JOURNAL OF THE ENGLISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY

Volume 49

2017

including the 93rd Annual Report
for the year 2017

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PAUL CAVILL
REBECCA GREGORY

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ISSN 1351-3095
Nottingham 2018

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ABBREVIATIONS OF COUNTIES AND EPNS COUNTY SURVEYS

Co	Cornwall
Ha	Hampshire
He	Herefordshire
K	Kent
La	Lancashire
Nb	Northumberland
Sf	Suffolk
So	Somerset
Wt	Isle of Wight

CPNE	*Cornish Place-Name Elements*
EPNE	*English Place-Name Elements*, Parts **1** and **2**
PN BdHu	*The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire*
PN Brk	*The Place-Names of Berkshire*, Parts **1**, **2** and **3**
PN Bu	*The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*
PN Ca	*The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*
PN Ch	*The Place-Names of Cheshire*, Parts **1**–**5**
PN Cu	*The Place-Names of Cumberland*, Parts **1**, **2** and **3**
PN D	*The Place-Names of Devon*, Parts **1** and **2**
PN Db	*The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, Parts **1**, **2** and **3**
PN Do	*The Place-Names of Dorset*, Parts **1**–**4**
PN Du	*The Place-Names of County Durham*, Part **1**
PN Ess	*The Place-Names of Essex*
PN ERY	*The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York*
PN Gl	*The Place-Names of Gloucestershire*, Parts **1**–**4**
PN Hrt	*The Place-Names of Hertfordshire*
PN Le	*The Place-Names of Leicestershire*, Parts **1**–**7**
PN Li	*The Place-Names of Lincolnshire*, Parts **1**–**8**
PN Mx	*The Place-Names of Middlesex* (apart from the *City of London*)
PN Nf	*The Place-Names of Norfolk*, Parts **1**–**3**
PN Nt	*The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire*
PN NRY	*The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire*
PN Nth	*The Place-Names of Northamptonshire*
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Reviews

Carole Hough, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016). ISBN 978-0-19-965643-1. Hardback, xxiii + 771 pp., 33 figures. £95.00

Making sense of names

Peter McClure

This is the latest in the OUP handbooks in linguistics, for which Carole Hough has recruited forty-three authors to write forty-seven chapters, grouped in seven Parts: I, Onomastic Theory; II, Toponomastics; III, Anthroponomastics; IV, Literary Onomastics; V, Socio-onomastics; VI, Onomastics and Other Disciplines; and VII, Other Types of Name (of aircraft, animals, astronomical objects, dwellings (mainly houses), railway engines and trains, and ships). The chapters are all in English but they deal with names from a broad range of (mostly European) languages, while the contributors themselves are drawn from Scotland, England, Ireland, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the USA and South Africa. It is a giant of a book, 771 pages long, including a 95-page bibliography, a not entirely comprehensive subject index and an index of languages, but not an index of names, which is a pity. Nor does it have a glossary of technical terms, which would have been advisable if OUP were serious in its claim that the handbook is intended to be 'accessible to the general reader'. Some of the terms used, like *onymic* and *taphonym,* are rare enough to have not yet found a place in the OED. The volume has been well edited by Hough, assisted by Daria Izdebska, and I have noticed very few errors. On p. 138, paragraph 5 'Old High German *Luog*' is said to denote 'whole, burrow, hallow'; it should read 'hole, burrow, hollow'. On p. 542, last line of 38.3.1, the cross-reference to '38.3.1' should read '38.4.1'. On p. 640, line 9, 'She' should read 'He' (the reference is to Leslie Dunkling). In the chapter on settlement names Figure 6.1 (Place-names in Britain from OE *mynster* 'large church, minster' and its reflexes) includes two examples of Yorkshire churches

named 'The Minster' (at York and Beverley) and *Minster acres*, the name of an eighteenth-century house in Co. Durham used as a Christian retreat centre. These are not settlement names and are probably an unintended consequence of using digital software to create a distribution map from an Ordnance Survey digital database.

For anyone daunted by the size of the book, Hough's introduction provides an excellent summary of each part and each chapter. The *Handbook*'s scope is too large for me to do justice to all the contributions, for which I apologise to those authors who through no fault of their own get only the briefest mention or none at all. I shall begin by discussing the scope and coherence of the *Handbook*, and then give my responses to two of the *Handbook*'s major themes: names and meaningfulness (in relation to given names, bynames, nicknames, forms of address and names in literature); and the benefits of a systematic approach to personal names and place-names, especially through the development of electronic databases.

I

For readers of this journal who would like a pointer to the chapters most relevant to British onomastics, I would single out those by Simon Taylor on 'Methodologies in place-name research' (pp. 69–86), Carole Hough on 'Settlement names' (pp. 87–103) and Peter Drummond on 'Hill and mountain names' (pp. 115–24); Patrick Hanks and Harry Parkin on 'Family names' (UK and worldwide: pp. 214–36); George Redmonds on 'Personal names and genealogy' (English given names and family names: pp. 279–92); Ellen Bramwell on 'Personal names and anthropology' (given names worldwide: pp. 263–78); Margaret Scott on 'Names and dialectology' (mostly illustrated by British place-names: pp. 488–501); and Alison Grant on 'Names and lexicography' (British toponyms and anthroponyms: pp. 572–84). They provide first-rate introductions to these topics and to current research methodologies, with a clarity of focus and presentation that would make them ideal for student reading at first and second degree level. I also very much enjoyed Peder Gammeltoft's two chapters on 'Island names' (pp. 125–34) and 'Names and geography' (not limited to British names: pp. 502–12), Guy Puzey's essay on 'Linguistic landscapes (not limited to British names: pp. 395–411), Richard Jones's essay on 'Names and archaeology' (English place-names and field-names: pp. 467–75), Gillian Fellows-Jensen's on 'Names and history' (English place-names: pp. 513–24), Richard Coates's on 'Names and historical linguistics' (all types of name, not limited to British: pp. 525–39) and Andreas Teutsch's on 'Names and law' in different parts of the world (pp. 554–71), a complex

subject that is discussed with subtlety and lucidity. I also recommend reading the six chapters in the final Part (from 'aircraft' to 'ships'). Although they might seem to be just a random selection of minor or peripheral topics, they elucidate motivational aspects of naming in western cultures in an especially vivid way. Guy Puzey, Katharina Leibring, Marc Alexander, Adrian Koopman, Richard Coates and Malcolm Jones take the credit.

