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Review Article

Names and People in the Thorney Liber Vitae

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The Thorney Liber Vitae, London, British Library, Additional MS 40,000, fols 1–12r: Edition, Facsimile and Study, edited by Lynda Rollason (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015). xxxii + 317 pp., 36 plates, 6 figures, 2 maps, £95 hbk. ISBN 978-1783270101.

This first edition of the full text of the Thorney Abbey Liber Vitae, one of only three surviving confraternity books from medieval England, substantially advances our understanding of the composition and role of confraternity books, of the range and origins of personal names in the upper classes of twelfth-century England and of the identities and interconnectedness of post-Conquest aristocratic and gentry families. It has been long in the making, partly because of the complexity of the task and partly because three of its originators passed away well before its completion. Olof von Feilitzen died in 1976, leaving an almost finished onomasticon of the personal (i.e. baptismal or given) names. Cecily Clark, to whom Feilitzen's manuscripts were passed, died in 1992, with her intended edition of the Liber Vitae far from complete. She had, however, published a number of papers on the text and its names, and Neil Ker (who died in 1982) had established the scribal stints in which the names of members of the Thorney confraternity had been recorded. The editorial role was eventually taken on by Lynda Rollason, with John Insley overseeing the final version of Feilitzen's onomasticon. Their collaboration in the 2007 edition of the Durham Liber Vitae provided, as Rollason puts it, both a spur to reviving the Thorney project and a model of how to do it. The wait has been worth it and much credit goes to those who helped to fund its research and printing costs, the Neil Ker Memorial Fund and the Marc Fitch Trust.

Editing and interpreting a *liber vitae* requires specialist knowledge of several kinds. Rollason has turned the sad loss of Feilitzen, Ker and Clark to advantage by recruiting some of the finest scholars in their fields to help bring the edition to fruition. Richard Gameson, who also contributed to the Durham edition, has helped Rollason finish the editing of the text and has written a detailed essay on the text's planning, production and palaeography and on the origins and contents of the tenth-century gospel book into which the Liber Vitae was inserted. Much new primary and secondary onomastic material has come to light since Feilitzen's death, and no-one is better qualified to have revised and updated his Onomasticon of personal names than John Insley, who is also largely responsible for the introductory essay on them. Katherine Keats-Rohan, the leading prosopographer of the Anglo-Norman period, has added to Feilitzen's and Clark's limited work on the identity of the confraters to produce a substantial Prosopography, as well as an introductory essay on the techniques and difficulties of interpreting the prosopographical data. There are shorter essays by Insley on the language of folios 9v1, 10r1a–d, and 10v; by Insley, Julia Crick and Tessa Webber on the language and palaeography of the 'Goldsmiths' entry'; by Rory Naismith on the entry for the moneyer, Thurstan of Stamford; and by Rollason on the Thorney Relic list on folio 11v. Rollason also provides an absorbing account of the history of the abbey and its *liber vitae*: why she thinks it was produced, the nature of its contents and how it compares with other *liber vitae* in England and on the continent. As with the edition of the Durham Liber Vitae there are full-colour images of the folios, recto and verso, but this time as plates within the volume, not on a separate DVD, while plates of black-and-white images of the same folios have been marked up to show the boundaries of the stints as numbered in the edition. These enable a reader to confirm or disagree with the transcription of any of the names, the dating of the hands and the composition of the stints.

From this summary it can be appreciated that the edition is a state-of-the-art achievement, a superb research tool, which honours and builds on the legacy of two of our greatest anthroponymists. In some respects it is indeed a completion and extension of what Feilitzen began, while in others it is still, and properly so, a work in progress. As Rollason and her colleagues acknowledge, many questions inevitably remain, especially around the

dating of stints, the etymologies of names, and the identities of individuals and families. This review is concerned with the treatment of the names, including the etymologies that are offered (or not, as the case may be), the interpretations they are given (or not) in the prosopographies and the means by which the edition attempts, sometimes with difficulty, to co-ordinate the contents of the Onomasticon and the Prosopography. There is much that has been gained from the Thorney Liber Vitae being given the ‘Durham’ treatment but it has also exposed some methodological issues that the edition does not quite come to terms with.

The value of the Thorney Liber Vitae for anthroponymists can easily be seen in the number of personal names for which this document is the earliest or only source in English records: 48 insular names, mostly Old English (OE), plus a few Old Norse (ON) names, seven of which have not been noted in Scandinavian sources, and a couple of Anglo-Scandinavian hybrids; and 41 Continental Germanic (CG) names, four of which have not been noted in continental sources (see the edition, pp. 54–5). Feilitzen also provides thorough and sometimes conclusive discussions of names whose etymologies have been inadequately or incorrectly explained in the past. In doing so he has corrected several doubtful etymologies that appear in Reaney and Wilson’s *Dictionary of English Surnames* (1991). *Gippe*, for example, is unlikely to be a variant of Middle English (ME) *Gibbe*, a pet form of *Gilbert* (Reaney and Wilson, s.n. Gipp) but is probably an Anglo-Scandinavian pet form of ON *Gípr* (an original byname from **gípr* ‘jaw’; edition, p. 193, A.6.46). Other improvements on Reaney’s etymologies include those for *Eward*, *Geruas*, *Godleof* (masc.) at **Godleof** (fem.), *Hunger*, *Inger*, *Urri*, *Randulf* and *Rimild*.¹ Some of the corresponding entries for these names in the *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names* (2016) repeat Reaney and Wilson’s explanations, which in the light of Feilitzen’s improved etymologies have now been corrected for future editions.

