

The Place Names of Lancashire: their Origin and History. By HENRY CECIL WYLD, M.A., in collaboration with T. O. HIRST, M.A., Ph.D. (London: Constable, 1911.)

The Place-names of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Investigated by F. W. MOORMAN, B.A., Ph.D. (Leeds: The Thoresby Society, 1910.)

THESE two volumes are welcome additions to the scanty list of scientific treatises on the place-names of particular English districts. The authors are well versed in English historical grammar and phonology, and in the general principles of etymological research. They have, moreover, been careful to base their investigations on extensive collections of the forms in which the names appear in early documents. The difficulties with which they have had to contend are, however, far greater than those encountered, for instance, by Professor Skeat in dealing with the local nomenclature of certain south-midland counties. Hardly any of the names of Lancashire and the West Riding are found in any earlier record than Domesday Book; indeed, for a large part of Lancashire even the aid of Domesday is wanting. The consequence is that very many names, the etymology of which would probably have been quite clear if we could find them in English charters of the tenth or eleventh century, are either hopelessly obscure or can be interpreted only by more or less doubtful conjecture. It is therefore not the fault of Professors Wyld and Moorman that the amount of absolutely certain etymological result in their volumes is comparatively small. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that if before undertaking the investigation of the names of Lancashire and Yorkshire they had had more experience in the study of the nomenclature of districts better provided with early records, they would often have seen their way to conjectures more in accordance with general analogies than those which they have proposed.

In the preface to the Lancashire book Professor Wyld explains that the documentary and topographical research is the work of Dr. Hirst, and that he is himself solely responsible for the etymological conclusions. While this kind of division of labour may have its advantages, it involves some liability to oversights for which neither of the collaborators may be definitely to blame, but which are none the less unfortunate in result. Partly, perhaps, from this cause, and partly from that already suggested, the book falls seriously short of what might have been expected from the author's known scholarship and ability.

It is a matter of common knowledge among students of local nomenclature that a large number of English villages are named from the streams on which they stand. Sometimes the river-name is used as a place-name without any addition; sometimes it takes an affix such as *-tūn* or *-lāh*. Many of these names of rivers and brooks are obsolete, but are preserved in the lists of boundaries appended to Old English charters. Now an etymologist who is familiar with the frequency of this mode of formation will, when he meets with a name of a village of which the first element appears to admit of no plausible explanation from English or Scandinavian sources, naturally consider the possibility that the obscure syllable may be the name of a stream. This possibility has evidently not been

present to Professor Wyld's mind; indeed he has in many instances not thought it worth while to look at the Ordnance map to see whether the modern name of a river does not furnish the solution of his etymological problem. Altcar, for instance, is on the river Alt, but the author can only suggest that the first syllable represents some unknown personal name. It might be said that this river-name is possibly an etymologizing figment like Ver, Penk, and Kimble; but in any case it ought to have been mentioned, and reasons assigned for regarding it as spurious. Cockerham and Cokersand, in which Professor Wyld finds the genitive of an unrecorded Norse personal name Kok, are on the river Cocker. The genuineness of this name is attested by its occurrence in Cumberland and elsewhere, and it occurs frequently in the Cokersand cartulary. The same important record, of which the authors have not made sufficient use, mentions Pilling (in various forms) both as the name of a river and that of a place on its banks. The river and the village still retain their name, as any large-scale map will show; but Professor Wyld mentions only the village-name. Wennington, again, is treated as a derivative of a man's name Wenna, no reference being made to the river Wenning (*Wennighe* in the thirteenth century). There are other instances in which the evidence of modern maps and ancient charters as to river-names has been similarly neglected; and I think that several place-names which Professor Wyld is put to desperate shifts to explain may with some probability be conjectured to contain obsolete and unrecorded names of streams. I will here only mention Cartmel. The last syllable the author rightly identifies with the Old Norse *melr*, sandbank, but for the first part he can suggest no more likely etymon than the Old Norse *kerti*, a candle. Now Cart is known as the name of two rivers in Renfrewshire, and the modern name of the river at Cartmel, Eea, is no name at all, but merely the Old English (or the Old Norse¹) word for 'river'. In view of these facts, it appears not unlikely that Cartmel means 'the sandbank of the river Cart'.²