I have so far mentioned barely half of the chapters, which from the reputation of their authors should be more than enough to whet the appetite of anyone with an interest in place-names and personal names, but they give only a limited picture of the varied character and value of the work as a whole. According to the Preface its aim is 'to provide an up-to-date account of the state of the art in different areas of name studies, in a format that is both useful to specialists in related fields and accessible to the general reader', while 'the main focus is on general principles and methodologies, with case studies from a range of languages and cultures' (p. vii). The overall structure of the volume, as defined by the titles of its seven Parts, gives an impression of comprehensive coverage. There are many chapters that fit the bill perfectly, but also some substantial gaps in coverage and occasionally some superficiality of treatment that in no way represents 'the state of the art'. A lack of coherence within and between some of the chapters is another occasional frustration.

Before I give examples, let me acknowledge that the causes of some of my criticisms lie not with the authors or the editors, but in the nature of the enterprise, which has less in common with a collaborative manual or textbook, where a group of authors write to fulfil an agreed, systematic plan, and more in common with an international symposium, where invited scholars independently offer what they wish and what they can within the constraints of a publishing deadline. Inevitably there are gaps, inconsistencies and contradictions, and readers are left to make their own comparisons, contrasts and syntheses, which is no bad thing in itself. Whether one reads the chapters sequentially or randomly, the somewhat uncoordinated juxtapositions of varied approaches (taxonomies, methodologies, surveys of published literature, general studies and case studies), which at the same time focus on disparate linguistic corpora, keep your brain alert and make you do your own thinking. The haphazard omissions, overlaps or repetitions of subject matter are accidents in a bran tub of pleasures and, admittedly, a few disappointments.

The diversity of the *Handbook* is its strength and its weakness. The international mix of the chosen contributors is stimulating. The histories and taxonomies of names vary between countries that have different

linguistic and cultural heritages, and there is much to be gained from seeing a topic treated from a perspective that is different from one's own. On the other hand, by trying to do too many different things in a not entirely systematic way, the *Handbook* risks promising more than it actually delivers. For example, the chapter on settlement names by Hough is centrally concerned with English toponyms, but the chapter on field and other landscape names (ch. 10, 'Rural names' by Julia Kuhn, pp. 135–43) deals mainly with toponyms in Switzerland. It is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between them. Both authors are sensitive to the linguistic narrowness of their chosen corpus of names and sprinkle their text with examples from elsewhere. Hough includes a few from Scandinavia, Russia, Greece and Morocco. Kuhn mentions some English-language instances, but they are drawn from an unexpected source, *Place-Names of the Isle of Man* (Broderick 1994–2004) and are not typical of English field-names in general. You would not gather from this handbook that field-name research in Britain and Ireland is a well-established discipline and that the collection of new data and the development of more refined methodologies are alive and well in the work of recent UK postgraduates and in current research projects in Britain and Ireland.

From a UK and Irish perspective of field-name research the *Handbook* can hardly be said to provide an 'up-to-date account of the state of the art'. This is not a criticism of Kuhn's chapter, which offers a clear account of the semantics and morphology of her chosen corpus of names and on methods of collection. Her final section, 10.5, makes the telling point that rural names are among the most threatened name types, for rapid changes in land use and management make them more transient and less likely to be preserved in official records. Systematic collections of rural names are often unavailable, and she emphasizes the urgency of collecting spoken or handwritten forms before the memory of them is lost for good (p. 143).

It is good to have case studies alongside more general treatments of a subject but ideally they should complement each other, not substitute for or duplicate one another. What is missing and what is redundant sometimes coincide. For instance, street name history is represented by Bertie Neethling's case-study of the political re-naming of streets in post-apartheid South Africa (Part II, ch. 11, pp. 144–57). It is a useful and original piece of research but its focus is hardly distinguishable from that in Puzey's essay on linguistic landscapes (Part V, Socio-onomastics, 27.4.2, pp. 404–408), which treats the important topic of political re-naming (including examples from South Africa) more succinctly and more powerfully within the wider context. This repetition of subject matter sharpens the disappointment that there is no chapter on the historical

taxonomy of street names, whether in a single country or more broadly in the western world. There is no cross-referencing between the two chapters. This follows the usual practice in the book (though there are some exceptions) and seems to be a tacit admission that authors were unaware of the overlap of material. The subject index does in part make up for this, the relevant page references for both chapters appearing under 'politics, political'.

The overall structure of the volume, as defined by the titles of its seven Parts, gives an impression of comprehensive coverage, as do many of the chapter titles, but the content is often narrower than the titles imply. In Part VI, chs 36 'Names and history' (Gillian Fellows-Jensen) and 32 'Names and archaeology' (Richard Jones) deal with place-names and say nothing of the role of personal names as evidence of settlement and migration history or of the problematic nature of trying to reconcile the inferences of anthroponymists with those of archaeologists and prosopographical historians. The desirability, but frequent difficulty, of harmonising the methods and findings of onomastic research with those of other disciplines is a central concern of anthroponymy, and the absence of a chapter on this is a matter of regret. Personal names are also unaccountably missing from Hough's discussion of the specifics of English settlement-names (ch. 6).

