4 Notes on some interfaces between place-name material and linguistic theory

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1 The uniformitarian principle and pre-English river-names

Most reputable linguists nowadays take for granted in historical investigations what is called the uniformitarian principle, that though the frequency of linguistic phenomena was not always the same in the past as it is now, the causes which operated in human language were. Proper names tend to have a somewhat semi-detached relationship to the history of their languages at large. They have not much been grist to the mills of those scholars who have sought to define universals of language, and the relevance of the uniformitarian principle to particular questions is perhaps easier to overlook in them. One area where I think this has been done is that of pre-English river-names, that is, names such as *Thames* and *Humber* which are not meaningful in English but have been adopted from languages earlier spoken in what is now England (and neighbouring parts) in which when coined they were meaningful.

The language from which English directly adopted them was that of the Celtic Britons, Brittonic (and/or occasionally perhaps Latin as spoken by Britons, but forms of river-names will hardly have differed between these). The linguistic material of some is perspicuous, showing them to have been either coined as compounds in Brittonic (thus *Candover* and *Douglas*, 'fair water' and 'black stream' respectively) or created in the process of borrowing into English: thus *Avon* = Welsh *afon*, the common noun for 'river', whose etymon can no more have constituted a complete river-name in Brittonic

My live meetings with Richard Hogg were mostly at academic conferences, where he would use his papers sometimes to make a solid contribution to knowledge of Old English or of linguistic history, sometimes to float an idea which he thought might be frivolous to see how far it would go. Conferences too are where people from neighbouring academic disciplines rub up against each other, with results which may again be of either of those two kinds. It seems apt to his memory that two of these notes follow up somewhat anecdotally matters arising from conferences; the third is one tangentially discussed with him at that most memorable of conferences we both attended, the First International Conference on English Historical Dialectology at Bergamo in 2003, in whose proceedings (Dossena and Lass 2004) our Southumbrian and Northumbrian contributions are aptly neighbours.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

than *ēa* 'river' did in Old English or *river* does in modern English.[1] Some make sense as other kinds of formation in what would for various reasons be earlier stages of Celtic, thus *Trent*.[2] Some are suffixal formations on bases not perspicuously Celtic: thus most of the names of major rivers, *Thames*, *Humber*, and the like. It is reasonable to regard them as borrowed from (an) earlier-spoken language(s) into Celtic, just as they later were from the Brittonic stage of Celtic into English.

This as a general pattern is confirmed by aspects of distribution. It is well known to people who have even a nodding acquaintance with place-names that river-names are recurrent. There are or have been, for instance, a dozen English rivers Humber; four T(h)ame join Thames, Teme, Team, Tamar, Tavy and Welsh Tawe, Taff and Taf in what may be called an equally strong team. Not so well known in this country is that similar groupings recur over much of the continent of Europe (mainly non-Mediterranean Europe). Most of the roots and suffixes in the non-perspicuous British river-names are paralleled there; some of the particular combinations are, as far as can be told in what for some of the most interesting is the absence of early forms; thus Ekwall's (1928) etymology, generally accepted, for the *Aire* in Yorkshire makes it etymologically identical with the French river *Isère* and with *Isar*, a tributary of the Danube. The linguistic texture of these names, especially the suffixes, makes clear that they belong at some level, as English and Celtic do, to the Indo-European language group, as discussed in detail in Kitson (1996). To avoid begging questions about its exact affiliations, the linguistic material of these river-names has for more than half a century now been called *alteuropäisch* 'Old European'.

Place-name scholarship historically developed largely in the context of particular countries, as other linguistic scholarship did in that of particular languages or language groups. When scholars first became aware that these recurrences existed and were too many to dismiss as merely coincidental, their instinct thus was to explain them in terms of ancient migrations of the peoples they were interested in, or when that was seen to be inadequate, of other historically known peoples not well enough documented for definite disproof of theories about them to be easy. The tacit assumption was made that a strong *onus probandi* lay on any view attributing particular names to the linguistic ancestors of more than one extant group. So the man who did most to investigate early river-names, Hans Krahe, when it was clear that Celtic,

[1] As Bradley (1901) pointed out long ago. Ekwall (1928: 23) was wrong to controvert this, especially as he admits (pp. 21–2) that old proper names of some of the rivers *Avon* are known. Some Welsh river-names are loose compounds whose substantive element is *Afon*, for example those indexed by Thomas (1938: 225, 227), the different set of Williams (1945: 61), or one in Owen and Morgan (2007: 13). That type may well have begun in Brittonic and underlie the place-name given as *Abone* in the Antonine Itinerary, discussed by Rivet and Smith (1979: 239–40).

[2] Jackson (1953: 524–5) adds precision to Ekwall's (1928) etymology; Rivet and Smith (1979: 476–7) add further relevant material.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Germanic, let alone Baltic, would not do, operated between the wars with a theory attributing the *alteuropäisch* names to implausibly widely travelled Illyrians. By 1950 he had wisely discarded it. His subsequent expositions of *alteuropäisch* hydronymy[3] posited a stage in the dispersal of Indo-European at which these four and other more or less 'western' branches were still a single speech-community, from which Indo-Iranian and other eastern branches had already separated. That formulation is still widely repeated, especially by people who want the *Urheimat* 'original homeland' of the Indo-European speakers to have been further east than north-central Europe. I think Krahe reached it from a desire to preserve as much as possible of the tacit assumption already mentioned. It was left to W. P. Schmid to point out that on Krahe's own etymologies (and on any reasonable view of the material), some of the roots used in river-names are found as lexical items in eastern Indo-European languages but not in western ones.[4] It follows that the naming system was in operation since before the eastern languages separated from the western continuum.

Unlike Coates (1998: 214) in his argument for an *alteuropäisch* name of the estuarine Thames underlying that of modern London, I do not equate *alteuropäisch* with Indo-European as such. The *alteuropäisch* names do not in my view belong to one single stage of linguistic history but are a type which began to be productive in Common Indo-European (spoken, I take it, in broadly the fifth millennium BC)[5] and remained productive through several stages of its gradual separation into the individual language groups, some of whose members survive. It is possible to some extent to distinguish relative chronology of productivity of elements within *alteuropäisch*, at least under favourable conditions, where there is nesting of suffixes and/or elements have strikingly different geographic distributions and/or ones that correlate strikingly with archaeology and/or are present in some historic language group(s) but not in (an)other(s); see for example Kitson (1996: 82–5, 104). Since linguistic innovations of the separate branches are by definition independent, the *alteuropäisch* type's ceasing to be productive is not likely to have occurred at the same stage in all of them, and certainly did not occur in the same way in all of them. And since, whatever one's view of the *Urheimat*, there was appreciable migration in the history of the speakers of most branches, we must reckon with the possibility of secondary production like the reuse of English names by colonists in America and Australia in modern times (rare as that is in river-names compared to settlement-names).

[3] The one which gives the best overview is in my opinion Krahe (1962). *Alteuropäisch* names were first brought in relation to British ones by Nicolaisen (1957; cf. Nicolaisen 1971).

[4] See Schmid (1968, 1970); Kitson (1996: 86–9) sets forth some of the important details.