Historical considerations would lead us to expect to find in Lancashire some names of British etymology, representing a comparatively late period of the language; and in fact there are several names which in their oldest recorded forms have a decidedly Welsh appearance. Ince (*Ynes*, 1300-01) looks like *ynys*, island, a word often applied to inland places presumably once surrounded by marsh. Penwortham is in Domesday Book *Peneverdant* (Professor Wyld has omitted this from his list of forms, but he gives *Penuerthan*, 1140-49), which suggests *pen-y-werddon*, 'head of the green' (the suffix, however, differs). Penketh may very well stand for *pen-coed*, equivalent to Woodhead; and Wigan (*Wygayn*, 1245) may be a derivative of *gwig*, a word which seems to represent an early adoption of the Latin *vicus*, and is common in Welsh place-names. For the first two of these names the author offers no explanation, contenting

¹ So far as I am able to discover, the pronunciation represented by 'Eea' might, according to the phonology of the North Lonsdale dialect, represent either the O. E. *ea* or the O. N. *ā*.

² The original form would probably be *Kerte*. It is noteworthy that Oluf Rygh has inferred from certain place-names that two rivers in Norway must anciently have borne the name *Kjarta*.

himself with quoting the early forms, and as to the others he makes suggestions which he admits to be unsatisfactory; but the view that the names may be British is not mentioned even for condemnation. Celtomania has in past times done a great deal of mischief in local etymology, but Professor Wyld sometimes exhibits an extreme Celtophobia which is quite as unscientific. For the name of the river Conder he cites a thirteenth-century form *Gondouere*; the neglected Cokersand cartulary gives *Kondover* a few years earlier. Now this is obviously a British name, containing the word for 'water' (in modern Welsh *dufr*, *dwr*), which many would-be etymologists know only too well. There are rivers in England called Candover and Conover; in Cardiganshire there is a *Camddwr*, 'crooked water'; perhaps *Can-ddwr*, 'white water,' is a possible name, though I do not know any instance of it. The fluctuation between C and G in the early forms of Conder may be due (linguistic chronology does not forbid the supposition) to the mutation required by Welsh grammar when the feminine noun *afon* (river) is prefixed.³ According to Professor Wyld, however, *Gondouere* is a hybrid compound of the Norse female name *Gunnhildr* and the Old English *ofer*, bank of a river. This is startling enough; but Professor Wyld is so far from thinking it extraordinary that an English river should be called after a Norsewoman that he discovers a second instance in Irwell, which he says contains the Norse female name *Yrr*, followed by the English *well*. The name *Yrr*, by the way, though according to Oluf Rygh it occurs in a Norwegian place-name, seems to have been borne only by one historically known person, the daughter of Geirmund, mentioned in the *Landnámabók*. The Lancashire Ireby and Ireleth are referred by Professor Wyld to the same personal name. The former might possibly be *Írabýr*, Irishmen's farm.

Professor Wyld does allow a Celtic etymology for Manchester (in Domesday Book *Mamecestre*; the earlier *Mameceaster* of the Chronicle is not mentioned). But there is no good ground for his assertion that 'the first element is clearly a personal name'. There can be no doubt that *Mameceaster* is, like Mancetter (the Roman *Manduessedum*), a hybrid formation, containing a fragment of the British name which appears in a multitude of corrupt forms in the manuscripts of the *Antonine Itinerary*. Whether the British place-name is derived from a personal name or not cannot be determined until the correct form is ascertained. I have tried to show, in the pages of this Review (xv. 495), that the extant evidence points to *Mammium* as the probable original; but I was careful to admit that the evidence is not decisive.

It seems to me possible, though by no means certain, that, like Manchester, Liverpool is a hybrid formation of which the first part is British. Professor Wyld with great confidence derives it from the Old English

³ It must, however, be remembered that some names of undoubted Germanic origin, in Lancashire as elsewhere, show the same variation in the initial letter of their early forms. On the other hand, one or two of the Lancashire names in which C alternates with G are possibly British. Crimbles (in Domesday *Crimeles*, in Cokersand charters *Crimell*, *Grymbles*) looks like the Welsh *crimell*, a ledge or ridge; and the first element of Cunliffe (*Cundeclif*, *Gundeclif*) may represent some compound of *cwn*, a summit.