Part VI is named 'Onomastics and Other Disciplines' but we sometimes have to understand 'discipline' more loosely as 'subject'. Fellows-Jensen's chapter, for example, is not an essay about the relationship between the onomastic and the historical disciplines but a brief history of place-names in England. As such it is as clear and readable a history of English place-names as you could wish to find (working backwards from nineteenth-century Manchester to Roman and pre-Roman Britain), even if the need for brevity has led her to assert rather than argue her case that Danelaw place-names in *-by* are probably post-Viking re-namings of existing Anglo-Saxon settlements (p. 517). The older, Cameronian interpretation that they are new settlements on less attractive land than neighbouring settlements in Old English *-hām* and *-tūn*, is asserted with equal confidence in Hough's chapter (p. 99). Both chapters fully justify the Preface's claim that the handbook provides studies that are 'accessible to the general reader' (p. vii) but they neither acknowledge nor attempt to reconcile the differences in their narrative of Danelaw settlement history. Many other chapters are more uncompromisingly intended for specialists, including Kay Muhr's scholarly and beautifully crafted case study 'Place-names and religion: a study of Christian Ireland' (Part VI, ch. 41, pp. 585–602). In this case the precision of the title (place-names, not personal names, and in Christian Ireland, not in Christian and non-

Christian Europe or elsewhere) draws attention to what is missing on 'religion' in Part VI. It highlights the uneven coverage of topics in the *Handbook*, including religion, and the occasionally arbitrary way in which chapters have had to be allocated within its seven Parts.

It goes without saying (except for the general reader, perhaps) that religion has played a massive role in the creation of place-names and personal names in many parts of the world, but its treatment in the *Handbook* is unbalanced. There is much on religion in personal names, especially in Part III 'Anthroponomastics', but little on religion in place-names. Finding the relevant passages is not easy, either, for the subject index lists only 'pagan names' (mainly in the toponymic chapters by Hough, Richard Jones and Muhr), 'Jews' (especially in ch. 13) and 'godparents' (in chs 14 and 19). It has no entries for 'religion', 'Christian(ity)', 'pre-Christian', 'christianising', 'Islam(ic)', or 'Muslim', an indexing of whose page numbers would have sent one to the extensive discussions of religious influence on personal names in Leibring's wide-ranging and lucid essay, 'Given names in European naming systems' (Part III, ch. 14, pp. 199–213) and in Edwin Lawson's compendium of contributions from fifteen different authors on 'Personal naming systems' (ch. 13, pp. 169–98). In addition, Taylor (p. 72) mentions 'increasing christianizing of the landscape' in relation to the re-naming of the Scottish place-name *Deer*; Hanks and Parkin (pp. 214, 226 and 233) refer to quasi-surnames in 'the Islamic world' and to Muslim, Hindu and Sikh family names in the Indian subcontinent; Koopman (p. 637) gives prominence to the re-naming of a house in South Africa because of a religious experience; and Malcolm Jones (p. 656) illustrates the extent to which the motivation behind the naming of medieval English ships (in a list dated 1338) was overwhelmingly religious. The inadequacy of the subject index in this instance is one of many signs of minor disconnectedness in this handbook, due partly no doubt to the practical difficulties of integrating so many disparate offerings into a cohesive whole within the publishing time-frame.

II

If the diversity of the *Handbook*'s subject matter and contributors has created a slightly untidy and incomplete emporium of assorted goodies, one is still grateful for the quality and range of good things to be found in it. Readers who are interested in name theory will naturally turn to the chapters on 'Onomastic theory' (Part I), by Willy van Langendonck and Mark van de Velde ('Names and grammar', pp. 17–38), Staffan Nyström ('Names and meaning', pp. 39–51) and Elwys de Stefani ('Names and

discourse', pp. 52–66). One gets a good sense from them of the age-old and continuing arguments about the meaningfulness or otherwise of names, and how names are similar to, or different from, other forms of referencing. But there are chapters in other parts of the *Handbook* which further enrich the debate. Grant W. Smith's (ch. 20, pp. 295–309), for example, on 'Theoretical Foundations of Literary Onomastics', provides an exemplarily clear description of past and present name theories. A substantial section of Coates's 'Names and historical linguistics' (37.4) rehearses the extreme view that names are, by definition, semantically empty even when they simultaneously connote something true about their referents. The meaningfulness of names such as *The Houses of Parliament* is seen as an incidental recovery of non-onymic sense 'during conversational processing' (pp. 532, 534). While that may sometimes be so, it fails to explain transparently semantic bynames like Old French *Parlebien* and the synonymous Middle English *Talkewell* (Jönsjö 1979: 138, 175), whose grammatical structure (unmarked verb-stem + adverb) seems to be exclusively onymic at the point of creation. As for bynames that do arise from non-onymic expressions (especially adjectives, nouns, noun phrases and prepositional phrases), the process of onymisation seems to me to be essentially nothing more than a change of linguistic function, whether or not there are concomitant grammatical and semantic consequences (such as ellipsis and metonymy). Subsequent partial or complete loss of lexical sense is frequent in most European naming systems, especially when a name survives significant changes in its referent or in its linguistic or extra-linguistic environments, but I am not the slightest bit convinced that it is a necessary prerequisite for onymisation.

