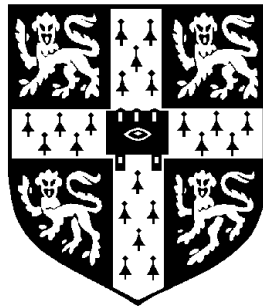


E. C. QUIGGIN MEMORIAL LECTURES 12

CAROLE HOUGH

**Toponymicon and Lexicon in North-West
Europe: ‘Ever-Changing Connection’**



DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE AND CELTIC

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Edmund Crosby Quiggin (1875-1920) was the first teacher of Celtic in the University of Cambridge, as well as being a Germanist. His extraordinarily comprehensive vision of Celtic studies offered an integrated approach to the subject: his combination of philological, literary, and historical approaches paralleled those which his older contemporary, H. M. Chadwick, had already demonstrated in his studies of Anglo-Saxon England and which the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic continues to seek to emulate. The Department has wished to commemorate Dr Quiggin's contribution by establishing in his name, and with the support of his family, an annual lecture and a series of pamphlets. The focus initially was on the sources for Mediaeval Gaelic History. Since 2006 the Quiggin Memorial Lecture is on any aspect of Celtic and/or Germanic textual culture taught in the Department.

Toponymicon and Lexicon in North-West Europe: 'Ever-Changing Connection'

© Carole Hough

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Toponymicon and Lexicon in North-West Europe: ‘Ever-Changing Connection’

CAROLE HOUGH

1. Introduction

It is a really great pleasure to be invited to deliver the twelfth E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lecture.¹ I should like to use this opportunity to talk about some of the exciting current developments within place-name studies. My topic is the relationship between the linguistic units or ‘elements’ used in the formation of the place-names of north-west Europe, and the linguistic units or ‘words’ available in contemporary vocabulary. This interface between the corpus of place-names or ‘toponymicon’ and the corpus of vocabulary words or ‘lexicon’ is an area where important revisionist work has recently been carried out.

My lecture has three main aims. Firstly, to outline the stages by which a new paradigm has become established. Secondly, to suggest some further directions in which it might be developed. Thirdly, to discuss some implications for our understanding of linguistic history, and of the interaction between the Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic peoples of the North Sea Littoral.

I hope in this way to pay tribute to an eminent scholar who was both a Germanist and a Celticist, and who combined an expertise in literature with keen insights into non-literary forms of language. It is a privilege to be able to celebrate his memory.

2. Place-names and language

I remember very clearly the first sentence of the first lecture that I ever gave to an undergraduate audience at the University of Nottingham:

The most important thing to remember about place-names is that they all originated as a description of the place in the ordinary, everyday language of the time.

That statement was in line with current scholarly thinking some twenty years ago, and indeed throughout most of the twentieth century. Were I to dust off that old lecture and prepare it for delivery to a new generation of students, I should have to adopt a strategy similar to that recommended by the Lord Chancellor towards the end of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Iolanthe* in order to avoid a tricky legal dilemma:

The most important thing to remember about place-names is that they did *not* all originate as a description of the place in the ordinary, everyday language of the time.

¹ During the preparation of this lecture, I have received help, advice and encouragement from many friends and colleagues, including Marc Alexander, Wendy Anderson, Carole Biggam, Graham Caie, Pete Drummond, Alison Grant, Margaret Laing and Margaret Scott. I am grateful to all of them for their insight, wisdom and support. My most particular thanks are due to Christian Kay and Jeremy Smith, both of whom read the full lecture in draft and contributed invaluable comments and suggestions.

The key concept here is that of everyday language. A fundamental tenet of place-name scholarship used to be that since place-names are generally formed in speech rather than in writing, they reflect the vocabulary of spoken communication. The extensive mismatch between the terminology preserved in place-names and the terminology preserved in the written record was therefore attributed in part to differences in subject matter, with place-names containing a higher proportion of words relating to physical surroundings and associated activities, and in part to differences in register, with place-names representing colloquial or ‘demotic’ vocabulary, and written texts a more literary form of lexis. To a large extent this still holds true. It can be no coincidence that much of the terminology attested uniquely in place-names from the Celtic and Germanic languages relates to flora and fauna,² landscape features,³ farming practices⁴ and so on, and no-one would claim that the register of diction coincides with that found in poetry or prose. The point at issue is whether the language of place-names reflects contemporary colloquial vocabulary, or if it represents a toponymic register distinct from both demotic and literary lexis.