The exceptional range of Feilitzen’s knowledge of continental primary and secondary sources is evident in many of the commentaries. As an onomast I am irresistibly drawn to the seven personal names that have been

¹ Edition, A.2.57, A.5.32, A.3.84, A.2.114, A.2.120, A.2.151, A.2.162, A.2.171; Reaney and Wilson, s.nn. Ewart, Gervaise, Goodliff, Hunger, Inger, Hurry, Randal and Rimmell.

categorised as ‘Unassigned’ (A.7), especially **Halenald** (A.7.3), which Feilitzen discusses at length. It was borne by Bretons and Normans on the continent and in England and took a great variety of forms, appearing in the Thorney Liber Vitae as *Hanenannus*. In other records spellings like *Alenaldus*, *Halenad*, *Halnād*, *Hanalus*, *Hanela(l)d* and *Hanenaldus* all name a Breton tenant-in-chief of William the Conqueror. Feilitzen doubts previous views that it might be a variant of CG *Elinand*, and Kenneth Jackson told him that it cannot be satisfactorily derived from Celtic. One possibility, not considered by Feilitzen, is that it is CG **Alanwald*, inferred by Morlet (1971–85, I, 29a, under Alan-) as the etymon of *Alunaldus*, a name recorded *a.*1027 in Seine-Maritime (Vernier 1916, 41). Aspiration of the initial vowel is common in names of this period, and a derivation from **Alanwald* would provide a fairly simple onomastic and linguistic solution, although recorded names in *Alan-* (extensions of names in *Ala-*) are admittedly few in number and the overwhelming frequency of spellings with initial *H-* would make a better fit with a name with etymological *H-*, if one could be found.

Insley has edited Feilitzen’s Onomasticon as lightly as possible, sometimes re-ordering the sequence of comments, adding new information and carefully keeping his own opinions separate. Moments of disagreement are rare, as when Insley persuasively argues that *Auicz* at 3r19(10) is probably an Anglo-Norman spelling of OF *Aviz* (Latin *Avitius*) rather than OE *Æfic* and so lemmatises it as **Avice** (A.5.12) in the Latin personal name section (edition, p. 180); and that *Haganhild* is more likely to be Continental Germanic and belong with **Aganhild**, A.2.7, rather than with an Anglo-Scandinavian hybrid (edition, p. 142, A.2.93). Completing another scholar’s work is a delicate task and in an edition where several extra new hands are at work it is right to try and keep changes to a minimum. On the other hand, it can present editorial problems if, as here, the original work is being shoed into a different format.

The change in format means that Feilitzen’s single list of all the names in alphabetical order has been revised according to the Durham model, which organises names within seven linguistic categories: Celtic (Welsh, Irish and Breton); Continental Germanic; Old English dithematic; Old English monothematic; Latin, Greek and Biblical; Scandinavian; and Unassigned. It also entails a change in lemmatical conventions. From the

single surviving sheet in page proof of the onomasticon (with Clark's corrections), it is clear that Feilitzen was following the format that he used in the edition of the Winchester Domesday (Barlow *et al.* 1976), where he chose one of the manuscript spellings for the lemma.² Insley has, of course, followed the Durham practice, where the lemmata are normalised etymological forms, in the manner of a dictionary. One consequence is that the Onomasticon cannot act as its own index (as Feilitzen's original would have done), so the edition supplies a separate index (Index 1), which is an alphabetical list of all the personal names in their manuscript spellings (including those that function as relationship bynames, mostly patronymics), keyed to the etymological lemmata in the Onomasticon. Another consequence is that some of Feilitzen's text needed editing to fit the re-distribution of the onomastic data and the new explanatory structure. This has not been done as thoroughly as it might have been (a casualty of the light-touch editing policy, perhaps) and it leads, as we shall see, to inconsistencies within and between entries, which affect the choice of lemmata, the assignment of names to particular linguistic categories and the efficient functioning of the lemmatical system across the linguistic categories.

When name-forms are linguistically ambiguous, the Durham model requires cross-referencing between lemmata in different linguistic categories, but not all of Feilitzen's entries have been fully adapted. An instructive example is **Sigemund** (Old English dithematic, A.3.160), where the two instances of *Simund* are explained by Feilitzen as a reflex of one or other of four possible names, either OE *Sigemund* (chosen as the head form), ON *Sigmundr* (Old Danish *Sighmund*), CG *Sigimund*, or a ME variant of the Biblical name *Simon*. Following the Durham model **Sigmundr** is duly lemmatised in the Scandinavian section (A.6.104) with a cross-reference to the discussion at **Sigemund**, but a similar entry has not been supplied for **Sigimund** in the Continental Germanic section, while at **Simon** (A.5.74, where the instances of *Simon* are listed) there is neither a cross-reference to **Sigemund** nor any mention of the common confusion of *Simon* with the OE, ON and CG names.

² I am grateful to Peter Jackson, who edited a selection of Clark's writings (Jackson 1995), for allowing me to see a copy of the page proof.

