement and the expansion or decline of family names. David Postles enigmatically describes this present book as ‘a new departure’ in the Survey and ‘a move to its dissolution’, leaving us in doubt about what the future holds and setting himself, I feel, an almost impossible task.

The *Introduction* briefly examines what he defines as ‘northern-ness’ and then touches on some perceived characteristics of northern surnames. These are: the custom in parts of Lancashire of forming surnames with the suffixes *-daughter* or *-maugh*;¹ certain aspects of the influence of bastardy on surnames;² and the relationship between toponymic surnames and the localities where they originated. These subjects are familiar to us, of course, from vol-

¹ The suffix *-maugh* was not “circumscribed to southern Lancashire” as the author claims. Examples occur also in Cumberland and Yorkshire, and several for the West Riding were quoted in volume 1 of the English Surnames Series (1973).

² This is a topic dealt with in some depth in Redmonds, *Surnames and Genealogy: a new approach* (Boston MA, 1997; repr. Bury, 2002), pp. 104–114.