3. North-West Germanic toponymicon

By the time of the earliest extant texts, not only had the Celtic and Germanic language groups split off both from each other and from other branches of Indo-European, but they themselves had started to sub-divide into distinct though related dialects. The chronology of these subdivisions has been much discussed; and in the context of the debate as to whether the East or West Germanic dialects were the first to split off from North Germanic, Wilhelm Nicolaisen drew attention to pairs of cognate terms in the place-name forming elements of the North and West Germanic languages, suggesting that they reflected a common ancestry.⁵ The significance of this was not only to support the theory of a North-West branch of Germanic, but to suggest

² Plant-names attested uniquely in place-names from the Anglo-Saxon period are catalogued and discussed in my article ‘Place-Name Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Plant Names’, in *From Earth to Art: The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. P. Biggam (Amsterdam and New York, 2003), pp. 41–78. Some additions to the corpus of Old English animal and bird names found in place-names are suggested in my articles ‘OE *wearg* in Warnborough and Wreighburn’, *JEPNS* 27 (1995), 14–20, ‘The Place-Name Felderland’, *N&Q* 42 (1995), 420–1, ‘OE *īsern* in Place-Names’, *SN* 67 (1995), 145–7, ‘An Old English Etymon for Modern English *drake* “Male Duck”’, *Neophilologist* 80 (1996), 613–15, ‘English Place-Names in *Lap-*’, *Nomina* 19 (1996), 43–50, ‘Place-Name Evidence for Old English Bird-Names’, *JEPNS* 30 (1997–8), 60–76, ‘OE *brūn* in Place-Names’, *ES* 79 (1998), 512–21, ‘Cheveley and Chaff Hall: A Reconsideration of OE *ceaf* in Place-Names’, *Nottingham Med. Stud.* 43 (1999), 21–32, ‘Place-Name Evidence for an Anglo-Saxon Animal Name: OE **pohhal/*pocca* “Fallow Deer”’, *ASE* 30 (2001), 1–14, and ‘Onomastic Evidence for an Anglo-Saxon Animal Name: OE **pur* “Male Lamb”’, *ES* 83 (2002), 377–90.

³ These will be discussed particularly in sections 6 and 7 of this lecture.

⁴ See for instance my article ‘ON **hjarðar-bý(r)* “Herd Farm”’, *N&Q* 42 (1995), 264–5. An alternative derivation from an Anglo-Scandinavian **hēordabý* ‘the village, settlement of the herdsmen’ is proposed by J. Insley, ‘Harby — A Place-Name Complex in the Danelaw’, *SN* 70 (1998), 9–23.

⁵ W. F. H. Nicolaisen, ‘Is There a Northwest Germanic Toponymy? Some Thoughts and a Proposal’, in *Nordwestgermanisch*, ed. E. Marold and C. Zimmermann (Berlin and New York, 1995), pp. 103–14. The cognate pairs, as listed at p. 111, are as follows: OE *ēa*, ON *á*; OE *æcer*, ON *akr*; OE *bæce*, *bece*, ON *bekkr*; OE *botm*, *boþm*, ON *botn*; OE *burh*, ON *borg*; OE *celde*, ON *kelda*; OE *clif*, ON *kliif*; OE *dæl*, ON *dalr*; OE *ecg*, ON *egg*; OE *ēg*, ON *øy*; OE *flēot*, ON *fljót*; OE *hām*, ON *heimr*; OE *hēah*, ON *haugr*; OE *hæþ*, *hāþ*, ON *heiðr*; OE *hol*, ON *hol*; OE *holt*, ON *holt*; OE *hēafod*, ON *hǫfuð*; OE *hūs*, ON *hús*; OE *hlið*, ON *hlið*; OE *lād*, ON *laða*, *hlaða*; OE *land*, ON *land*; OE *mōr*, ON *mór*; OE *moss*, ON *mósi*; OE *næss*, *ness*, ON *nes*; OE *rod*, *rodu*, *roð*, ON *ruð*; OE *hrycg*, ON *ryggr*, *hryggr*; OE *sand*, ON *sandr*; OE *set*, ON *setr*; OE *stede*, ON *staðr*, pl. *staðir*; OE *stig*, ON *stigr*; OE *sār*, ON *scár*; OE *þrop*, ON *þorp*; OE *þwīt*, ON *þveit* (ablaut); OE *wæd*, ON *vað*; OE *wæter*, ON *vatn*; OE *widu*, ON *viðr*.