Furthermore the Durham model separates the onomastic discussions from the prosopographical discussions, which are similarly organised into five categories (secular clergy; regular clergy; abbots and monks of Thorney; laity: royalty; laity: aristocracy, gentry), with the attendant need for cross-referencing both within the Prosopography and between the Prosopography and the Onomasticon. Cross-referencing between the onomastic and the prosopographical entries does occur, but haphazardly rather than regularly (in either direction). This is where Index 2 comes into its own; it is where all the onomastic and prosopographical lemmata are linked to their stint number, their alphabetical-numerical coding in the commentaries and the page numbers of the introductory essays where a name is mentioned. But I think that many readers will find the structure of the Durham model a complicated one to use, with its atomisation of the confraters and their names into numerous categories and sub-categories. Although effective in many ways, it can be laborious having constantly to switch to and fro between the text and the commentaries via the indexes, and it can be puzzling when the atomised elements have not been systematically co-ordinated across the volume or when, on the odd occasion, Feilitzen's work and Insley's revisions of it have not been adjusted to the requirements of the new format.

Thus a few of the names have been categorised inappropriately, including the following three that are in the 'Unassigned' section (A.7). The well-known alternative etymologies of **Alman** (A.7.1) are clearly stated by Feilitzen, and its appropriate location is either the Continental Germanic section (one man so named has a wife with a CG name) or the Old English section, with cross-references. For **Ærli** (A.7.2) Feilitzen states that 'no satisfactory etymology can be suggested', but he provides two hypothetical, but perfectly feasible, Old Norse or Anglo-Scandinavian etymons, which fit with his initial observation that 'final *-i* points to Scandinavian origin'. This is a less clear-cut case, but for readers interested in Old Norse etyma (attested or reconstructed), I think it would be more helpful to have this lemma in the Scandinavian section, while retaining all of Feilitzen's caveats. A third example is unequivocally in the wrong place. Insley convincingly identifies Feilitzen's unexplained **Rorgeis** (A.7.5) as 'a French variant of *Rorgo*, itself a variant of *Rorico*, ... a name of Continental Germanic origin'. It therefore belongs in the Continental Germanic section. On the other hand

a name that should have been in the Unassigned section is **Gerwas**, which is listed in the Latin, Greek and Biblical group at A.5.32, but Feilitzen is explicit that the etymology is unknown, and although he annotates it as ‘Middle Latin *Gervasius*’, this is a scribal form not an etymological one.

The most striking example of a misplaced name is *Lisias*, which is allocated to the Latin, Greek and Biblical section and lemmatised as **Lysias** (A.5.48). Feilitzen’s commentary begins by considering the Latin (Greek) name as a possible etymon, but then moves into a detailed demonstration that *Lisias* could alternatively be identical with *Lisius* or *Lisoius*, a CG name that was favoured in some Norman and Breton families. This must be the right explanation, since the man named *Lisias* occurs in stint 3r2, comprising relatives and affiliates of Alan de Craon, and he is identified by Keats-Rohan in the Prosopography as one of Alan’s brothers, who is elsewhere called *Lisoius* (E.37.1, p. 238, col. 2). Recurrences of *Lis(o)ius* in eleventh-century Anjou and in the Breton family of de Moutiers are remarked on by Feilitzen (Onomasticon, A.5.48) and by Keats-Rohan (Prosopography, E.37.1 and in other publications, Keats-Rohan 1999, 377, and Keats-Rohan 2002, 588–9). Noting that an eleventh-century French priest (in Le Mans) was called both *Lisoius presbiter* and *Lisiardus presbiter*, Feilitzen inferred that *Lisoius* was a pet form of *Lisiard* with the Romance hypocoristic suffix *-oi*. It is probably no coincidence, therefore, that a Liziard or Lesiard de Moutiers is recorded as either a grandson or great nephew of Lisoius de Moutiers, himself a nephew of the Lisoius de Moutiers (or de Monasteriis) who held land of the Conqueror before 1086 (Keats-Rohan 2002, 588–9, and Forssner 1916, 178). Alternatively *Lis(o)ius* could be a reflex of a CG **Lietswig*, *-wic*, *-wih*, a hypocoristic variant of *Leudwig*, *-wic*, *-wih* (Förstemann 1900–16, I, col. 1049, s.n. *Liudowicus*; Tavernier-Vereecken 1968, 184). It would have become *Lisoius* and *Lis(e)ius* through the same sound changes by which Feilitzen derives *Fulcoius* and *Fulcheius* from CG *Fulcwig*, *-wic*, *-wih* (A.2.63, **Fulcoius**). Indeed, Feilitzen’s discussion at **Fulcoius** cross-refers to **Lisoius** (in bold type), as though he intended it to be a lemma, but it is absent from the Onomasticon.

It is a pity that Keats-Rohan’s prosopographical identification of *Lisias* with *Lisoius* did not trigger a different editorial decision about which linguistic category it belonged to. It is one of several instances where lack

of co-ordination between linguistic and prosopographical discussions might leave the reader unaware of some relevant data or argument, or simply confused as to which interpretation to put their trust in. It reminds me of Cecily Clark's comment, when reviewing the edition of the Winchester Domesday (to which Feilitzen made a huge contribution in Barlow *et al.* 1976), that 'even here, where historians and linguists have set out to collaborate, the all-too-common imperfect sympathy between them is not quite exorcised' (Clark 1977, 86). The same problem was encountered in the editing of the Durham Liber Vitae (Rollason and Rollason 2007, I, xv–xvi), and in the Thorney volume Lynda Rollason repeats the point made there that differences in methods and conclusions between historians and linguists can be difficult to harmonise. She 'has not attempted to resolve these, but has rather believed that such differences will alert users of this volume to the complex problems which this text presents, and encourage others to pursue further the issues which the full publication of it raises' (p. xxxii). That is an honest admission that readers may have to do some work of their own to bridge the gaps that sometimes open up between onomastic and prosopographical treatments of individual names.