Bramwell's chapter (18) on 'Personal names and anthropology' makes the point beautifully. She observes that, while European personal names have a predominantly referential function, in many parts of Africa prototypical names have 'a clear semantic link between the form of the name and real-world meaning' (p. 274). Their functionality as names depends on their retaining lexical or syntactical meaningfulness. She concludes that '[t]here is a gulf between concepts of the name in European culture, where it is seen as an essentially arbitrary label, through many African and other cultures, where a prototypical name is seen as fundamentally meaningful and motivated by circumstance' (p. 277). At the other end of the spectrum Balinese names are 'arbitrarily coined nonsense syllables' (p. 275). In other words, the presence or absence of 'sense' in names is not a constant; it can vary within and between cultures at any one time and over time.

Historically the European name-stocks have gradually moved their positions along this spectrum. Senseless names now predominate in most onomastic categories. They mostly work well enough as individual identifiers, but there are countless examples of names whose transparency of sense enables them to function with extra effectiveness within their onomastic system, helping people to find their way round their physical and social world more efficiently than a good many senseless names. It is easy to find examples: topographical features named *Church Street*, *Home Field* or *Far Pasture*, commercial brands like *Shredded Wheat*, red-haired persons named *Ginger*, present-day Icelanders named from their paternal relationships, and the millions of late medieval persons named from their occupation, their place of origin or residence, their paternity, their looks or behaviour, and so on, before the growth of hereditary surnaming diminished or removed the semantic value of the original names. These last two examples are discussed in Eva Brylla's chapter (16, pp. 237–50) on 'Bynames and Nicknames'. She takes the view that Icelandic patronymics 'occupy an intermediate position between proper names and appellatives' (p. 240). I would take a different view, that it is not a question of 'position' but of function, and that they can perform both functions simultaneously, or to put it more simply, appellatives (i.e. common nouns or descriptive phrases) can be used as names without necessarily losing any of their semantic content.

This is a theme that one can pursue elsewhere in the *Handbook*, for example in Paula Sjöblom's treatment of 'semantics and functions' in her chapter on 'Commercial names' (pp. 453–64) and in Koopman's discussion of when it might be valid to consider ethnonyms as proper names instead of appellatives (ch. 17, esp. pp. 251–52). Stefan Brink's essay on 'Transferred names and analogy in name-formation' (ch. 12, pp. 158–66) raises questions about onomastic meaningfulness in the re-use and creation of place-names through analogy, metaphor, metonymy and various kinds of phonetic, morphological, lexical and grammatical associations. Berit Sandnes's chapter on 'Names and language contact' (pp. 540–53) deals with, among other topics, the rare occurrence of translation in place-names, which, because it requires bilingualism, also necessitates a semantic perception of names and name elements (38.4.4). I would imagine that field-names in linguistic borderlands might offer more plentiful evidence of toponymic translation.[1] It would also have been useful to have had companion chapters on transfer and analogy in the creation and

[1] Compare the remarks on some translated field names in north-east Flintshire by Hywel Wyn Owen (1981: 51).

bestowing of given names, nicknames and surnames, and on the impact of language contact on personal names. The Anglicisation of non-English given names and surnames is as relevant now as it has been for the past 1500 years as a reflex of the migration, integration and assimilation of different populations. I suppose that this could be an argument for an even larger handbook, which heaven forbid, but it is also an illustration of the way in which so many of this handbook's chapters spark thoughts about topics that it has not had room to cover fully or at all.

In 'Names and cognitive psychology' (ch. 33, pp. 476–87) Serge Brédart surveys research into why the recall of proper nouns is usually harder than the recall of nouns. Results so far are said to be inconclusive. Linguistic memories require context and I would have thought that it is the arbitrariness or absence of contextual hooks (linguistic and extra-linguistic) that makes meaningless names so difficult to retrieve. In my own experience I find a name that has real-world sense or that regularly collocates with another name easier to recall than one that does not. Once I've remembered a person's first name I can usually find the surname it collocates with (or *vice versa*), either instantly or by going through the alphabet to trigger the right initial consonant or vowel. Similarly, thematically-named streets, railway engines, aircraft, ships and astronomical objects (most of which are illustrated in the chapters in Part VII) are on the whole easier to remember than those that are not, so long as variations in name-sets containing binary forms occur in the specific, not the generic. *Acacia Grove* and *Lilac Grove* are more accurately remembered than *Acacia Grove* and *Acacia Close*.

What is often so hard to identify is the circumstance in which an ordinary descriptive expression is being used as a name rather than as a non-onomastic *ad hoc* descriptor. One possible indicator is grammatical ellipsis. Brylla (p. 240) remarks that in Sweden and Norway the loss of preposition in a toponymic descriptor is a sure sign that it is being used as a name. The same is probably true in English records from as early as the late eleventh century but retention of the preposition is far from being any guarantee that a locative referring expression is non-onomastic, as one can see in medieval English bynames like *Attewode* (the source of the surname *Attwood*), or *de Areci* and *de Arcy*, Latinised forms of Anglo-Norman *Darcy* (from Arcy in Manche).[2] The point is equally valid for medieval nicknames, occupational names and relationship names; lack of a definite article or a filial element (such as *-son*) strongly indicates an onomastic usage but the retention of them leaves us ignorant of whether the referring

[2] See FaNBI, s.nn. Attwood, Darcy.

expression employed by the clerk is intended to be onomastic or not. In fact there are countless examples in English medieval records of clerks translating an asyndetic byname into a fully syndetic Anglo-Norman or Latinised descriptor. Clearly the clerk regarded the byname as meaningful, when, for example, the same man from Kingston on Soar (Nt) is named in the Assize Rolls as Stephen *Ankety* in 1280 and as Stephen *le fiz Anketyne* in 1289;[3] or Peter *Coste* of Bulwell is called Peter *filius Coste* in the 1287 Sherwood Forest Proceedings.[4] Uncertainties around the meaningfulness of bynames increase when hereditary surnaming comes into play, partly because it is frequently unclear whether or not a particular instance of a byname is an inherited name, but also because hereditary surnames in late medieval England show a mixed usage of meaningful and non-meaningful denotation.[5] Contextual ambiguities such as these, as well as those that arise from homo567ynymy, inevitably reduce the value of occupational bynames as evidence of word usage, an important caveat that is not mentioned in Grant's chapter on 'Names and lexicography'.