that a system of place-nomenclature had begun to develop semi-independently from the lexicon prior to the split between the North Germanic dialects represented by the Scandinavian languages and the West Germanic dialects represented by Old English, Old Frisian, Old High German and Old Saxon. As Nicolaisen argued:

It would be absurd to regard all these terms purely as lexical items which could be employed in the naming process whenever required; they must have been part of a Northwest Germanic onomasticon, and not just of a lexicon.⁶

This theory has now gained widespread acceptance by name scholars, and indeed by historical linguists more generally.

Part of the evidence is that some of the terms have a different chronological profile within the toponymicon and lexicon. OE *hām* ‘home(stead), village’, one of the elements associated with the initial phase of Anglo-Saxon settlement in southern Britain, appears to have gone out of use for place-name forming purposes from an early date, while continuing in use as a lexical item.⁷ If place-names were formed from ordinary language, we might expect it to have been productive for as long as the term was current in the lexicon.

Also relevant is that some elements appear to have a limited range of use. Most place-names are compounds, comprising a defining element or ‘generic’ identifying the type of place in combination with a qualifying element or ‘specific’ giving additional information about it. Some terms, such as descriptive adjectives or animal and bird names, are only suitable for use as qualifiers, but all generics could theoretically be used to qualify other generics. In practice, a number of early place-name elements are rare or non-existent as qualifiers, suggesting that they had a stereotyped use as generics only. Again, OE *hām* is an example. Despite its frequency of occurrence, particularly in areas of early settlement in south-east England, there are no secure instances as a qualifier⁸ except within fossilised compounds such as OE *hām-stede* ‘homestead’, the etymon of place-names such as Hampstead in Berkshire and Middlesex, Hamstead in Staffordshire and the Isle of Wight, and Hempstead in Gloucestershire.⁹ Since on the one hand there are no occurrences of the compound in Old English outside place-names and charter bounds,¹⁰ while on the other there are cognates in both North and West Germanic languages,

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 111.

⁷ Key articles on the dating of place-names from OE *hām* include B. Cox, ‘The Significance of the Distribution of English Place-Names in *-hām* in the Midlands and East Anglia’, *JEPNS* 5 (1972–3), 15–73, repr. in *Place-Name Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon Invasion and Scandinavian Settlements*, ed. K. Cameron (Nottingham, 1975), pp. 55–98, and J. McN. Dodgson, ‘Place-Names from *hām*, Distinguished from *hamm* Names, in Relation to the Settlement of Kent, Surrey and Sussex’, *ASE* 2 (1973), 1–50.

⁸ The main dictionary of English place-name vocabulary, A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 vols., EPNS 25–6 (Cambridge, 1956), I, 226–9, s.v. *hām*, cites Hampden in Buckinghamshire as a possible example, but this is now considered more likely to derive from OE *hamm* ‘enclosure’ (cf. A. D. Mills, *A Dictionary of British Place Names* (Oxford, 2003), p. 224).

⁹ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I, 232, s.v. *hām-stede*. A secondary form *hām-styde* is the etymon of names such as Hempstead in Essex (*ibid.* I, 217, s.v. *hām-styde*). All references are to the historical counties preceding the local government re-organisation of the 1970s.

¹⁰ T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth, Supplement* (Oxford, 1921), p. 505, s.v. *hām-stede*, considers that in some charter bounds ‘it is or may be a common noun’. However, the tendency for boundary markers to contain terminology otherwise found only in place-names aligns them with the toponymicon rather than the lexicon.

including ON *heim-stoð*, OFris *hēm-sted*, OHG *heimstat* and MDu *heemstede*,¹¹ it seems likely that it was formed prior to the split between toponymicon and lexicon.