[5] The reasons for thinking so are in my opinion even stronger than argued in Kitson (1997), but this is not the place to dilate on them, as I did in an unpublished paper at a conference mainly of Indo-Europeanists at Łódź, 2004.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Most Indo-Europeanists, I think, now operate with something close to either Krahe's model or Schmid's model, allowing for disagreements in detail. But Isaac (2003) has made the tacit assumption mentioned earlier quite explicit.[6] Isaac claimed that the *alteuropäisch* hypothesis, though useful in Krahe's day, is out of date and can be discarded in the light of etymological advances made by Celticists, especially Continental Celticists. He furnished regrettably few examples, those confined to part of Scotland, not England. Still it was clear that his view would require discarding what seem perfectly sensible misty/watery etymologies for words like Nevis and Naver (Nicolaisen 1976: 188–9), with no compensating gain.

It seems to me, moreover, that Isaac's theory violates the uniformitarian principle as it should apply to place-names. Onomasts have not, as far as I know, approached these with the same ambitions of statistical rigour that the school of Greenberg have for universals of other areas of language. Yet it seems to hold pretty generally that of all classes of place-names, main river-names are the most resistant to change.[7] In taking over a substantial body of river-names from their predecessors the Anglo-Saxons exhibited behaviour typical of immigrant populations worldwide, as Mississippi and Ohio bear witness. Yet the attitude of Anglo-Saxons to Celts, at least among their ideological leaders, at least by the end of the settlement period, was of not borrowing anything (or at least not admitting they had borrowed it). For Celts, who were certainly not autochthonous in Britain, and who are not known to have developed any colonialist ideology stronger than *Vae Victis!*, to have taken over no names at all from their predecessors would be preposterous.

Another implication of conservativeness of river-names is to reinforce the view propounded by *alteuropäisch* hydronymists for phonetic reasons (chiefly *a* in formations which if inherited by Celtic directly from Indo-European should have *o*), that Celts were not the first speakers of an Indo-European language to colonise the British Isles. This is particularly so if, as used to be an orthodoxy, the Celts did not arrive here until the last millennium BC. There is now probably less of a consensus on the arrival of the Celts than there has ever been,[8] but whatever view is adopted, the exiguousness of the evidence for river-names of non-Indo-European origin in Britain – in all

[6] See now the Introduction to Part I.

[7] Names of mountain ranges might perhaps be expected to rival them, and some are certainly old, but some are notably young, for example in Britain the most substantial mountain range, the Cairngorms, have a name from the most recent linguistic stratum of their inhabitants other than English; and that of the most substantial range in England, the Pennines, is a modern antiquarian invention.

[8] Likewise for our neighbouring island, where Ó Murchadha (1992–3: 49) quoted Professor Donnchadh Ó Corráin as stating with characteristic trenchantness: 'Scholars are not at all sure when Ireland was conquered by the Celts' and 'we do not know what other languages were spoken in prehistoric Ireland.' Judicious readers will notice that this is the reference I garbled from memory in Kitson (1996: 77 n. 6).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

likelihood none at all in England – is a fact which ought to be taken into consideration.

Rather than trying to explain away pre-Celtic names in Britain, Celticists learned in Indo-European would in my opinion be more profitably employed in elucidating their relative chronology. On all accounts so far there are unlikely to be phonologically distinct layers such as Anreiter, Haslinger and Roider (2000) find for the eastern Alpine region. Lacking those, evidence of distribution, both in linguistic patterns and in geographic space, must take priority over etymological theories for particular names. Only for formations confined to areas known to have been inhabited by Celts is 'command of Continental Celtic data and related bibliography'[9] more than marginally relevant. Isaac (2003) averred that the *a* in the Thames group could have arisen within Celtic if the etymon had not had the Indo-European *o*-grade usually posited but a zero-grade with sonant *m*. Now, as a phonetic process without context so it could, but is it credible that an originally stressed suffix should have induced zero-grade in a form where the consonant makes the vocalism ambiguous when there is consistently *o*-grade in unambiguous comparable formations? And by no means all Continental Celtic scholarship reads its evidence the same way as Isaac would have us do. Villar (1995) produces mainly from the Iberian Peninsula a whole clutch of names relating to the Thames group in general and the Tamar formation in particular, which he finds phonetic as well as distributional reasons to think were not coined in Celtiberian but were taken over by it from 'Old European', just as Nicolaisen (1971) and I think happened in Britain.

In these investigations a distinction obtains in principle between chronology of coinage and chronology of currency. The semi-detached relationship of naming systems to the languages in which they operate in general, and the conservativeness of major river-names in particular, means that what originates as a derivative formation in one language, or stage of language, may serve in turn as a base for formations in a borrowing language, or later stage. One name to which this is relevant is *Sabrina* 'Severn', of which there are certainly derivatives within Celtic (Savernake in Wiltshire preserves one of them) but for which, as Rivet and Smith (1979: 451) say, '[N]o clear Celtic etymon is identifiable.' On the one hand the root *Sab-* is found in continental river-names, not all in lands ever inhabited by Celts; on the other the only parallel for its extension in *-r-* known until recently was in Ireland. Sims-Williams (2006: 293–4) now turns to a third-century AD inscription for a *Sabrina flumen* tributary of the Euphrates in what was anciently Armenia, now eastern Turkey, which it is easy to follow him in imagining bestowed by Celts. We think at once of the Galatians a little further west in Asia Minor.

[9] As De Bernardo Stempel (2000: 99) puts it – misrepresenting the direction of argument of Kitson (1996) – the more surprisingly since unlike Dr Isaac she does recognise the reality of *alteuropäisch* names.

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Sims-Williams prefers to connect it with a nearby mountain-range *Skordiskos* and that with 'the famous Celtic tribe from the Balkans, the Scordisci'. But it looks from his footnotes as if *Skordiskos* is more likely to be of Greek origin; as for the tribe, he notes 'it is not clear that their name is *linguistically* Celtic'. When he uses that pair in turn to explain Celtically a pair of Iranian-looking names nearby, this reader seems to sense what happens so often in ancient writings, a sober scholar indulging his romantic vein at the edge of the known world. The doyenne of English place-name studies, Dr Margaret Gelling, was fond of quoting from James Bond: 'Once is happenstance, twice is coincidence, three times is enemy action.' With the eastern *Sabrina*, whether an ancient formation surviving only near the extremes of the Indo-European-speaking world or a colonial name bestowed by Celts, we seem to be only at the stage of coincidence. Professor Sims-Williams has changed his mind on the affiliation of *Sabrina*, first saying (Sims-Williams 2000: 8) that *Sabr-* 'cannot be counted as Celtic etymologically', then (Sims-Williams 2006: 293) that it is 'presumably Celtic'. I think his earlier view was wiser.

The uniformitarian consideration is reinforced by typological ones not so far used by Celticists, or perhaps by hydronymists at all, to point to a likelihood that, excepting secondary colonial coinages, *alteuropäisch* river-names had ceased to be productive among proto-Celtic speakers before their complete separation as a speech-community from wider west Indo-European groupings. The evidence is something English and German scholars tend to take for granted because we are used to it: dithematic noun compounds whose most important substantive elements in English are *brōc* and *burna*, thus Whitbrook and Blackb(o)urn(e), semantic equivalents of Candover and Douglas.