personal name *Leofhere*. There is no phonological objection to this; the disappearance of the genitive ending *s* is common enough in place-names. But the name must originally have belonged to the tidal inlet of the Mersey, which appears in old maps as 'The Pool'; and it seems to me more likely that so large a piece of water would retain its pre-English name (it would almost certainly have one), with the addition of the English *pool*, than that it should be named after a person. The Welsh dictionaries give *llifer*, a flood (cognate with the verb *llifeirio*, to overflow); and this word seems appropriate enough as a name for the inlet. The earliest known form of Liverpool, *Liuerpul* (1198), agrees at least as well with my conjecture as with Professor Wyld's, and there is no documentary evidence on the other side. It might help to decide the question if we could discover the etymology of the Lancashire place-name Little Lever (already *Leuer* in the twelfth century), as to which the author offers no suggestion. Professor Wyld cites examples to prove (what no one would deny) that a 'pool' could be named after a person. He is able to find only three instances: *Offepul* in a spurious charter, Steerspool-in-Furness, and Otterspool (in early documents *Otrepul*, *Otirpul*, &c., always without the *s*), which he thinks to be derived from *Ohthere*. (A better example, *Ōsricespul*, may be found in Bosworth-Toller.) As to Otterspool, it may be remarked that *Ōhthere* would not by normal phonetic development become *Otter* (what it ought to become we see from the Cheshire place-name Oughtrington), and that 'otter-pool', as a descriptive term, is not more extraordinary than *oterhola* and *oterburna*, which occur in charters. Professor Wyld's discussion of Liverpool contains one excellent suggestion, viz. that the form *Litherpul*, once very common, is a perversion due to association with the etymologically unconnected name Litherland.

The treatment of the names of Scandinavian origin is in several instances unsatisfactory. I will here refer only to the article on Kellamergh. This name appears about A. D. 1200 as *Kelfgrimeshereg*; the other early examples have *Kelgrimes*-. It is obvious that we have here the genitive of a Norse personal name compounded with *-grimr*; but what is the first element? It might be possible to find an explanation for *Kelgrimes*-, but *Kelfgrimes*-, which occurs only once, seems hopeless, and is perhaps due to a scribal error. Professor Wyld's explanation is based on a curious misapprehension. The late Oluf Rygh, in his work on old personal names in Norwegian place-names, states that the Old Norse name *Þjóðolfr* survives in Norwegian use as *Kjǫlv*, and shows from documents that this phonetic change is as old as the sixteenth century, when the place-names which appear earlier as *Þjóðolfsrud* and *Þjóðolfsstad* were written *Kjǫlsrud* and *Kjǫlstad*. Professor Wyld carries the special phonology of sixteenth-century Norway into the Scandinavian England of the twelfth century, and says that *Kelfgrim* represents an earlier **Þjóðolfgrim*, 'an unusual and perhaps a late form of compound personal name.' (Late it certainly is: its exact date is A. D. 1911.) Strange to say, he actually quotes from Rygh the spelling *Þjóðolfsass* as occurring in 1308, which proves that even in Norway the name had at that time not yet assumed the form which he supposes to have existed in England a century earlier. As the initial *kj* cannot have developed from *þj* directly, but only through the intermediate stage of *tj*,

its origin must be posterior to the Middle Norwegian change of *þ* into *t*.

Professor Wyld's article on the word *ing*, a meadow, appears to me unsound. The word in dialect use is simply the normal modern English phonetic descendant of the Old Norse *eng*; as *string*, *wing* come from Middle English *streng*, *wenge*. According to the *Dialect Dictionary*, it is used in those counties that have a large Scandinavian element in their dialect, and in no others except Kent, Sussex, and Surrey. As to Kent and Sussex, one of the most puzzling phenomena of English dialects is the presence of several apparently unmistakable Scandinavian words in the speech of those counties. For the occurrence of the word in Surrey, the only evidence cited by Dr. Wright is a solitary place-name. So far, then, there is no reason for supposing that the word in modern dialects has any other source than the Old Norse *eng*. Professor Wyld admits that Old English did not, so far as is known, possess the word *eng*; but he asserts that it had two cognate and synonymous words, both written *ing*, but one having a guttural and the other a palatal *g*. He grants that these words have not been found separately (the instance alleged by Middendorff is a scribal blunder), but he finds the palatal form in *Waneting* (Wantage), *Lacing* (Lockinge), and various other place-names. Now *Waneting* and *Lacing* are shown by charters to have been river-names as well as place-names. Other Old English names of brooks (*torrentes*) are *Lidding*⁴ and *Theodninge*.⁵ *Duluting*, now represented by the village-name Doultling (Somerset), is recorded in Old English only as the name of a stream; and modern river-names in *-ing* and *-inge* are by no means uncommon (Lancashire, as we have seen, has a *Pilling* and a *Wenning*). Hence, on the doubtful assumption that the two syllables spelt *ing* are independent nouns and not mere suffixes, it is natural to suppose that they mean 'stream' and not 'meadow'. That they are etymologically cognate with *eng* there is nothing to prove:⁶ for all we know, *eng* may descend from a pre-Germanic **ankiā* and *ing* from a pre-Germanic **engho-*, **enghio-*.