ON *heimr*, the North Germanic cognate of OE *hām*, similarly went out of use early as a place-name-forming element, with no occurrences in areas of later colonisation such as Iceland, the Faroes or the Danelaw.¹² However, some twenty occurrences of the place-name Sulem in Iceland reflect a derivation from an original ON **sól-heimr* ‘sunny homestead’, a compound also found in Shetland.¹³ This would appear to have continued in use after ON *heimr* itself had ceased to be productive; and since, like OE *hām-stede*, it is found within the toponymicon only, it too may never have formed part of the lexicon.

Nicolaisen identified a preliminary list of thirty-seven cognate pairs productive in the North and West Germanic toponymica.¹⁴ Others have since been added, both strengthening the case for a North-West Germanic toponymicon and resulting in new interpretations of individual place-names and place-name elements. A significant methodological advance was the realisation that more light might be thrown on uses of place-name elements through comparison of place-names in different parts of Europe than through comparison with lexical items in the same language.

An example is OE *lāf* ‘remainder’, whose meaning in a lost Oxfordshire place-name *la Papelafe* was previously considered obscure.¹⁵ It has now been explained as a reference to inherited property and private ownership of land, by comparison with the cognate ON *lef* in place-names such as Bolderslev, Fuglslev, Hundeleve and Sigerslev in Denmark.¹⁶ So too, an early interpretation of the place-names Marstalla and Marstallen in Sweden as ‘pasture for horses’ has been overturned in favour of a derivation from an Old Swedish **marstall*, cognate with OE *meresteall* ‘pool of standing water’ from a North-West Germanic **maristallaz*.¹⁷ A watery interpretation has also been proposed for OE **(ge)strēones halh*, the etymon of Strensall in the North Riding of Yorkshire as well as of the lost *Streanaeshalch* recorded by Bede as the site of the monastery founded by St Hild. Here comparison with uses of the cognate ON **strjón* in Norwegian and Orcadian place-names supports the topographically appropriate meaning ‘productive fishing area or fertile nook of land’, and again suggests a common ancestor in the North-West Germanic toponymicon.¹⁸

No less significant are correspondences between toponymic uses of cognate terms in different languages within the North or West Germanic groups respectively. Staffan Fridell identifies a topographical use of Swedish *kil* ‘wedge’ to refer to a wedge-shaped piece of land in

¹¹ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I, 232, s.v. *hām-stede*; K. I. Sandred, *English Place-Names in -stead* (Uppsala, 1963), pp. 65–6.

¹² G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles — the Place-Name Evidence as Seen from Denmark and the Danelaw’, in *The Northern and Western Isles in the Viking World: Survival, Continuity and Change*, ed. A. Fenton and H. Pálsson (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 148–68, at p. 154.

¹³ *Ibid.* J. Jakobsen, *The Place-Names of Shetland* (London and Copenhagen, 1936), p. 54, notes that ‘*Sulem* is one of the sunniest and most fertile places in Shetland’.

¹⁴ See note 5.

¹⁵ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, II, 12, s.v. *lāf*.

¹⁶ C. Hough, ‘OE *lāf* in Place-Names’, *N&Q* 44 (1997), 304–6.

¹⁷ S. Fridell, ‘Fornengelska *meresteall* och fornsvenska **marstall*. En nordvästgermansks sammansättning?’, *Ortnamnssällskapet i Uppsala Årsskrift* (2008), 37–42.

¹⁸ Four occurrences of OE **(ge)strēones halh* (including two boundary markers) are discussed in my article, ‘Strensall, *Streanaeshalch* and Stronsay’, *JEPNS* 35 (2002–3), 17–24. A fifth is added in my article, ‘Another **(ge)strēones halh*’, *JEPNS* 36 (2003–4), 61–2.

the parish name Kila in Sweden.¹⁹ This also appears appropriate for the West Norse cognate in place-names such as Kildale, Kilton and Lathkill in England, reflecting a similar toponymic application in East and West Norse.²⁰ As regards West Germanic, Rob Rentenaar demonstrates the value of a comparative study of names in *-mouth* in the British Isles and names in *-muide(n)* in the Netherlands and Flanders,²¹ and Patrick Stiles shows that the North Frisian word *hallig* supports the sense ‘slightly raised ground isolated by marsh’ postulated for OE *h(e)alh* in some place-names in England.²² Jan Agertz focuses on evidence from England and Sweden to investigate the meaning of Germanic **hulta*, the etymon of OE and ON *holt* in Nicolaisen’s list of cognate pairs, supporting the view that it refers to a method of cultivation (coppicing and pollarding) rather than to the size of a wood.²³ Further research along these lines can be expected to lead to the elucidation of additional cruxes within the toponymica of north-west European countries.