It is not a question of blaming either the editor or the contributors. A constructive dialogue between onomasts (especially of the etymological kind) and prosopographers is not always a practical option. The linguistic and historical disciplines that underpin their techniques are distinct and highly specialised, and it is rare for circumstances of time and place to enable meaningful conversations between scholars working in different fields. At the simplest level of consulting each other's published works, mutual understanding is hampered at times by the different conventions that etymologists and prosopographers adopt in standardising name-forms, which in turn influence their perception of a name's identity. In an edition where so much of the commentary is split between different lemmata in different categories, the discrepancies between lemmatical forms are an obstacle to easy cross-referencing. From a linguist's point of view part of the problem lies in the *ad hoc* fashion in which prosopographers standardise manuscript forms. One can understand a preference for name-forms that for one reason or another are familiar to us moderns, even if it entails a degree of linguistic inconsistency. Northern Norman French *Wido* in the manuscript

is persistently rendered in the Prosopography as **Guy** (its Central French form), but Central French (and southern Norman French) *Galterius* in the manuscript is always turned in the Prosopography into northern Norman French **Walter**. For names that are not in the modern name-stock there seems to be no principle at work. The Prosopography sometimes uses a standardised etymological form and sometimes not. Manuscript *Leuing* appears as **Leofing** (as it does in the Onomasticon) but *Wlketel(us)* remains unaltered as **Wlketel** (p. 215, A.2.17), making no attempt to link it to its more intelligible etymological form **Úlfketill** in the Onomasticon. The manuscript form *Almoth* is lemmatised as **Almoth** in the Prosopography at A.2.3 (and as ***Almóðr** in the Onomasticon, A.6.6) but in the accompanying commentary it is always spelled *Almod(us)*.

Rollason justifies these inconsistencies on the grounds that she has had to make compromises between the two lemmatical practices which, as she admits, might not satisfy everyone. If shuttling between the Prosopography and the Onomasticon sometimes proves to be a not entirely coherent experience it is also partly because the onomastic and prosopographical commentaries do not always communicate effectively with each other. For example, in the Onomasticon at A.3.114, the name of Abbot *Leofsinus* (alias *Lefsinus*) is listed at **Leofsigē**, which refers us to the Prosopography at both **Leofsigē** and **Leofsine** (C.1.3 and 4), but unhelpfully does not explain the documentary form with *-inus*. It looks like a hypocoristic of OE *Lēofsigē* with the OF suffix *-in*, but *-inus* is in fact a conventional Anglo-Saxon, pre-Conquest latinisation of names in *-i(g)*, which occurs on a number of occasions in Domesday Book (Feilitzén 1937, 125, §148). The abbot's real name was therefore *Lefsi* (OE *Lēofsigē*) not **Le(o)fsin* but the Prosopography (at C.1.4) insists on calling him *Leofsine* [*sic*] and does not recognise that this abbot's name was identical with that of the previous abbot, who is recorded as *Leofsi(us)* and *Lefsius* in the Liber Vitae (and is lemmatised in the Prosopography as **Leofsigē**). The manufactured distinction in name-forms has a useful referential value for prosopographers, but neither of the prosopographical commentaries acknowledges the synonymy or refers the reader to the Onomasticon at **Leofsigē**, which in its turn fails to supply what the prosopographies need, an explanation of the link between the manuscript form *Le(o)fsinus* and the lemma. To add to the appearance

(at least) of confusion, the prosopographical entry for **Leofsig** (C.1.3) remarks that ‘the name *Leofwin* in the list of early abbots in ThLV (10ra(13)) may refer to this man or perhaps his successor Leofsine ...’. It is not explained why or how this could be so, either in the Prosopography or in the Onomasticon (at **Leofwin**).

This is not the only instance where poor co-ordination of etymological and prosopographical discussions has arisen more from a lack of editorial interaction between them rather than unresolvable differences of method. Keats-Rohan remarks (Introduction, p. 59) that the mid-twelfth-century stint 2r11 is one of the few entries relating to a post-Conquest English family, that of *Touius de Lufeuuic* (Tovi of Lowick in Northants). She regards the interpretation of this stint as ‘very straightforward’ but onomastically it is not. Since Normans sometimes bore bynames from their English properties, and since Tovi’s wife Agnes and son Ralph bear ‘Norman’ names, the only evidence for the Englishness of Tovi and his family is his given name (Old Danish *Tōvi*). Feilitzen’s Onomasticon at A.6.122, however, points out that this name was also borne by two pre-Conquest Normans in Normandy and is contained in the place-name Le Mesnil-Tôve (Manche). Tovi of Lowick may well have had an Anglo-Scandinavian ancestry but it is not impossible that he was a Norman, named perhaps after a Norman grandfather or an English godparent, or was at least half Norman, if he acquired his name from a Norman ancestor’s English marriage. Inferences about ethnicity based on given names are never straightforward if they are not unambiguously supported by other evidence.