Dithematic compounds have been the main productive type in Germanic and Celtic river-names from late prehistory to the present, as they have in place-names generally. What seems to have been overlooked is that the use of proper compounds in this way is a peculiarity of these two groups not shared by their neighbours among the surviving branches of Indo-European. Stream-names in the Slavonic realm are still formed suffixally, as inspection of a large-scale map of any part of Poland will verify. The non-speaker has the impression that the suffixes used are ones productive in the modern language at large. The same applies overwhelmingly to minor place-names generally, and dithematic major names are due normally to interaction with Germanic.[10] Most readers will know from experience that Italian place-names are not dithematic either. Italian hydronyms are presented by their cartographers as phrases, *Fiume Serchio*, *Torrente Pedogna*, and the like, with a generic element

[10] Instances are Novgorod, famously founded by Vikings, and Bratislava = Pressburg, occasional capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire (Bach 1952–6: II, §§499.2, 721.1 outlines forms of the latter). There are also personal names apparently used unchanged as place-names, for example Wrocław = Breslau (Bach 1952–6: II, §§504.2, 509.1).

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in apposition to a proper name which may either be that of the river as such or of a settlement on it. The former are semantically parallel to *River Thames*. I am not sure how much the word meaning 'river' or 'stream' is actually used in such names in the spoken language; the river-name as such is monothematic/suffixal, not compounded. In *Torrente Pedogna* the generic is a necessary part of the name to distinguish it from the hamlet *Pedogna*; but this appositional phrase is still a very different thing from a proper compound as in the Germanic and Celtic languages, not only formally but also in semantics: the qualifier in our stream-names, if not expressing a quality of the water, is much likelier to denote an animal or plant species or type of ground or human artefact than a pre-existing place.

Where adjacent groups deploy a linguistic innovation not shared by their neighbours, the presumption is that they do not do it independently, but either by borrowing one from another or as part of a single speech-community, at least in respect of the aspect of language in question. A likely implication here is that dithematic compounding supplanted *alteuropäisch* suffixation as the productive type in Germanic and Celtic place-naming, including river-naming, at a time when they were either adjacent and to an appreciable extent still mutually intelligible or separated only by extinct branches of Indo-European enjoying appreciable mutual intelligibility with both.[11] That presumably was after proto-Italic speakers had migrated south over the Alps from an original position roughly between proto-Celtic and proto-Germanic, and it definitely was before the earliest accounts of north-west Europe by classical geographers, so it should be broadly during the second millennium BC.[12] Such an origin fits the known history of the languages at large: a reshaping of name-systems seems to bespeak deeper mutual interaction than vocabulary items common to Germanic and Celtic, datable to the last few centuries BC when they were adjacent but not mutually intelligible, and less than the morphological items either has in common with Italic. Dithemacy may have begun in place-names by analogy with personal names, for which dithematic forms were used beside suffixal and simple monothematic ones from Common Indo-European down to historical Germanic and Celtic times.

The chronological suggestion above is broadly supported by another aspect of typology, that of the order of elements. In Germanic syntax it is normal for adjectives to precede the nouns they qualify, so in dithematic compounds the order qualifier followed by substantive element is to be expected. In Celtic, adjectives normally follow nouns, so that order is

[11] One such branch in the Low Countries was postulated by Kuhn (1962) from place-names which included dithematic river-names.

[12] Archaeologists' dates for the Indo-Europeanising of Italy diverge as hopelessly as for the Celtising of Britain. People who believe in a shorter chronology for Indo-European than I do will easily adapt this sequence to it. But the question of mutual intelligibility between Celtic and Germanic is another detail that seems to me to fit better in a long chronology.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

surprising; but it is normal in older place-name compounds, including river-names. It makes sense for it to have begun as a sub-Indo-European areal feature shared with branches whose normal order it fitted typologically. The Celtic languages did eventually, in about the fifth century AD, change the normal order in place-name formation to match that in ordinary phrases. The change in order went with a change from proper compounds to loose compounds, what Padel (1985: xv), in a good discussion, calls 'name-phrases'.

Another aspect of the uniformitarian proposition is that except in circumstances of new migration the number of rivers or largish streams felt at any one time to need renaming must always have been very small, unlikely to sustain more than one special name-type and/or types remote from productive processes in other place-names or the language at large. Much of the vocabulary-base of *alteuropäisch* names was already archaic or obsolete in west Indo-European. When the dithematic type was adopted for river-names it is likely therefore to have replaced the *alteuropäisch* type in productivity rather quickly and completely. The question arises what time-lag there was between its adoption in other place-names and in river-names. The likeliest circumstance in which a need for a new type of river-naming system might be felt is a substantial colonising enterprise. Unfortunately archaeology does not seem to provide any in which proto-Germanic and proto-Celtic speakers are likely to have been involved together, let alone with proto-Germanic speakers as the prime movers. The less mutual intelligibility we think there was between proto-Celtic and proto-Germanic, the earlier we should be inclined to place the change to dithematic names.

That change marks the latest possible limit for large-scale coinage of *alteuropäisch* names. But we should note the possibility that their productivity ended centuries earlier. It is imaginable that the more varied monothematic names of Italy reflect a stage common to wider west Indo-European until Germanic and Celtic (and their lost *zwischenvölker*) moved to the dithematic type. In that case it could be said that *alteuropäisch* ended not with a bang but with a whimper, attenuated out of existence, perhaps in the late third millennium BC rather than in the second.

Direct replacement of *alteuropäisch* by dithematic names as the productive type would not mean that suffixal stream-names stopped being coined altogether. It would mean that new coinages were based on current vocabulary using derivational processes current or only recently obsolete in the language at large. The kind of mix likely can be illustrated from that other substantial colonising enterprise, the Anglo-Saxon settlement of England.[13] The most frequent monothematic name *Hlȳde* is generated from the adjective *hlūd* 'loud' by the *-i-* infix familiar from lexical pairs like Old English *word/hrœdwyrde*, Latin *verbum/proverbium*, which may well have been used in

[13] Ekwall (1928: xlvii–xlviii) gives a conspectus of minor English river-name types.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

river-names as well as ordinary words since before the separation of Italic.[14] Names could be formed from plant- and animal-names, thus *Beferic*, *Gearwec* from 'beaver', 'yarrow' by a suffix whose archaism Ekwall (1928) was not happy with,[15] and from pre-existing river-names by a hardly less archaic suffix[16] that he liked, thus *Bydincel* and probably *Stirchel*. Various agent-noun formations were used; and appreciable use was made of the all-purpose Old English derivative suffix *-ing*. But the total of such formations is small compared to those in *brōc* and *burna* and minor stream-words. Very few of these names are likely to have been formed later than the settlement period.

Only for two major river-name groups can a decent case be made for origin in Old English. Ekwall denied it for both of them. The Ouse/Wissey/Wash group occasioned one of the celebrated controversies between him and Zachrisson (1926, 1933). Some related lexical items occur in Old English as well as other Germanic languages; the distribution is fairly restricted geographically, and the Yorkshire Ouse is recorded as *Abus* in Romano-British times (Rivet and Smith 1979: 240–1).[17] For these reasons I suspect Zachrisson was basically right whether or not he got all the phonetic details right. The other group are the rivers Stour. Adjectives *stūr* meaning things like 'heavy, stiff, unfriendly' are attested in several Germanic languages but conspicuously not in Old English; and if it were formed from one in archaic Old English, it ought to have a *-i̯-* infix and appear as ****Stȳr* with *i*-mutation, which it never does. Early forms of Low German *Stuhr* and *Stör* cited by Ekwall do have the *-i̯-*.[18] The English Stours are more important as well as more numerous, found as far west as west Worcestershire; names of tributaries are formed by Old English suffixes from *Stūr* just as from undoubtedly non-English river-names like *Byd*. The overall trend of the evidence is quite strongly against *Stūr* being English. Attempts at Celtic etymologising are factitious.[19] For a plausible origin we need to posit again a kind of western

[14] Ekwall (1928) presents this as a 'suffix *-iōn*'; but it is not confined to the weak feminine declension whose nominative in early Germanic was *-ōn*, though many monothematic river-names belong to that declension.