Much of Brylla's chapter is concerned with classifying nicknames (including hypocorisms) and bynames according to their semantic function and morphology. However, her treatment of nicknames as a sub-category of bynames blurs the distinction between free-standing nicknames (which have a long history of their own and needed a chapter to themselves), and post-posed bynames (which belong with the history of surnaming). The latter are treated at length, partly illustrated from Swedish material (which Brylla knew well) but mostly from Middle English names drawn from Reaney's and McKinley's publications on surnames. Unfortunately the analysis of the English data lacks the sharpness and illustrative accuracy that would have come from first-hand research experience of it and from a fuller acquaintance with the published literature on the subject.[6] For example, her view that '[a] fundamental criterion underlying the claim that a byname/byname element is a proper name is that it is used regularly and *in an unchanged form* by a large or limited circle of persons' (p. 240, my italics) is undermined by the evidence of Middle English, where variation in byname form occurs even when it is an inherited family name.[7] I am sorry to be critical of this chapter, not least because the *Handbook* is

3 TNA, Just 1/666 and 671.

4 TNA, E32/127.

5 See McClure 2010. Semantically transparent variations in hereditary surname forms are not unknown even in early Modern English records; see McClure 1982.

6 See the lucid account of Middle English bynaming in Clark 1992 (566–83) and the references there.

7 For some examples, see McClure 2013 (17–18, 22) and the references there.

dedicated to the late Eva Brylla with such affection, admiration and gratitude. It attempts a wide range of coverage and is pleasantly written but it falls well short of being an up-to-date survey of linguistic scholarship and the current state of the art.

I have long been interested in English and American nicknames, so perhaps I am being unduly picky, but I was also disappointed that the social contexts in which nicknaming thrives (such as closed, intensely competitive groups) figure so little in the *Handbook*, in spite of their importance in understanding the social and psychological function of nicknames, the linguistic forms that they take and their varying prevalence. There are the briefest of allusions to this topic in the chapters by Terhi Ainiala ('Names in society', p. 373) and Emilia Aldrin ('Names and identity', 387). A few other chapters do touch on nicknaming and hypocorism, but the subject as a whole deserves a much fuller treatment. In 'Forms of address' (ch. 29, pp. 427–37), Irma Taavitsainen and Andreas H. Jucker include a number of pet-names in historical English usage (like 'sweetheart', 'chuck', and 'love') along with terms of abuse ('devil', 'dog', 'fool', etc.) and titles ('Madame', 'Sir', 'Your Honour', etc.). I enjoyed this essay, which raised again the question of whether referring expressions with semantic transparency (as they need to have as forms of address) should be excluded from the category of names or whether they belong at one extremity of a meaningful-meaningless naming spectrum. The authors' sources are limited to literature but there is much additional material they could have drawn on in historical correspondence, both public (there is much of this in the National Archives) and private (some of which is in print, like the *Letters* of *Alfred, Lord Tennyson*).[8]

Surprisingly there is no discussion in this chapter of the use of formal and informal proper names (like *Thomas*, *Tom(my)*, *Ginger*, *Smith*, *Smithy*) as terms of address. This is a pity, because social variation in choice of name-forms has an interesting history. In the nineteenth century it was common, for example, for respectable husbands and wives to address each other quite formally (as Mr and Mrs Bennett do in *Pride and Prejudice*). In play texts of the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries use of first names among equals in the middle and upper classes is limited to moments of intimacy, whether in love or in anger, while among unequals it regularly signified a lower social status in the hierarchy of social power. It was ordinarily used by parents to children, by masters and mistresses to servants, and at the lowest level of society (labourers and ordinary servants) by equals to each other. Among men of the middle and professional classes,

[8] See Lang and Shannon (1982–90).

address by surname alone (with no title) was common as an expression of friendship or fellowship, a practice that also spread to public schools, between masters and pupils and between pupils and pupils. Needless to say, that usage has changed dramatically within the last half century, as have the social contexts in which it is now common to be addressed by one's first name.

Some modern nicknames are also cited in Katarzyna Aleksiejuk's essay on 'Pseudonyms' (ch. 30, pp. 438–52). Page 443 mentions the jazz musicians (Edward) 'Duke' Ellington and (Charlie) 'Bird' Parker (my bracketed insertions), and the American gangsters Cornelius 'Needles' Ferry and John 'Dingbat' O'Berta (a pseudo-Irish spelling of *Oberta*), who (it should have been said) was also known as 'The Dingbat'. The choice of these examples initially puzzled me because a pseudonym in my vocabulary is a false or fictitious name for the purpose of disguising someone's private identity (see the definition in OED). This is transparently not the case with any of these men's names. Nor is it quite true to say that jazz musicians 'often substitute pseudonyms for their first names' or that 'gangsters tend to incorporate them as middle names'. Who is doing the naming? The quoted nicknames were originally bestowed on them by others. Stretching the sense of *pseudonym* to include nicknames that in no way conceal the bearer's private identity confuses and diminishes the usefulness of the terminology, or so it seems to me, but I am apparently at odds with the author's quoted definitions of the term from the ICOS terminology list and from Podol'skaia (1978: 118), which specify fictitiousness but not the intention of disguising identity.[9] Most pseudonyms are invented by authors (in which case they are pen-names), by performers (usually known as stage-names) and increasingly by internet users (user-names). The selection of illustrative examples in this chapter (limited to pen-names, as far as I can see) is oddly unbalanced. There are none from Europe and America but several dozen from India, China, Japan and colonial Africa (30.2.7).