Disagreements about the onomastic and prosopographical identity of names can certainly be a healthy source of debate, leading to a better understanding of name usage and of the often tricky question of whether two or more name-forms could refer to the same or to different persons. I was surprised, however, at Keats-Rohan’s suggestion (Introduction, p. 65) that Oger de Lundonia, recorded in 1086 as a landholder in Huntingdonshire, was possibly identical with Orgar the Proud, who granted property in London in 1125 (Ekwall 1947, 56). *Oger* is an Old French form of CG *Odger*, and is a name borne by a number of Normans and Bretons in Anglo-Norman England (Forssner 1916, 197), while *Orgar* is a common late OE and ME reflex of OE *Ordgār*, as the Onomasticon at A.3.130 indicates

(compare Feilitzen 1937, 336, s.n. *Ordgār*). You could argue, if extra-linguistic evidence strongly supported it, that in the Domesday Book form the first *r* of *Orgar* was dissimilated (a phonetic change noted in other names in Feilitzen 1937, §70) or else omitted through scribal error, but if (as seems to be the case) conflation of the two names is the only ground for suggesting that they named the same man, forty years apart, it is an unconvincing one.

My comments on the treatment of names have mainly concentrated on the small details that typically worry ‘a pernicky philologist’ (as Cecily Clark disarmingly phrased it in her Winchester Domesday review). There is, however, one major cause of concern and regret. Unlike the editions of the Winchester Domesday and the Durham *Liber Vitae*, there is no onomasticon of bynames, even though a full treatment of them was part of Feilitzen’s and Clark’s original plans for the edition (Clark 1985, 65). The incorporation into Keats-Rohan’s Prosopography of Feilitzen’s occasional hand-written notes on the bynames and of the onomastic-cum-prosopographical observations in Clark’s 1985 *Nomina* article goes a little way to compensate for this, but it is an unsatisfactory compromise, which leaves a significant gap in the structure and content of the edition and which weakens the Prosopography in not having had access to expert linguistic opinion on the origins of all the bynames. How far such linguistic expertise would have influenced the prosopographical conclusions is another matter; it might have created some more editorial challenges.

Patronymics and metronymics are generally well served because the given names from which they derive are systematically discussed in Feilitzen’s Onomasticon (although cross-references to the Onomasticon from individual prosopographies are sporadic, not systematic). Explanation of other types of byname, however, is limited to whatever discussions happen to appear in the prosopographies, where their treatment is uneven, erratic and sometimes mistaken. Some prosopographies explicitly incorporate material from Feilitzen’s unpublished notes and Clark’s published articles on the *Liber Vitae*; the linguistic scholarship in these entries simply highlights its absence in others. Too often the identification of the place of origin of a toponymic byname is registered only in the modernised spelling of the lemma, with no discussion of the reasoning behind it or even (in the case of English toponyms) an indication of the county in which the place of

origin is situated. For bynames like *Clopton*, for which there are possible sources in several counties, it is especially unhelpful for identifications to be so vague. French toponyms fare much better, for Keats-Rohan is expert in the continental origins of Anglo-Norman families. Yet *de la Haye* (E.39) receives no comment either on its etymology or on the several places from which it might have been named in Normandy. For *de la Mare* (E.40) the prosopography begins: ‘The toponym “of the sea” is impossible to identify.’ Self-evidently so, but Old French *mare* denotes ‘pool, lake’, not ‘sea’ (which is OF *mer*), and the byname almost certainly alludes to one of the many French places called La Mare, probably in this context one of those in Normandy (notably Seine-Maritime and Eure).

Linguistic and onomastic imprecision detracts from prosopographical clarity. At **Lithware** (E.77.1) are mentioned ‘grants of fisheries and land in Welle (Cambs)’ but there is no place in Cambridgeshire currently called *Welle*. What the reader requires is a reference to Upwell and Outwell (formerly both one place called *Welle*) in *EPNS Cambridgeshire* (pp. 276 and 288). The entry for **Faucillon** (E.48.1) concludes: ‘Around 1185, a William Faucillon granted to the same land in Terling, in a part to which his family gave its modern name of Fawsley.’ Terling is in Essex (this is not mentioned) but as far as the current Ordnance Survey maps are concerned the ‘modern’ name *Fawsley* belongs exclusively to a village in Northamptonshire. The reader needs directing to *EPNS Essex* (p. 297), where Reaney records the O.S. name in his time as (Great and Little) Farsley (not Fawsley) and adds that Gilbert Faucillon (probably the Gilbert of the Thorney Liber Vitae) was one of its owners. Identifying the site of the Faucillon manor on the modern map is now impossible. Great and Little Farsley have disappeared from the current O.S. maps, which record Great Farsley in Terling as *Taylor’s Farm*, presumably after William Taylor, who is recorded as a late eighteenth-century tenant (London Metropolitan Archives, MS 11936/392/612869); Little Farsley may now be known as Farding’s Farm, but I am not sure of this.