These criticisms, which could be largely added to if space permitted, are intended in no hostile or captious spirit. The good qualities of work of this kind are not, as the faults are, capable of being shown by examples, and therefore this notice must appear one-sided. I can only say briefly that the book, over and above its obvious value as a repertory of documentary forms, contains many useful observations, with regard both to general principles and to details, and that no student of local etymology can afford to neglect it.

Professor Moorman's book has for me a peculiar interest, for my own studies in local etymology began—more than forty years ago—with the place-names of the West Riding, and I have ever since been in the habit of making note of any fresh evidence bearing on their interpretation. Many of the conclusions arrived at in this volume coincide with those which I find in my early notebooks. I regret to see

⁴ Birch, *Cart. Sax.* no. 201.

⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 230.

⁶ The fact that the variety of Plattdeutsch so unhappily mis-called 'East Frisian' has a word *inge* meaning 'meadow' is no proof that the word is West Germanic; even the ablaut-grade of the Low-German word is very uncertain.

that many of the etymologically most interesting place-names of the Riding are omitted. The author explains in the preface that he has confined his attention to those names which are found in Mr. Skaife's editions of the Yorkshire Domesday and of Kirkby's Inquest. No doubt he had a right to limit the scope of his work as it seemed to him expedient; but the book as it stands is incomplete. In the bibliography there is no mention of the *Monasticon*, but as most of the documents in that work are now accessible in separately published cartularies, it is possible that little harm has been done by the omission. The index to the *Monasticon* would, however, have supplied a reference for Halifax which (if the document be genuine) is a century earlier than the first instance cited.

On the whole, the merits and defects of this volume are much of the same kind as those of Professor Wyld's work. Where the evidence is really decisive (which perhaps happens somewhat oftener with the Yorkshire names than with those of Lancashire) the author usually draws the right conclusion, and his exposition of the general principles of research is often instructive. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence that his preparatory studies in the local nomenclature of England generally have not been so thorough as could be desired.

In the course of his discussion, which is in general satisfactory, of the various meanings of the suffix *-ing* in Old English, Professor Moorman says that it is often a substitute for the ending *-an* of the genitive of personal names of the weak declension. (The context shows that he is really speaking of Old English, not of the much later analogical change of *-an* into *-ing*, which indeed he seems to have overlooked altogether.) By way of illustration, he states that if the Old English form of Waddington was *Wadingatūn*, the first element must be regarded as a patronymic, but if it was *Wadingtūn* we must interpret *Wading* as equivalent to the genitive *Wadan*. The theory that *-ing* is equivalent to a genitive suffix is Kemble's; but if it were true at all it would be impossible to restrict its application to the weak declension, for the charters abound with names like *Wulflāfingtūn*, *Folcwininglond*, *Cœlmundinghaga*, derived from personal names which form their genitives in *-es*. Professor Moorman's novel modification of Kemble's hypothesis is therefore a change for the worse. Germanic philology, however, lends no support either to Kemble's original view or to that which, in deference to certain criticisms, he afterwards substituted for it: viz., that *-ing* is an adjectival suffix with possessive meaning. My own provisional opinion is that the genitives plural ending in *-inga* often lost their final *a* in polysyllabic names. The ending *-ingas*, when attached to a personal name, I regard as always patronymic. The facts by which Kemble's theory was suggested can, I think, be otherwise explained. In designating a house or property by the name of its owner, it would often be equally natural to use the genitive of the man's name or its patronymic derivative, just as in modern days we may speak either of 'Nokes's farm' or 'the Nokeses' farm'. The possibility that this may have in course of time given rise to a habit of using *-ing* as a mere possessive ending I see no reason to dispute.