True pseudonyms, like 'Boz' (Dickens's pen-name), 'The Undertaker' (the ring-name of the American wrestler Mark Caloway) and 'Banksy' (the as-yet unidentified street artist) have something in common with names in fiction, in so far as they are invented for an imagined, public identity. Writers' choices of name for their fictional characters should be consistent with the fictional world their characters inhabit, especially when the names are semantically transparent, as they are in allegory and in some types of

[9] The ICOS terminology list can be found at <https://icosweb.net/drupal/terminology> (accessed 28 March 2018).

social satire. If that fictional world is intended to mirror, however selectively, the real world of the place and time in which the fiction is set, one would think that good authors would take care to choose names that resonate accurately with that world. That does not always happen, even in some of the most successful historical novels (by Walter Scott, for example, or C. J. Sansom) and perhaps it does not matter, as few readers will know anything much about historical naming practices. The modern literary critic, however, should do (and sometimes does not), so I was pleased to see a chapter on 'Language-based approaches to names in literature' by Paul Cavill (ch. 24, pp. 355–67).

Cavill's aim is to illustrate the growth and decline in the literary exploitation of meaningful names from Anglo-Saxon to modern times. It is a thoughtful and perceptive essay, although I think that his interpretations of a couple of names in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* miss the point. In the 'Reeve's Tale' there is the unidentified place-name *Strother* ('Fer in the north, I kan nat telle where', jokes Chaucer), and in the 'Wife of Bath's Prologue' there is the given name *Alisoun*, which names both the Wife and her 'gossip'. Cavill sees the meaningfulness of these names for Chaucer's artistic intentions in terms of their etymologies. He writes: 'Chaucer probably knew that *strother* was not so much a "toun", as a frequent element ("place overgrown with brushwood") in Northumberland and Durham minor place-names, places of no consequence' (p. 357). Perhaps this is making too large an assumption about Chaucer's knowledge of north-eastern topographical vocabulary. I think that Chaucer's joke about the students, Alan and John, their Northumbrian speech and their place of origin, is much more personal, an in-joke at the expense of people he knew in London and Westminster. This was the wealthy Northumberland merchant and upper gentry family called *de* (*del* or *de la*) *Strother*, members of whom belonged to the same social circle of royal officials and aristocratic affinities as Chaucer and his audience. Several of the Strother family were named *Alan* and *John*, and they and other family members acted on behalf of the king as castle wardens, king's escheators and sheriffs of Northumberland in the second half of the fourteenth century. One of them (Robert Strother) was, like Chaucer, appointed by the king as a customs controller; this was after Chaucer's death but it underlines the point that the Strothers and Chaucer were members of a network of royal officialdom.[10] It is the regional speech of this family and the obscure provenance of their *nom d'origine* that is the butt of Chaucer's humour.

[10] See McClure (2015: 47–9). Robert Strother was appointed customs controller on wool, hides and wool fells at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1423 (Patent Rolls at

Cavill sees Chaucer's choice of *Alisoun* as the name of his Wife of Bath and of the pretty wife in *The Miller's Tale*, as instances of typification, in which *Alisoun* symbolises the typical attractive woman (p. 361). That seems right, for *Alice* is the most frequently recorded female given name in the late fourteenth century, and its usual pet form *Alisoun*, though less often found in the written record, was probably its most common colloquial form (Redmonds 2004: 42). However, I cannot agree that the etymology of *Alisoun*

> appears to be 'nobility' (Continental Germanic *Adalheidis*) and this, together with its adoption through French, adds a courtly gloss to the name. Part of the humour of its use in Chaucer derives from the rather uncourtly behaviour of the bearers of the name. (p. 361)

Strictly speaking the etymology of *Alisoun* is an extension of *Alice* with the Old French hypocoristic suffix *-oun*. The hypocoristic form is relevant in this context, since it conveys a familiarity of relationship that suits the sexually promiscuous character of each of these imagined women. It is *Alice* (Old French *Aaleis*, Middle English *Alis*) not *Alisoun* that derives directly from Continental Germanic *Adalheidis*, and this is composed of the elements *Adal-* 'noble' and *-heidis* 'kind, worth, rank'. It is not a derivative of *adal-* + the suffix *-heid* 'nobility'. The elements from which Germanic dithematic names were created were doubtless recognised as meaningful by the creators and early users of these names, and some of the resulting combinations were probably regarded as meaningful compounds.[11] That said, many of the later compounds make little sense as phrases and those that appear to do so may sometimes be accidents of the Germanic system of thematic variation. How long West Frankish *Adalheidis* was perceived as a compound meaning 'noble rank/worth' is an open question but once it had undergone its phonetic contraction to Old French *Aalis* all its lexical and semantic associations must have been lost. There is no way that Chaucer or his audience would have known the Germanic etymology of *Alice*, and it is implausible to suppose that any of the humour in these *Tales* derived from a perceived irony that an uncourtly woman bore a name with a supposed 'courtly gloss'. On the contrary, *Alice* and *Alisoun* were names that in Chaucer's time were as common as dirt,

<http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/patentrolls/h6v1/body/Henry6vol1page0102.pdf>). FaNBI s.n. Strother has been considerably revised for the second edition.

[11] According to Insley (2013: 218), the 'earliest layer of Germanic personal names…are morphologically and semantically motivated, that is, the names can be semantically interpreted from the appellatives that form them'.

from the top to the bottom of the social scale, and that is why Chaucer chose it for both of his adulterous women, the chattering carpenter's wife and the socially aspiring dominatrix from Bath.