As Keats-Rohan says herself (Introduction, p. 75): ‘With much more time and labour, more of these stints could be analysed in terms of people and events; it is with regret that the task has to be abandoned here’. Time, as ever, is the enemy of perfection, and twelfth-century prosopography is an

exceptionally difficult area of historical research. If some prosopographies are incomplete or open to disagreement, that is what scholarship thrives on, and anyone wanting to use the Thorney Liber Vitae in their own research will be immensely grateful for Keats-Rohan's substantial and often original and illuminating contribution, not only to an understanding of the contents of this particular *liber vitae* but to her development of new techniques for interpreting the prosopography of stints in this and similar documents. It is disappointing, however, that accurate linguistic identification of names has not been systematically built into the prosopographical methodology. It is evident, for example, in the prosopographies of persons with bynames that there has been no consistent consultation of basic etymological reference works, such as Ekwall's or Watts's English place-name dictionaries, the English Place-Name Society county volumes, Reaney's and Wilson's *Dictionary of English Surnames* (now superseded by the *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*), and the principal etymological dictionaries for continental place-names and surnames. Such references as there are mostly derive from Feilitzen's surviving notes and Clark's published articles.

There are also signs of a temptation to disregard the linguistic implications of a byname if it does not coincide with preferred prosopographical hypotheses. The byname of *Vmfred(us) Emmestun()* *cl(er)icus* (written in a beautifully clear hand, as one can see in the plate for folio 11r) sits in the middle of a three-man stint, in which the other two men are associated with land in Helpston (Northants). As Clark pointed out, the only English place-names whose medieval forms correspond satisfactorily with *Emmestun* are Broadhempston and Little Hempson, both in Devon. Since no territorial or family connection with Devon is known for any of the three men, Keats-Rohan concludes: 'it seems clear that this toponym is a cacography for *Helpestona*, Helpston, Northants' (p. 214, A.2.7 **Humphrey, clerk of Helpston**). An appeal to cacography is hard to justify unless there is some likelihood that the manuscript has been carelessly produced (but the handwriting in the Liber Vitae is clear and careful) or that its source materials were unintelligible to the scribe. Cacography in medieval texts normally arises in the copying process, from the misinterpretation of similar-looking letters, suspension marks, abbreviation signs, ambiguous spelling

conventions or extraneous pen-strokes. I am puzzled as to how *(H)elpe~~stun~~(~~)~~ could have been miswritten as *Emmestun*(~~)~~.

If the byname really is from a place-name reasonably close to Thorney Abbey and its known catchment area (for which see Clark 1985), one could possibly argue a case for Armston (in Polebrook, Northants), which is recorded as *Armestun* in 1140 and *Ermeston* in 1227, and which was the source of a minor gentry surname: *Johannem de Armeston*’, 1296 in the *White Book of Peterborough* (Raban 2001, relating to Polebrook hundred, Northants); *Henry de Armiston*, 1301, *Thoma Armeston*, 1525 in Northants Subsidy Rolls (Polebrook, Northants); *Walter de Ermeston*’, 1370 in Feet of Fines (Notts; no.428); *William Armeston*’, 1388, *Clement Armeston*’, 1506 in Feet of Fines (Northants; nos 112 and 145). A phonetic assimilation of *-rm-* to *-mm-* probably has to be ruled out, since there seems to be no evidence for such a change in this or other English place-names with *-rm-*. However, a copying error of <mm> for <rm> by the clerk who entered the names in this stint could have arisen from a badly formed or partly obscured <r> in his original.³ This hypothesis might carry some weight if it were known that Thorney Abbey or any of its confraters had connections with Armston, but I am not aware of any evidence for this.

One should be extremely cautious in correcting the form of a name that is unambiguously written and linguistically intelligible, and in the present context this is especially relevant. Misnaming would be an embarrassing fault in a book of life, where the names of the confraters were the sole record of their owners’ right to be remembered and prayed for. The naming of the earl of Hertford as *comes de Hereford* at 2r35(15) is not an exception to the rule; it is not an error or ‘misrepresentation’, as stated in the Prosopography at E.63.1 *Hereford* is a recorded twelfth-century variant of *Hertford* (*EPNS Hertfordshire*, 225) and was probably an alternative development of OE *Heorotford*, whose weakly stressed second syllable *-rot-* was in these instances simplified to *-re-* before *-ford* instead of the more usual *-rt-* or *-rte-*. The same point applies to *Os(er)n(us) capellan(us) de Hereford*, 10v16(1), where on formal grounds the reference could be to Hereford but

³ For examples of mid-twelfth-century <r> see Johnson (1915, 41), especially nos 4 and 6.

is more likely to Hertford, given that another name in the stint is *Reinald(us) de Huntedone* (Huntingdon).