[15] Because '*-ic* is hardly recorded as a diminutive suffix in English except in personal names' (Ekwall 1928: 370). That is to say that whether or not diminutive it was obsolescent. Reduction to *-ec* is phonetically regular (Campbell 1959: §369) but *-ic* is commoner in stream-names, perhaps reinforced by analogy with names containing the British suffix *-ic* (> Welsh *-ig*) which Ekwall invokes oftener than I should. This is problematic because whichever language's suffix they contain, most of the names must be early enough to have been in principle subject to the sound change, for example S907 *Styrice*, recapitulated, for a stream as far east as Essex. I think semi-detachedness of names from developments in ordinary language is at work here.

[16] So rare that the individual instances of words containing it are signalled in Clark Hall (1960).

[17] *Abus* etymologically means 'river', but it was of course not a common noun in British Celtic, since the etymon of **abona* is shared with Italic and according to Mann (1987) with Albanian.

[18] Cf. Bach (1952–6: III, 407–8) on their geography; on the names Bach (1952–6: II, §§95.2, 192.2, 298.7). See now also Coates (2006b).

[19] As Jackson (1953: 195 n.1) magisterially points out. Jackson (1953: 342) was also firm in rejecting any possibility of a Celtic etymology for the Ouse.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Indo-European whose river-names developed from *alteuropäisch* in the same way as Italic ones did. Two rivers *Stura* in northern Italy do nothing to weaken this conclusion. Only the Ouse/Wissey/Wash group seems to be left as plausibly Old English. New coinages along *alteuropäisch* lines after the change to the dithematic type in Germanic and Celtic are likely to have been of the same order of rareness.

All these arguments do not constitute absolute proof, but they do establish a strong *onus probandi*; and it is in the opposite direction to that which Dr Isaac and his like thinkers claim. *All alteuropäisch* river-names in north-west Europe are likely to date from before the ending of a west Indo-European dialect continuum in which there was appreciable mutual intelligibility between proto-Celtic and proto-Germanic. In order to demonstrate an *alteuropäisch*-type name to be Celtic, it does not suffice for them to show that there is a workable Celtic etymon; they need to show that there is *not* a workable etymon at any stage earlier than Celtic.[20] Suffixal names coined within proto-Celtic should be visibly Celtic in their linguistic material.[21] Linguistic rules usually have exceptions, and there is bound to be a penumbra of them here; but I think not many. Celtic imperialism will not be crowned with success in the academic study of river-names any more than it was in the end in the outer world of the Iron Age.

2 When was 'the Anglo-Saxon traveller'?

Dr Margaret Gelling devoted much of her career to demonstrating that topographic elements in English place-names were used in senses more exact than scholars of earlier generations were accustomed to think.[22] By her phenomenally sustained energy in visiting sites and photographing them she amassed a greater knowledge than anyone before has had, quite possibly a greater knowledge than anyone else will ever have, of what land-forms lie close to places whose names contain what elements. In the last couple of decades she formed a formidable double act with the geographer and landscape artist Ann Cole. Name scholars, especially habitual attenders of

[20] For example, of five adjectival names listed by De Bernardo Stempel (2000: 103) from Ptolemy's Ireland, *Argita* is formed on a Common Indo-European etymon, **(S)libnios* on one current after the separation of the easternmost branches whose most relevant lexical productivity is in Greek, *Vidu(v)a* on one mainly productive in Germanic and Celtic, *Logia* on one mainly productive in Germanic, and only **Vinderis* on a particularly Celtic etymon. De Bernardo Stempel does not adequately take into account the Germanic (and Baltic) evidence which shows that the root she cites for *Logia* was **Loig-*, not as she states it. Mann (1987: 703) conveniently assembles forms; cf. Pokorny (1959–69: E 667–8). For **(S)libnios* Mann (1987: 1212, 1214) is better than Pokorny (1959–69: II, 309).

[21] For example De Bernardo Stempel's explanation of **Vinderis* as containing a degree of comparison also sets it apart from the others in the last note. (There is not a consensus among Celticists about the origin of the Irish equative; her etymology fits Thurneysen's (1980) account well, Szemerényi's (1996: 197) badly, Lewis and Pedersen's (1961: 183) not at all.)

[22] Dr Gelling died in 2009, after this chapter had been commissioned.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022170.006 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Society for Name Studies conferences, know this very well. Historical English linguists more generally perhaps do not. The purpose of this note is to alert them to a point in the work of Gelling and Cole which deserves their attention.

An old-fashioned philologist like myself finds it natural to think that the kind of exactness Gelling and Cole find in place-name meanings was how the language was on the whole used in those days. They think it was more than that. After all, as any linguist historical or otherwise will agree, not all users of a language or a subset of a language in any period use it with equal care and exactness. Topographic features must have been named by people who knew them, presumably in most cases by people who lived somewhere near them. Gelling and Cole's concern is not primarily with topographic features as such but with towns and villages named after them. They think that an important factor in the establishment of what they call a 'country-wide system' of topographic names consisted in the perceptions of travellers. 'Travellers' perceptions would probably not initiate a naming system, but they could have played a major part in its development and stabilisation' (Gelling and Cole 2000: xvi).

My question is: if so, when? Is the 'Anglo-Saxon traveller', as for convenience at conferences they call him, a coherent phenomenon of a particular period, or just a ghostly amalgam of the linguistic choices of indefinite numbers of people over an indefinite time? If the latter, should place-name scholars be allowed to talk about him as if he were a compact individual? If the former, did he operate on all the elements on which he did operate at the same historical period, or did different sets of travellers operate at different times on different elements? The answers to most of these questions depend partly on how far, in Anglo-Saxon England, language and linguistic change in place-names were, as I put it above, semi-detached from the language at large.

The questions are particularly acute for elements where there is reason to think that normal usage in the language was less uniform than Gelling and Cole seem to establish as the norm for place-names. For *beorg* 'hill, barrow, etc.' and *hlið* 'slope' I have tried to give some sort of answers in Kitson (2008). For such elements even those of us whose instinctive preference is against hypostatising the 'Anglo-Saxon traveller' have to admit that there is a phenomenon to be explained, and Gelling and Cole's explanation, unanchored in space and time as it may seem, is the only one in the field at present. As far as I know I am the only writer who has yet tried to address it as a problem in linguistic theory. I do so from my work on the boundaries of Anglo-Saxon land charters, which use topographic features as such, not as naming settlements. Their distribution is uneven and they cover less of the country than place-names (mainly south and west of Watling Street), but they have the advantage of exactly defined topography. The sequence of features along a boundary-line usually makes it clear what a particular one is. The land-form Gelling and Cole pick for a place-name is not always the

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closest one of its general kind to the settlement-site, and in such cases it is possible to wonder whether they have picked the right one (and my approach is perhaps skewed unfairly against them) or whether even in place-names, usage is rather less uniform than they deem it.