But there is a more important twist to Chaucer's use of *Alisoun* as the name of his Wife of Bath, the archetypal virago of antifeminist literature. Cavill mentions that in the Wife of Bath's Prologue it is also the name of the Wife's 'close friend' (p. 361) but misses it significance. The word Chaucer uses is *gossib*. Twice he has the Wife referring to her 'gossib … [whose] name was Alisoun (*Canterbury Tales,* D: l. 530) and to her 'gossyb dame Alys' (l. 548). This, I think, is also the *dame* from whom the Wife learned the tricks of her trade, not her mother as many Chaucer editors and commentators assume it to be in the line 'I folwed ay my dames lore' (l. 583). *Gossib* or *gossip*, a contraction of *god-sib* 'spiritual kin', was sometimes used in Middle English to denote a close friend but this was an extension of its basic sense of 'godparent' (MED, s.v. god-sib). The literary function of *Alice* alias *Alisoun* in *The Canterbury Tales* derives from the naming practices of Chaucer's day. It was the principal godparent (in this case the godmother) who would have presented the child at the font for the priest to baptise, who would have promised to teach her goddaughter Christian principles of behaviour (by implication to be an obedient daughter and submissive, chaste wife), and who, in common with many godparents in the late fourteenth century, would have given the child her own name.[12] Chaucer's satirical point is that Alison Wife of Bath learned the techniques of her adulterous and male-dominating marriages from her godmother. That is why he gave them both the same baptismal name and why he gave them a typifying name whose supreme popularity meant that the entire female race could be damned at a stroke. In its economy and precision it is a brilliant piece of comic, medieval anti-feminism, in which Chaucer teases the male chauvinists in his audience as well as the women.

It is not as though the naming of children by and after their godparents gets no mention in the *Handbook*. The first section of Redmonds's chapter on 'Personal names and genealogy' (19.1) discusses its currency in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at some length, but this disconnect between the contents of different parts of the *Handbook* is another example of how easy it is for scholars in different areas of onomastic research to be unaware of what each other is saying. That, of course, is why this handbook with its wide range of subjects and approaches is potentially so useful, although its full value depends on readers (and contributors) having the time as well as the curiosity to venture into chapters on unfamiliar topics.

[12] See, for example, Redmonds (2004: 46–59) and Niles (1982).

A reviewer has to do this, thankfully, and in my case, as someone who rarely spends time on literary onomastics, I found the chapters on this subject engaging and thought-provoking.

III

One theme that links modern literary onomastics with the study of names in the real world is the revolution in analytical techniques that has been opened up by the ability to digitise, and therefore search for patterns, in vast quantities of data. 'Corpus-based approaches to names in literature' by Karina van Dalen-Oskam (ch. 23, pp. 344–54) emphasizes the huge possibilities offered by quantitative analysis. 'We are not quite there yet', she says, 'but the developments in this area are certainly promising' (p. 344), and she illustrates this from her own work, first in a pilot study of Dutch novels and secondly in a new, larger project called *Namescape* (encompassing forty-four novels, twenty-two of which are in Dutch). The availability of digitised, searchable records and name indexes, with dated name-forms precisely located to a county or better still to a parish, has already transformed British, especially English, surname studies in the last few years. It is the basis of the Family Names in the United Kingdom project (FaNUK), that Hanks and Parkin write about in the chapter on 'Family Names' (15.2.1), with the new *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (FaNBI) as its chief outcome. One of its achievements is the incorporation of recent immigrant names into the dictionary's inventory in proportion to their numerical presence in the modern name-stock. Contact between different naming systems is increasingly experienced in our globalised societies, and one of the hopes of the FaNUK project was that a mutual understanding of their origins and social roles might make a contribution to more inclusive inter-ethnic relations. In Hanks's and Parkin's chapter the comparisons of surname usage across the UK, Europe and in other parts of the world (the Middle East, India and Asia) offer a crisp alternative to the unsystematic, poorly focused collection of brief essays (most of them perfectly competent in their own right) in 'Personal name systems' (ch. 13).

While Hanks's systematic approach to the compilation of given name and surname dictionaries marks a recent step-change in anthroponymic lexicography, systematic coverage has long been the practice in British place-name dictionaries, and at increasing levels of granularity in the county surveys of the English Place-Name Society. Taylor's fine chapter on 'Methodologies in place-name research' sets the bar still higher with the

more advanced model that is currently practised by the Survey of Scottish Place-Names (SSPN). It takes full advantage of digitised mapping and offers a model for other surveys to emulate or adapt. Taylor observes that the EPNS surveys (SEPN) are not yet fully up to speed in this regard, although his generalisations misrepresent the actual complexity of SEPN practice over time. Unlike the SSPN, the SEPN (he says) 'gives no absolute spatial data such as NGR or altitude, no referents, no context, no source-specific details and no pronunciations' (p. 84). Some, but not all of this, is true. The EPNS is close to publishing an electronic version of all the surveys (DEEP) in which every name is georeferenced to the level of township or parish, but it has not yet decided to follow the lead given by SSPN in giving spatial references for linear features (hill ranges, rivers, etc.) and for indicating the altitude and the orientation or aspect of named features. Is that the next step forward? The more precise are the topographical profiles of place-names, the more insight we may hope to get into the relationship between name elements and their location in the landscape.