That English place-names often contain personal names which do not happen to be found in the extant records is a well-ascertained fact.

But some scientific knowledge of the principles of Old English personal nomenclature is necessary before venturing to assign an unknown personal name as the etymon of a place-name ; and Professor Moorman frequently shows that he has not made any thorough study of this subject. No scholar of experience in this field will for a moment entertain his view that *Hecmund* in Heckmondwike (*Hecmundeswyke*) is derived from *hæc*, a wicket-gate ; his alternative suggestion that it is not a proper name but an appellative meaning 'wicket-keeper' is even worse. The name is probably the well-known *Hæahmund* ; the change of *hēχ* into *hek* is a sound-substitution for which many parallels could be found. Again, the author supposes that *Taddenes-scylf* (Tanshelf) was called after a man whose name (or nickname) was a compound of *tāde*, toad, and *Dene*, Dane. We can be pretty sure that the name of the owner of Tanshelf was not 'Toad-Dane', though what it really was is not so certain. I think it not unlikely that *Taddenes* represents *Tātwinēs*, and that the Domesday *Tateshala* (which belongs either to the same place or to one closely adjacent) stands for a contracted pronunciation of *Tātwinēshealth*, Tatwine's haugh.

The mistaken statement that Leeds is mentioned in Nennius (in the form *Leodes*) is apparently due to citation at second hand, as the reference given is to the place (cap. 65) in which a mention of Baeda's *regio Loidis* might have been expected. Another mistake that seems to proceed from the same cause is the attribution to Camden of the derivation (which the author justly condemns) of Halifax from 'the holy face' of John the Baptist. Camden's romantic story about the 'holy hair' (*hālig fear*) of a murdered virgin (which the author seems not to have met with) looks rather suspicious, but it may contain a kernel of genuine tradition. At all events Camden's etymology is linguistically unobjectionable, while Professor Moorman's attempt to read a topographically descriptive sense into the name is on several grounds inadmissible. Occasionally the etymology proposed for a place-name yields an extravagantly improbable meaning, as, for instance, the suggestion, that Rilston (*Rilestone*) may mean 'the enclosure of the mob or rabble'. The Icelandic word *rill*, a mob, by the way, is not known to have existed in Old Norse ; the authority cited for it is Björn Halldórsson's dictionary in the eighteenth century.

The names Adel (Domesday *Adele*) and Idle (*Ydele*, 1280) are conjectured to represent respectively the Old English forms *Adanlæh* and *Idanlæh*, containing genitives of personal names. I do not think the reduction of *-læh* to *-l* ever occurs ; the instances alleged are at least highly suspicious. The identification of Bootle with the Domesday *Boltelai* is not recognized by Messrs. Wyld and Hirst, and their list of early forms for Bootle does not include any that point to an ending *-læh*. The correctness of the identification is, however, supported by the position of the name in the document, and the probability is that the name had two forms, the one simple and the other compound. Trendle (Somerset) appears in a charter as *Trendeleah*, but this doubtless stands for *Trendel-læh*. What Adel really means I do not know ; the obvious suggestion that it may be *adela*, puddle, sewer, is not very likely. But I see no reason why

Idle may not mean deserted or waste land ; compare *Idelhiwisc* in Kemble; *Cod. Dipl.* no. 1163.

In conclusion, I should like to mention a rather interesting point connected with one of the names which Professor Moorman has explained successfully. In the neighbourhood of Hunshelf (the Old English form of which would be *Hūnes-scylfe*) there is a place called Unsliven Bridge. I strongly suspect that Unsliven (for which some maps give the perverted form *Unshriven*) is an alteration of *Hunshilven*, representing an Old English genitive *Hūnes-scylfan*, or (if the inflexion *-an* be inadmissible in this district ?) the genitive plural *-scylfena*.

These two volumes are the work of scholars who have won deservedly high repute in other departments of English philology. All the more forcibly do their shortcomings illustrate the neglected truth that the investigation of the origin of place-names demands a special kind of preparation, for the absence of which neither linguistic knowledge nor general training in philological inquiry can possibly compensate.

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? Professor Moorman constantly assumes it in his restorations of Old English forms, but I doubt whether he is right in so doing. See my article in *The Academy*, 17 February 1883, p. 116, and Professor Napier's remarks in his paper on 'The Franks Casket' in the *Furnivall Celebration Volume*, 1900.