Even when you know exactly what landscape feature a name applies to, there may be wide disagreement about what aspect of it is named. At Crookberrow, Worcestershire, a long barrow comprises the summit of a small hill. Gelling and Cole (2000: 169) show a view of one of the short ends, Kitson (2008: 387) a silhouette of one of the long sides. The two drawings differ so much that anyone who has not viewed the place may be forgiven for doubting the veracity of at least one of them; their implications for what if any particular shape of hill the word *beorg* connotes are utterly different. I feel sure that the name was first given for the profile I drew, for who ever names a long barrow from its short side? But that does not logically exclude the possibility that it survived because the 'Anglo-Saxon traveller' of a later period than when the name was bestowed was conscious of the profile Ann Cole drew. I wish more dispassionate historical linguists would address themselves to these questions.

3 Syncope on the war-path, and/or breakdown on the main road?

It is not right to have a paper that is all theory and no data; and I should not feel right producing one for Richard Hogg without some Old English dialectology. Readers of my articles (e.g. Kitson 1990, 1993) know that variation in late Old English linguistic items which the grammarians either state or imply is random, if present in significant samples in charter boundaries often turns out to be mappable, whether in terms of presence versus total absence of particular variants in particular areas or, less spectacularly, significant differences in frequency between different parts of the country (bearing in mind that, for most items there is not much of a sample outside the south and the west Midlands).[23]

One word of which there is a decent sample (249 boundary features) is *herepaþ*, literally 'army-path', a word for 'main road' which in late Old English is rare outside Wessex and is recessive before *strǣt*. Its area of main currency is shown in Kitson (1995: map 22).[24] The grammarians cite it for syncope of medial *e* in compounds even after a short syllable (Campbell 1959:

[23] Charters are cited by number in Sawyer's (1968) hand-list, subdivided in lower-case roman where there is more than one boundary survey in a charter. Prefixed dates are what I take to be those of composition of the surveys, not always the same as the purported dates of the charters containing them. Manuscript dates, where material, are inserted parenthetically in upper-case roman numerals after dates of composition.

[24] Which errs in including a patch of Surrey; it should be redrawn along the Hampshire–Surrey border. The question is which side of that border to place the detached bounds S1559, which in part run along it. On the one hand they are introduced as being of Crondall and Itchell, which would put them in Hampshire; on the other hand the bounds themselves march with 'the lordships of Farnborough, Crondall and Itchell' (Sawyer 1968: 134), which

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§348; Hogg 1992a: §6.21) and for the fact that though it is a compound of *pæþ* 'path' where Germanic *a* as usual has become Old English *æ*, *æ* never appears in *herepaþ* in pre-Conquest texts. Campbell (1959: §335) formulates this as: 'In a group of words frequently used in weak stress, and in the second element of some compounds, *a* is treated as if it stood before a nasal, appearing as *a* or *o*.' Hogg (1992a: §6.4) is not so sure that the treatment is quite the same as before nasals and goes to greater length to try to define the stress conditions, though still inconclusively. Whatever the exact causes, charter boundaries may be expected to show something about the distribution of these effects. It will be seen from Table 4.1 that they not only do, they show more strikingly a third effect not mentioned by the grammarians, breaking of the tonic vowel to a diphthong before the consonant cluster resulting from syncope.[25]

In areas with plural samples the variant with *-o-* is always a minority form, but its frequency shows significant regional variation. In Somerset, Devon and Cornwall it is 32%; Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire 17%; Wiltshire 15%; Berkshire and Oxfordshire 13%; Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight with or without the Essex singleton 6%. This distribution is enough to show that treatment as if before a nasal is not the right formulation; if it were, the frequency would be highest in the west Midlands and should be a majority in Worcestershire, as it is for the unstressed syllable in *ondlong/andlang* 'along'.[26] What is going on surely is retraction of post-tonic *a* under the influence of the preceding labial. Preceding labials are a common factor in nearly all the forms Campbell (1959) and Hogg (1992a) cite under this head: *andswaru/ondsworu, sīðfæt/sīðfat, swa*, *hwa*, *was* and its negative *nas*; a following labial is conspicuous in *of*(-). It even seems from Campbell (1959: §73) that most instances of the rare *ot-* occur in words with a labial consonant soon following. Only *ac* 'but' has to be explained differently. The lower frequency of *-o-* forms in the south-east goes with a greater propensity there for *a* to interchange irregularly with *æ* (or, if you prefer to take a very long view, the eventual falling together of those two vowels was to some extent incipient there;[27] or on an even longer view, Old English phonemic separation of *æ* from *a* might never have been quite so fully established there).

would seem to place them in Surrey. Mr Michael Holroyd, an expert on local manorial history, has untied the Gordian knot by making them describe the manor of Cove in Crondall, with or without a part of Itchell as well.

[25] Counting is by boundary features not by individual spellings, which would skew the figures because recapitulation of features ('to X; from X', 'to X; along X', etc.) is a stylistic device commoner in the Midlands than the south. When there is recapitulation the two spellings usually agree in matters of linguistic substance. Only where there is significant disagreement are they treated separately as halves in the table.

[26] The figures I have for that word with the first syllable written out (it is often abbreviated *7*) are *ondlong*, *ondlang*, *olluncges* and like variants 226 features, *andlang*, *andlong* and variants 120 features, that is a 65% score for *ond*-based forms in Worcestershire.

[27] In this context the spellings *fræm* for *fram* and *ændlæng*, *ændlænd*, *ændlang*, *ændlanges* for *andlang*(*es*) in the late twelfth-century Hampshire survey S1558 are less well known than they deserve to be, not least because the available edition silently emends *ænd-* to *and-*.

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Table 4.1 *Linguistic variation in Old English* herepaþ *'main road'*

			Vowel of final syllable				Medial			Breaking in 1st. syll.	
County	Features	Recapitulations	*a*	*o*	*æ*	*e*	*-e-*	*-a-*	Syncope	*ea*	*eo*
Warwickshire	1	1	1						1		
Worcestershire	5	5	3+½	½					5	2	
Gloucestershire	6	4[a]	5	1			1		5	2[a]	
Somerset	34	17	23+½	10[b]		½[c]	15		19	4(or 5)[d]	
Cornwall	5	1+1W	3	2			1		4		
Devon	34	8	23	11			13+½		20+½	1	
Dorset	28	12[e]	26	2			18		10		
Wiltshire	63	20+3P	50+½	8+½	1[f]	1[g]	27+½		31+½	3+½[h]	
Hampshire	51	15+1P	46+½	2	2+½[i]		22+½		27+½	2	
Isle of Wight	4	2	3	1			1		3		
Essex	1		1						1		
Berkshire	15	7	13	2			3+½	½	10+½	2+½[j]	1
Oxfordshire	1		1				1				
West Riding of Yorkshire	1			1			1				
TOTALS	249	92+5irreg.[k]	201½	42½	3½	1½	107½	½	141	17/18	1

[a] Including 1055 (XII[1]) S1026 *s(e)althearpan*.
[b] Including 937 (XVIII) S432 *herworth*.
[c] 1033 (XII) S972 *herpeð* (acc.) beside *herpaðe* (dat.).
[d] The doubtful case is s.x[2]/xi (XI?) S443(i), whose MS reads *arpaðes* corresponding to *hærpaðes* in the essentially identical s.x[2]/xi (XII) S254(i).
[e] Including *ereðe* for one of the features in s.xi (XV) S342.
[f] 968 (XIV) S766(v).
[g] s.xii[2] sub-c.965 (XIII) S1577(i) *saltherpe*.
[h] Including *hearepoð* for one of three features in S393(i), a forgery based textually on 997 S891(i) which does not have the breaking.
[i] Two of three features in s.xiii[1] (XIII) S1559 and a recapitulation in s.xi (XII) S309.
[j] Including 958 (XIII) S651 *on þæne hearapod* (accusative) recapitulated *þonon anlang hearpodes* (genitive).
[k] Recapitulated as *paþ* (P) or *weg* (W); see notes 42 and 43.