Cacography is doubtfully invoked again at E.142.1, **Alan of Woodstone**. The written form of the byname at 1v3(10) is *de uuesd()*, which Keats-Rohan associates initially with Ousden (Suffolk), convincingly so if *uuesd()* is interpreted as *Uvesd(en)*.⁴ In that case the lemma would have been **Alan of Ousden**. Keats-Rohan's preference for **Woodstone** relies on a reading of the name as *de UUESd()*, which she explains as 'possibly a cacography for the abbey's manor of Woodstone, Hunts'. Given that other persons named *de W(o)deston* appear in the Liber Vitae and the Thorney Abbey cartulary (as a witness to a grant of confraternity), identifying *UUESd()* with Woodstone is an attractive option but only if good linguistic grounds can be found for it. For the reasons given earlier, I think it is unlikely to be a scribal error for *Wodeston* but it could be an alternative form of it. There is evidence for the relevant vowel alternation in some of the early spellings of the name in *EPNS Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire* (p. 229): *Wydestun*, *Wudestun* 973 (c.1300–25) in the Thorney Abbey Cartulary, and *Wedeston* 1201 in Curia Regis Rolls, which support an etymology containing OE *widu* 'wood' alternating with its mutated variant *wudu*. Feilitzen's notes mention a Ralph *de Wesden* in a charter of 1190. What this spelling and its orthographic variant *UUESd()* may represent is a simplified pronunciation of *Wedeston* as /wedsun/ or /wedsən/, metathesized to /wesda:n/.

One of the occasional frustrations I have in using the edition is that not all names are indexed in their manuscript spellings. Index 1, as already mentioned, is an alphabetical list of all the personal names in their manuscript spellings, keyed to the lemmata in the Onomasticon. The absence of a byname onomasticon, however, means that there is no corresponding index for byname spellings. Index 2 is a general finding list for all the onomastic and prosopographical lemmata, their stint numbers, their code number in the commentaries and any references to names in the essays, by page number. Also included are the manuscript forms of bynames

⁴ The place-name appears to be a compound of the genitive singular of OE *ūf* 'owl' + *denu* 'valley'; see Ekwall (1960, s.n. Ousden); Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 106–7).

and descriptors (like *heort* and *presbiter*) but only those that are not lemmatised in the commentaries. Consequently if you are working from the text of the Liber Vitae and look for *emmestun()* or *uuesd()* in Index 2 to see where they are explained or otherwise discussed you will not find them, unless you already know, or somehow guess, that *emmestun()* has been prosopographically lemmatised as **Helpston** and *uuesd()* as **Woodstone**. The same problem arises with many other bynames, mostly toponymic, where the relationship between the manuscript form and its prosopographical lemma (often one of its modern surname or place-name forms) is not immediately obvious to anyone unfamiliar with the relevant scholarship.

The lack of a byname onomasticon creates other instances of discontinuity and disjointedness. *Nicole* at 1v10(3) is a common twelfth-century form of *Lincoln*, but its bearer has no prosopography, so it appears in the index as an isolated, unexplained manuscript form. One might have expected a cross-reference to the indexed form ‘Lincoln’ or the prosopographical lemma **Lincoln** but this refers not to a byname in the Liber Vitae but to prosopographical inferences for a layman simply named *Jol* at 9v3(1) and two clerics with the descriptor *episcopus* at 10r1a(8 and 9). The byname of *Joh(annne)s Gurdan* at 1v10(6) is indexed as ‘Gurdan’, with no italics, as though it were also a lemmatical form, but this spelling of the given name does not appear in the Onomasticon entry for **Jordan** at A.5.39, where it belongs. Somehow this variant of the given name slipped under the editorial radar. These long indexes, which are essential aids to using the edition, have been produced to a high degree of accuracy, however, and absence of a name or a descriptor from Index 2 in either its manuscript or lemmatical guise is rare. I have noticed only the husband of *Godgiue uxor Petri cem(en)tarii* at 3r20(1), who is missing from the index at ‘Peter’, and there is no indexing of *cementarius* (or mason).

This review of the Thorney Liber Vitae edition is not the place to make up for the missing byname onomasticon, but it may be useful to comment on three incomplete or doubtful byname explanations in the Prosopography.

(1) **E.42.1 Robert Disci**. Feilitzen’s notes point out that the derivation of this surname from Diss in Norfolk (endorsed, for example, by Mason (2004) in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*) is untenable. Early

spellings of the place-name in Watts (2004, 188), like *Dice* (1086), *Dic* (1130) *Dize* (1158), *Disze* (1190) and *Disce* (1191), point to Old English *dic* ‘ditch’, with the final consonant [ʃ] modified first to [ts] and then to [s]. There is no evidence in the place-name forms for the final *-i* of the surname, which in any case is also frequently rendered in records contemporary with this stint (dated 1176–93) as *de Di(s)ceto*. Robert’s father Ralph *Disci*, *de Disci* or *de Diceto* was dean of St Paul’s in London. There are no English or French place-names for which *de Diceto* would be an etymologically correct form. So what can it be? A plausible explanation was suggested long ago by Bishop Stubbs (Stubbs 1876, 1, xvii) that *de Diceto* was a scribal invention for a surname derived from one of three places in Maine (now in Sarthe), Dissay-sur-Courcillon (*Disiacum*, 11th cent.), Dissé-sur-Ballon (*de Diceio* 1182) and Dissé-sous-le-Lude (*Disceium* 1182). To these could be added Dizy-le-Gros (in Aisne, *Disiacum* 907) and Dizy-Magenta (in Marne, *Disiacum* c.662). All are derived from a personal name *Dis(s)ius* + *-acum* (Dauzat and Rostaing 1963, s.nn. Dicy, Dizy, and Morlet (1971–85, III, 81a). In giving *de Diceto* as its Latin form the scribes were perhaps mistakenly interpreting (*de*) *Disci* as analogous with Anglo-Norman surnames like *Cheyney* (*de Cheney*, *de Cheyny*, *de Cheinnei*, *de Chesneto*, *de Caisneto*), where final *-ei*, *-i*, or *-y* derives from the Old French reflex of the Latin collective suffix *-ētum*. It is from one or more of the places named with late Latin *casnetum* ‘oak grove’ (Dauzat-Rostaing (1963), s.nn. Chaignay, Quesnay; *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names*, s.n. Cheyney).