As a regular user of SEPN volumes I would also be in favour of following the SSPN model in presenting name data in rather fuller historical and documentary contexts than has been customary. There are signs of this already in the Shropshire survey, where the explanatory text often provides substantial contextual interpretation of the place-name in relation to the place's physical setting and documentary forms; but it is difficult to tell how systematic this is. Regarding the citation of toponymical and topographical bynames, it would be a great help if what Taylor calls 'referents' were given with their full name and context, instead of the long-standing practice where place-name forms attested in a byname appear only as the bare byname marked '(p)', shorn of any preposition and forename. In PN Sa **6** 29–30, at the end of the section on field-names, there is unusually a list of medieval bynames that might be evidence for otherwise unrecorded names of minor places in the parish of Claverley. It does not seem to be a regular new feature (though I hope it might become one) and its usefulness in surname research is limited both by the fact that these bynames are not indexed (though they may one day be searchable in DEEP?) and by the absence of the forenames and of the source reference for each name-form. Fully naming and sourcing all referents, and where possible identifying them (as grantor, witness, tax-payer, etc., with social status or occupation, if given), would greatly increase their value for various purposes, whether toponomastic, prosopographical or anthroponomastic.

If Taylor's characterisation of the SEPN approach to National Grid References is partly mistaken, so is his generalisation about the complete absence of pronunciations. Both errors arise from an unfortunate choice of representative SEPN volume, which does, however, expose inconsistencies in past SEPN methodology. He takes as 'typical' of SEPN practice the most recent example (vol. 90), which happens to be Barrie Cox's *Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 6 (2014), but the Leicestershire volumes, which entirely omit NGRs and pronunciations, are not typical. For example, in the four published volumes of David Mills's Dorset survey (1977–2010) and the six published volumes of Gelling's Shropshire survey (1990–2012) NGRs are given for all major and minor place-names, and in the SEPN's forthcoming online digital editions (DEEP) all the grid references missing from other county surveys are supplied.

As for pronunciations, it was SEPN policy from the very start to record local pronunciation in phonetic script 'wherever it is of interest' (PN Bk, p. xxxi), and placed immediately after the head form. This was later refined as: 'The local and the standard pronunciations of a name, when of interest and not readily suggested by the spelling are given in phonetic symbols….' (PN Gl **4** 95 (6)). The deliberately slippery wording ('of interest' and 'not readily suggested by the spelling') gives each editor considerable freedom to make subjective judgements about what to include or what not to research in the first place. It is admittedly not ideal and a few editors have been allowed to abandon the policy altogether; not only in the Leicestershire volumes but also in the Berkshire ones there are no pronunciations at all. That is unfortunate. I have found SEPN information on local pronunciations invaluable in identifying the likely origins of modern surnames. One of many instances in FaNBI is *Bowser*, one source of which is certainly Bolsover in Derbyshire, pronounced [bauzə].[13] *Budgen* is hesitantly explained in FaNBI as a possible variant of *Beauchamp*. In the 1881 Census its epicentre is Sussex (Archer 2011), and since PN Sx (518) gives a local pronunciation [bɔʤəm] for Bodiam, I think that this is a more likely source of the surname.[14] Naturally it works the other way, too, when surname spellings expand our knowledge of local place-name developments, and EPNS editors will no doubt find FaNBI an increasingly useful source of extra data. Apart from PN Lei, the standard SEPN practice of giving information on pronunciation remains intact, except that in the Shropshire survey the pronunciations are not placed after the head form but are included in the text of the etymological commentary.

13 PN Db **2** 214.

14 The new explanation will appear in the dictionary's second edition.

The freedom of individual editors to alter the content and layout of volumes to fit their own approach to the data (which Gelling was especially inclined to do) may have some benefits but the diversity of practice in current EPNS surveys gives an impression of uncertainty and inconsistency in editorial policy.

I hope, therefore, that future SEPN volumes will systematically provide pronunciations (current and past, when known or inferred) and also give their sources (not a consistent practice in SEPN volumes). Where, for example, did Gelling get her information about Claverley (PN Sa **1** 82)? She mentions the local pronunciation [cla:li] (a typographical error for [kla:li]) but gives no source. It might have come from local informants, or from a printed source, such as the *Pronouncing Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Forster 1981: 59) or from the *Shropshire Wordbook* (Jackson 1897), whence Forster took it. But neither of these is listed in 'Abbreviations and Bibliography'. Another fruitful source is the *Glossary of Dialectal Placenomenclature* (Hope 1883). It gets a mention in the bibliography for PN Sx, for example, but not in PN Sa **1**. One of the pronunciations of *Buildwas* alluded to by Gelling (PN Sa **1** 66) is given by Hope and would provide a more precise dating (at least a *terminus ante quem*) for pronunciations with *-w-* than Gelling's vague reference to 'modern'.

Thanks to digitised information, systematic approaches to name studies are now possible to a degree unheard of two decades ago but their ability to be comprehensive will always be constrained by the uneven scope, quality and availability of reliable sources (documentary and oral) and resources (human, technical and financial). We also need to beware of theories and methodologies which impose an artificial uniformity on the analysis of incomplete and complex data. Language, like other forms of human behaviour, is naturally messy in its operations; it is biological not mechanical, and explanatory theories that insist on a philosophical clarity of definitions risk misrepresenting the realities of linguistic behaviour. The semantics of names are an extreme case of an already complex phenomenon. The coining, adoption and usage of names in different cultures and in different semantic categories generally conform to the lexis and to the typical phonetic, semantic and grammatical patterns of the host language, but they are also prone to diversity and irregularities that are peculiarly onomastic.

I was reminded of this when reading Carole Hough's essay on the grammar of names in this journal (Hough 2016) and it is an appropriate reference to end on. By drawing extensively on chapters in the *Handbook* that she edited, she testifies to the value of a work whose variety of topics

and approaches can create stimuli for new thinking. It is well worth the space on one's bookshelf, and the publisher's price for the hardback (£95.00) should not deter anyone from buying their own copy. At the time of writing the kindle and paperback editions can be bought for £35. There is no better single guide to the range, quality and potential of current onomastic research.

Peter McClure
peter@mcclure.karoo.co.uk

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