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Of the five surveys whose recapitulations change between *-a-* and *-o-*, the textually related pair Worcs S1370(i)/S201(i) have *a* in the final syllable of a noun compound *folchearpað*, *-o-* medially before an inflexion in simplex *hearpoþes* (*-ð-*). Wilts S449(i) has uninflected *herpoþ* and inflected *herpaþes*, S272(ii) has unsyncopated *hærepaðe* and syncopated *herpoðes*; the textually related S1513(ii) reverses the order with *herpoðe* and *herpaðes* both inflected. There might conceivably be a genuine difference in accentuation patterns between descending stress in S449(i) and secondary stress spread over two short syllables in S1370(i), but it is hardly accidental that four of these five inconsistencies occur in texts involving abnormally long chains of copying by presumably non-local scribes. Those four may well all be due to scribal error. All five may be, because though S449 is extant as an 'original' charter of 939,[28] the manuscript is damaged and the gaps are made up from the Winchester cartulary,[29] which is also the source for S272 and S1513. The form *herpaþes* is preserved in the 'original' but *herpoþ* only in the cartulary.

As for the front vowel spellings, Wilts S1577(i)'s reflects reduction in a Franco-Latin milieu. The rest again are all in the Winchester cartulary, which has frequent scribal interchange of *æ* and *e*, so Som S972's uninflected *herpeð* followed by inflected *herpaðe* probably represents assimilation of the compound to simplex *pæð*. I feel that is likelier to be late pre-Conquest authorial than cartularial but I would not press this. Hants S309's *wicherpæðes* beside *wícherpaðe*, both inflected, looks cartularial. S1559's two features *herepæthe* beside one *herepathe* may well represent genuine instability in the very latest stage of post-Conquest Old English in what may have been the last patch of country to speak something closer to Old than Middle English.

The outlier WRYorks 963 S712(i) is anomalous not only in having *-poð* but in using the word at all so far from Wessex so late. It is hard to know what to make of it. The extreme possibilities are a precious sole relic of a second *herepað*-preferring subdialect or a misleading product of a south-westerner seeking his fortune up north. The latter speculation is made less plausible by the fact that bishop Oswald of Worcester did not become pluralistic archbishop of York until 971, and by peculiarities of organisation in the boundary clause which tend to suggest a man steeped in local custom, whose outside affinities, if any, should be with early Kentish intellectual patterns rather than up-to-date West Saxon ones.

[28] I use inverted commas to emphasise that whatever may be the case for the diplomatic, *no* charter is really 'original' as far as the bounds are concerned. But the level of coherence of linguistic distributions even after a little garbling in cartularies is so high as to prove that chancery scribes usually copied faithfully the lost local texts on which they must have relied.

[29] As the Old Minster, Winchester, cartulary British Library, Additional MS 15350 tends to be called for convenience. Most of it is twelfth century; S1559 and S1558 are in small parts which are later insertions.

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Somewhat over half the features show syncope of the medial vowel. The distribution looks from Table 4.1 roughly that of a sound change in progress, spreading from the Midland to the southern counties, but there are a lot of anomalies in detail (including again WRYorks S712(i)). The contrast between the Midlands and the south may well have been less than it looks, in that most of the midland data are from surveys of the late tenth and eleventh centuries, and even in Dorset, whose crude figures make it look most resistant to the change, forms with syncope replace those without as the predominant type in the 960s. Warks 922 S1289 already has syncope, so to some extent the dialectal contrast is real. The one Gloucestershire survey without syncope is the only one from before 960; it is also in the south of the county.

In Wiltshire and Hampshire distributions are seriously untidy, especially Hampshire, where syncope is present in most of the earliest items (854 S304, 868 S340, one of two features in 924 S2S3, 2½ of 3 features in 931 S412). Ninth-century southern charters, including S340, do somewhat mix their local dialect with Mercianising spelling-norms,[30] but such an explanation is not remotely adequate for so well and long sustained a sequence. What the early Hampshire forms rather show is that the accentual reduction which causes this syncope is not primarily in the compound *herepaþ* as such but as an element in longer name-compounds. The items with syncope in S304, S340, and S283 all have preceding qualifiers; the items without syncope in S283 and S412 are both simplex.[31] This points the way to a finer analysis of the distribution of syncope as in Table 4.2. Qualifiers are usually not repeated in recapitulations, so features are counted with *-e-* or syncope according to their first statement; hence slight discrepancies in the totals between this and Table 4.1.

As a final element in noun compounds,[32] whose primary stress is on the initial element, *her(e)paþ* has syncope in 86% of a sample of twenty-eight, the exceptions being one in Wiltshire (which is both the earliest datum there and in a survey on the southern boundary of the county) and three in Dorset

[30] Contrast S340 *aldcærmannæs/-es* with *ealdær-/ealdermannæs* for the same feature in the later forgery S273 which reuses the same survey. The frequent *æ* for *e* is cartularial (the Winchester cartulary again); *ald-* for *eald-* is a Mercianism.

[31] Though the latter is followed by a phrase expressing destination.

[32] *Þēodher(e)paþ* 'public highway' Som S380(i) (×2 features), Devon S387, Dorset S744 corruptly, Wilts S767; *folcherpaþ* 'public highway' Worcs S1370(i), S201(i); *friðherpaþ* 'privileged road' Wilts S424(i); *sealt-herpaþ* 'main road for transport of salt from Droitwich' Worcs S1348, Gloucs S414(ii), S1026, Wilts S1577(i); *wīcher(e)paþ* 'main road to Southampton' Dorset S429, Wilts S400, S492(i), Hants S487, S680, S309; *ceasterherpaþ* 'main road to Winchester(?)' Wilts S427; *hrycgherepaþ* 'main ridgeway' Dorset S534 corruptly: *wuduherpaþ*, *portherpaþ*, *Bæþherpaþ*, *Lundenherpaþ* 'main road to the wood' Worcs S1352(i), '... to the market-town' Wilts S586 (×2), '... to Bath' Som S692, S711, '... to London' Hants S381(i); and genitival compounds of destinations Som S571 *Wendan beorges hearpaþ*, Dorset S1044 *Cern hlinces herpaþ*. (Note that qualification of a road by destination does not entail that the charter boundary moves along it in the direction of that destination.) The recessiveness of *her(e)paþ* is illustrated by the survival of a stretch of the feature in S429 on the modern map as Week Street. It leads in the first instance to Wick in Downton, Wilts,