(2) **E.6.1 Ralph Barry**. The prosopography for Radulfus *Barri* (c.1141–2) labels him as ‘unidentified’, but compares him with later men with the same byname (‘which occurs also as Barre and Barry’) in the thirteenth-century *Book of Fees*. They include tenants of the de Stutevilles in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and fee-holders of various honours in Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. The entry could also have noted that the byname occurs earlier as *Barr(i)et* and that it derives from Old French *barré*, Anglo-Norman **barr(i)et*, **barré*, **barri* (Latin *barratus*) ‘striped’, with reference perhaps to striped clothing or to a piece of horizontally striped cloth worn around the helmet for identification in battle. The word came to be used in heraldry for a field horizontally divided by strips of alternating colour. The seal of Galfridus Barry, lord of Teversal

(Notts), on a charter dated 1244, was ‘barry of eight or ten with a file of ten labels’. This name is to be distinguished from the toponymic byname *de Barri*, borne by the Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan family of the chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis (*Oxford Dictionary of Family Names*, s.n. Barry).

I think therefore that Radulfus Barri (c.1141–2) may have been identical with the Rad(ulfus) Barret who held fees in Nottinghamshire of the barony of Crick (Derbys) in 1130 (*Pipe Roll of 31 Henry I*), and perhaps the Rad(ulfus) Barre, who was a witness to the foundation charter of Welbeck Abbey (Notts) in 1153 (*Dukery Records*, p. 256). A later Radulfus Barre held land in Teversall in 1204 (*Pipe Rolls*) and this man was certainly related to Will(eltu)s Barry who, according to the Nottinghamshire section of the *Rotuli Hundredorum*, held one fee of Robert de Stutevill’ in Teversall in 1275, of right ‘since the Conquest’, and probably to Galfridus Barre or Barriet, who held fees in Nottinghamshire in 1166 of the Crick Barony (*Red Book of the Exchequer*) and in 1177 (*Pipe Rolls* and *Chancellor’s Roll*: the former gives *Barre*, the latter *Barriet*). A later Galfridus Barre (1242–3 *Book of Fees*) held five parts of a fee of John de Stutevill in Nottinghamshire, probably including Teversall. That the Ralph Barri of the Thorney Liber Vitae was a member of this family seems highly likely, although his relationship to other family members is unknown.

(3) **E.48.1 Robert Faucillon.** The name-forms are Rodb(er)tus *Falceliun* at 2v12; Rodb(er)t(us) *Faucillun*, Roger *Faucillun*, Hugo *Faucill(un)*, Helta *Faucill(un)*, Albericus *Faucill(un)* and Gileb(er)t(us) *Faucill(un)* at 2v5. The byname is explained as ‘a diminutive derived from *faucher* “to reap” (Morlet 1991, p. 399)’, but Morlet’s explanation is unconvincing, oddly so since Morlet must have known of a far more likely etymology from her own, earlier monograph on Continental Germanic personal names (Morlet 1971–85, I, 87b), which identifies *Falchilo* as a hypocoristic form of CG names in *Falh-*, as does Förstemann (1900–16, I, col. 495 at FALHA-). This Anglo-Norman family name is surely Old French *Faucillon -un*, the cas-régime of *Falchilo*.

There are a tiny number of slips and misprints. With reference to Cecily Clark, the Preface, p. xxix, n. 3, reads ‘Peter Johnson, her literary executor’. It should read ‘Peter Jackson’. In the commentary on Continental Germanic

Personal Names, p. 147 at A.2.137, the lemma ‘Margot (fem.)’ has a wrong gender attribution. *Margot* (of which the manuscript form *Margos* is probably a nominative form) is an Old French reflex of a CG name in *-gōt*, as Feilitzen’s commentary makes clear. On page 182, at A.5.40, ‘*DECN*, p. 1834’ should read ‘*DECN* p. 183’. On page 210, col.1, commenting on *-nap* as a variant of the Old English theme *-nōþ* with the vowel shortened, the phonetic symbol [] is presumably a printer’s error for [ɑ], i.e. cardinal vowel no. 5. For [o:] shortened to [ɑ], see Hogg (1992), p. 228. Index 2 at **Tovi** refers us to p. 304 for a mention of Tovi the Proud; it is an error for p. 204 (at A.6.122).

Pointing out errors, expressing misgivings about some aspects of the methodology and some of the conclusions, and even complaining about a significant omission in the onomastic apparatus are the critical luxuries of a reviewer who did not have to spend years researching a highly complex document or pulling together a large quantity of disparate, specialist contributions into a coherent whole within a limited time-frame. My overriding response to this combination of work completed and work in progress is one of admiration and gratitude for the stimulus it creates for future research. It is an editorial and scholarly *tour de force* that makes a major contribution to studies of the clerical and lay upper classes in twelfth-century England, their names, their affiliations and their religious records. The volume has been beautifully produced by Rollason and the Boydell Press and is a physical and intellectual pleasure to handle and to explore.

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