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Table 4.2 *Herepaþ* features by type or absence of qualifier

	Noun		Adjective		Direction/ number		Simplex			TOTALS		
County	*-e-*	Syncope	*-e-*	Syncope	*-e-*	Syncope	*-e-*	*-a-*	Syncope	*-e-*	Syncope	All
Warwickshire									1		1	1
Worcestershire		4							1		5	5
Gloucestershire		2	1	1					2	1	5	6
Somerset		5	1	1			14		13	15	19	34
Cornwall							1		4	1	4	5
Devon		1	1	1			13		18	14	20	34
Dorset	3	1	1	1	1		13		8	18	10	28
Wiltshire	1	7	2	4	1		25		23	29	34	63
Hampshire		4		7	2		22		16	24	27	51
Isle of Wight			1						3	1	3	4
Essex									1		1	1
Berkshire				1			4	1	9	4	11*	15
Oxfordshire			1							1		1
West Riding of Yorkshire							1			1		1
TOTALS	4	24	8	16	4	0	93	1	99	109	140	249

*Including the feature in S651 first stated with *-a-*.

(the three earliest of the four there).[33] When preceded by a weak adjective, when primary stress is on the noun, there is syncope in 67% of a sample of twenty-four.[34] With these should belong accentually two features qualified by number[35] and probably two qualified by compass direction.[36] Counting these with the adjectives reduces the proportion of syncope to 57%. Of features without a preceding qualifier only 52% have syncope.[37] This is so much less

but that seems unlikely ever to have been important enough to be named as the destination of a main road. Southampton (*Hamwic*) is the only reasonable candidate for the *wīc* in the other surveys.

[33] Wilts 928 S400, Dorset 935 S429, 948 S534, 966 S744.

[34] *Ealdan* 'old' Gloucs S664, S1346, Som S432 corruptly, S735, Devon S255, S433(i), Dorset S419(ii), S290(i), Wilts S766(i), S272(i), S1513(i), Hants S283, S532(i); *brādan* 'broad' Wilts S640, S706, S767, Hants S304, S340, S273, Berks S597, Oxon S902; *wīdan* 'wide' Hants S360(vi); *norðlangan* 'north-tending' Hants S842(vi); *sandihtan* 'sandy' IoW S1663. That variety in adjectives is only seen at the south-eastern end of the range may be another aspect of recessiveness. The items with *-e-* in this list are those in S664, S735, S255, S419(ii), S272 (i), S1513(i), S1663, and S902.

[35] 'One/a' Dorset S334 *on anne herepaþ*; 'the other' Wilts S459 *on þane oðere herepaþ* (the second in the survey).

[36] Hants 935 S430 *on þæne east hærepaþ* and the same feature reused in the textually derivative 980 S837.

[37] With *-e-*: Som S345, S440 (×2), S475 (×2), S476 (×2), S570, S785 (×2), S343 (×2), S414(i) (×2); Corn S755(i); Devon S298(ii), S405(i) (×4), S442 (×2), S498, S601, S255 (×2), S971, S390; Dorset S419(ii), S429, S474 (×3), S485(ii) (×2), S534, S632, S630(iv), S334, S342 (×2); Wilts S326, S364 (×2), S438, S468, S459, S522, S582(i), S582(ii), S891(i) (×3), S275(i) (×3),

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than in the noun compounds[38] as to make clear that syncope of *her(e)paþ* began in noun compounds where it is the second element, and spread from that to more strongly stressed contexts as well as from midland to south-western counties.

Some features have phrases of destination or position following the noun, thus Hants S412 *to ðon herpaðe ðe scyt to þære byrig to west cleran. west andlang herpaðes* 'to the main road which runs to Burghclere; west along the main road'. This complication cuts across the categories in the table: such phrases are not found with noun compounds but are found with both adjectivally qualified and simplex features, both with *-e-* and with syncope.[39] It does not affect variation in *her(e)paþ* unless to increase somewhat the chance of a change of mind between first statement and recapitulation.[40] The stylistic device of recapitulation is applied noticeably unevenly between the categories. 64% of the features stated as noun compounds are recapitulated, usually as simplex but agreeing in respect of syncope with the noun compound.[41] Only some 39% of adjectivally and similarly qualified features are recapitulated,[42] and 35% of simplex features.[43]

S275(ii) (×2), S540(i), S229(i) (×3), S272(ii), S393(i) (×3); Hants S283, S412, S417 (×2), S418 (×3), S430, S446, S463, S693(i), S690, S754, S837, S874 (×2), S970, S276, S1558, S1559 (×3); Berks S413, S496, S672(i), S790(i); WRYorks S712(i). With *-a-*: Berks S651. With syncope: Warks S1289; Worcs S1348; Gloucs S414(ii), S141; Som S441 (×2), S571, S596, S697, S709, S254(i), S443(i), S972, S1006 (×2), S1571, S1572; Corn S951(i) (×2), S1019(i), S1019(ii); Devon S601, S721, S795 (×2), S1863, S890(i) (×3), S910(i), S1387 (×2), S998, S433(ii) (×2), S1033(i), S1033(ii), S386, S389; Dorset S736 (×2), S347, S933, S1004 (×4); Wilts S416, S427, S438, S449(i), S468, S469(i), S1811 (×2), S522, S631, S608, S766(iii) (×2), S766(v), S379, S850, S881 (×3), S999, S272(ii), S1513(ii) (×2); Hants S412 (×2), S430, S463, S488, S487, S811, S693(ii), S699, S376 (×2), S381(i), S837, S842(vi), S360(i) (×2); IoW S1662(ii), S842(i), S842(ii); Essex S717; Berks S500 (×2), S558, S560, S577 (×2), S761 (×2), S673(i).

[38] But *pace* Hogg (1992a: §6.21), syncope is still the majority form.

[39] Adjectival with *-e-* Dorset S419(ii), Wilts S272(i), S1513(i), with syncope Hants S340, S273; simplex with *-e-* Devon S601, Wilts S272(ii), S1513(ii), Hants S412, S418, Berks S672(i), with syncope Worcs S1348, Dorset S1004, Wilts S449(i), Hants S412.

[40] The previous note's features in Devon S601, Wilts S272(ii), and Hants S412 first stated with *-e-* are all recapitulated with syncope. So is the similarly distant recapitulation in Hants S430 described in note 42 below. So are simplex features in Wilts S522, Berks S413, and the one with *-a-* in Berks S651. Adjectivally qualified features in Wilts S640, S706 are first stated with syncope and recapitulated simplex with *-e-*; one of three simplex features in S881 is first stated with syncope and recapitulated with *-e-*.

[41] Worcs S1370(i), S1352(i), S201(i), S1348; Gloucs S414(ii), S1026; Som S571, S692, S711; Devon S387; Dorset S744, S1004; Wilts S400, S427, S492(i), S586; Hants S680, S309. The qualifier is included in the recapitulation only in S1026, S400, S492(i) and S309.

[42] Gloucs S664, S1346; Som S735; Dorset S334; Wilts S640, S706, S766(i); Hants S430, S837, S842(vi); Berks S597. The qualifier is included in the recapitulation in S1346 and S766(i). In S430 the recapitulation is as a positional phrase for the following feature *in on þan hærpaðæ*; the textually derivative S837 corrupts it to *in on þær paðæ* as if from *paþ* with wrong gender.

[43] Features first stated with *-e-* are recapitulated in Som S345, S440 (×2), S475 (×2), S570, S343 (×2), S414(i) (×2), Devon S442, S601, S255, Dorset S534, S632, S334, S342 (×2), Wilts S364, S522, S582(i), S582(ii), S275(ii), S272(ii), Hants S412, S418, S463, S690, S874, S970, S1558, Berks S413, S672(i); with *-a-* Berks S651; with syncope Warks S1289, Worcs S1348, Som S441, S709, S972, Corn S951(i) (as *weg*), S1019(i), Devon S721, S910(i), S998, S433(ii),

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Taking the simplex features apart from the rest reinforces the initial impression of a sound change in progress, but chronological patchiness of county samples makes it hard to pin down. S1289 may mean that *-e-* forms were obsolete in the Midlands by the early tenth century, but a single datum is too little for confident assertion. In the south it would be reasonable to say that forms with syncope came to preponderate in most of Wiltshire in the 930s or 940s, in much of Hampshire in the 940s, in Somerset in the 950s, in Devon and Dorset in the 960s, in Cornwall later than that, in south Hampshire and far south Wiltshire probably likewise, and in north-east Hampshire probably never. However one draws the line there are enough exceptions far enough either side of it for us to suspect that sociolinguistic factors were also at play, correct speakers preferring forms with *-e-*, demotic speakers forms with syncope. If true, that may modify the geographic picture. It is noteworthy that most late *-e-* forms in Wiltshire are in a single survey on its southern border, 997 S891(i), and a group of derivative forgeries. If that single surveyor happened to be motivated by correctness for this item, it removes most of the reason for thinking *-e-* forms predominant anywhere in Wiltshire after the 950s. Other details suggest he was not,[44] but the possibility of this kind of interaction of variables has to be borne in mind when interpreting charter material, though its potential effects are not usually as great as this.

After syncope of medial *e*, the remaining stressed *e* is in the position before *r* + consonant where in early Old English *æ* was broken to *ea*, and *e* was broken to *eo*. And in some 12 per cent of the features with syncope, breaking occurs. The charter boundaries in question are Worcs 969 S1370(i) and s.x^{2} S201(i); Gloucs 984 S1346 and 1055 S1026; Somerset 956 S571 (two features), s.xi S1571, s.xi^{2} S1572; Devon 1061 S1033(i); Wilts two and a half of three features in 994 S881; Hants *c.* 964 S376 (two features); Berks 951 S558 (half a feature), 953 S560, 958 S651 and 990s S673(i). The broken diphthong is in every case *ea* except in Berks S560, which has *eo*.

To these might well be added Som s.x^{2}/xi^{1} (XI) S443(i)'s acephalous spelling *arpaðes*,[45] for whose *a* breaking is the only rational origin.[46] Rationality is however not guaranteed: S443 is a late Anglo-Saxon forgery probably recycling the survey of an earlier genuine charter now lost. The essentially identical s.x^{2}/xi^{1} (XI) S254(i), in a more blatant forgery, has

Dorset S736 (×2), S1004 (×2), Wilts S449(i), S469(i), S1811, S766(iii) (×2 as *paþ*), S766(v) (as *paþ*), S881 (×3), S1513(ii), Hants S412 (×2), S699, S376, IoW S1662(ii), S842(i), Berks S500 (×2), S558. S364's feature is stated three times, all with identical spelling.

[44] The cartulary source, Add. 15350 yet again, spells the features dative *harepoðe* beside twice genitive *herepaðes*. The first feature is governed by *on* connoting motion and should be accusative, as it is in S275(i) and S393(i) *hearepoð*, S229(i) *herepað*: S540(i) lacks this feature. The consensus of the forgeries supports *-o-*, implying that the original local surveyor was not wedded to a single correct form for this item.

[45] Not the only acephalous spelling in that boundary: it ran earlier from a <*c*>*umbes heafde*.

[46] So for a rarity Kemble was a wiser editor than Birch. Against that, its essentially identical fellow-forgery s.x^{2}/xi^{1} (XII) S254(i) reads *hærpaðæs* for the same feature.

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hærpaðæs for the same feature. One feature out of three in Wilts s.xi S393(i), one of a group of forgeries based on the extant 997 S891(i), has breaking even without syncope, probably by scribal confusion from two diphthongs *eo* in the preceding feature-name and an *ea* in the following one. One of S651's two spellings likewise has medial vowel not syncope, but since the vowel is *a* not *e* it must be epenthetic, repeating *a* from the diphthong in the underlying syncopated form.

Whether or not these dubious features are included, the sample is large enough for *herpað/-poð* to be a real linguistic phenomenon, a phonetic variant sporadically occurring in late Old English. The distribution is not strongly dialectal (though distinctly rarer in south Wessex than in north Wessex and the adjacent Midlands) nor chronological (though relatively commoner in late texts, as the underlying syncope is). It would look like one of the most intermittent dot-maps in *LALME* (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986).

The cause of the phenomenon is not likely to be strictly phonetic. If it were, why is the diphthong nearly always *ea*, not *eo*? That only works phonetically if the *e* from *i*-mutated *a* (which the stressed *e* of *here* is etymologically) was still distinct from, and appreciably more open than, etymological *e*. That was true in the part of the south-west Midlands where the early Middle English 'AB language' and similar dialects developed,[47] and may still have been in the whole west midland dialect region, as Kristensson (1986: 451–3) holds. But it is not supposed to be true of any part of Wessex. More likely the impulse for *hearpað* was analogical, a feeling that *e* ought only to occur before *r* + consonant as part of a diphthong, channelled by the similarity of the already existing word *hearpe* 'lyre, "harp"'.

Most charters, whether or not they have syncopation or breaking in the word, decline *herepaþ* respectably as a strong masculine noun; thus Gloucs 984 S1346 *up on ðone ealdan hearpað*; *of ðæm ealdan hearpaðe*. The analogical explanation for the breaking is strengthened by the fact that Gloucs 1055 S1026 actually levels it with weak feminine 'harp': *þ cymeð in þa sealt hearpan. Swa suð æfter sealt hearpan*. So does the Franco-Latinate Wilts s.xi^{2} S1577(i) *de saltherpe*. There is a double coincidence here, in that both are the latest texts surviving from their respective counties to use it, and both do so in the compound *sealtherpað*. It looks rather as if noun compounds were leading the way in a final reduction of this obsolescent word in the same way as they had for syncope. This makes one wonder if 'harp' in other place-names may be a reduction of *herepað*. The candidate which springs to mind is the Welsh Harp in Middlesex, now the name of a reservoir but formerly an inn on the main road (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1942: 59–60). The road in question is Watling Street, which was the main route toward mid and north Wales.

[47] As demonstrated by Jack (1990) developing earlier arguments of Kristensson (1986).

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We cannot prove that the inn had antecessors far enough back for the phrase to have been current; but the road might well have been called by Londoners *se Welisca herepaþ*. I like to think Richard Hogg would have been amused. I know he would have agreed with me that contrary to the views of some writers there is an awful lot of genuine data-based Old English dialectology still to be done.[48]

[48] I did some of it in a book finished in the 1990s, but was not able to interest publishers in coming to a reasonable agreement about the maps.

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