4. Indo-European onomasticon

The notion of onomastic terminology developing separately from lexical terminology is not limited to the North-West Germanic languages, nor indeed to the toponymicon. The names of highest antiquity are those of major rivers, and correspondences between pre-Celtic river names in the British Isles and on the continent suggest that a common system of river naming was in use throughout north-west Europe in prehistoric times. The language of these river names is often referred to as *alteuropäisch* or ‘Old European’, as in the pioneering work of Hans Krahe²⁴ and subsequent research by Nicolaisen.²⁵ There has been much recent debate as to whether it was of Indo-European or non-Indo-European origin, the most vigorous proponent of the latter theory being Theo Vennemann.²⁶ In a detailed study upholding the former hypothesis, Peter Kitson not only identifies links between these hydronyms and Indo-European roots, but also demonstrates

¹⁹ S. Fridell, ‘Två västmanländska sockennamn’, *Ortnamnssällskapets i Uppsala Årsskrift* (1997), 5–15.

²⁰ C. Hough, ‘ON *kill* in English Place-Names’, *SN* 72 (2000), 1–5.

²¹ R. Rentenaar, ‘*Muide* and *mouth*. A Medieval Place-Name Element in the North Sea Region’, in *Names Through the Looking-Glass: Festschrift in Honour of Gillian Fellows-Jensen*, ed. P. Gammeltoft and B. Jørgensen (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 189–207.

²² P. V. Stiles, ‘Old English *halh*, “Slightly Raised Ground Isolated by Marsh”’, in *Names, Places and People: An Onomastic Miscellany in Memory of John McNeal Dodgson*, ed. A. R. Rumble and A. D. Mills (Stamford, 1997), pp. 330–44.

²³ J. Agertz, ‘Germanic **hulta* as a Toponymic Element’, in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Uppsala, 19–24 August 2002, Vol. 2*, ed. E. Brylla and M. Wahlberg in collaboration with L.-E. Edlund (Uppsala, 2006), pp. 5–11. Although Agertz claims that this is represented in the place-names of all Germanic-speaking areas, the examples given again relate to North-West Germanic.

²⁴ Particularly important are *Die Struktur der alteuropäischen Hydronomie*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz (Wiesbaden, 1962), and *Unsere ältesten Flußnamen* (Wiesbaden, 1964).

²⁵ Highly accessible discussions include “‘Old European Names’ in Britain”, *Nomina* 6 (1982), 37–42, and ‘On River-Names in the Scottish Landscape’, in *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling*, ed. O. J. Padel and D. N. Parsons (Donington, 2008), pp. 233–8. The latter contains a useful bibliography of Nicolaisen’s publications on pre-Celtic river-names in Britain.

²⁶ Detailed arguments are set out in a number of his papers, including ‘Linguistic Reconstruction in the Context of European Prehistory’, *TPS* 92 (1994), 215–84, ‘Remarks on Some British Place Names’, in *Interdigitations: Essays for Irmengard Rauch*, ed. G. F. Carr, W. Herbert and L. Zhang (New York, 1999), pp. 25–62, and ‘Water All Over the Place: The Old European Toponyms and Their Vasconic Origin’, in *Actes du 2ème Symposium International de l’Eau, Cannes, 29–31 Mai 2000*, ed. R. Caruba and R. Galvez-Cloutier (Nice, 2000), pp. 257–63. All three are reprinted, with other papers, in T. Vennemann, *Europa Vasconica — Europa Semitica*, ed. P. N. A. Hanna, Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs 138 (Berlin and New York, 2003).

that some river-names in western Indo-European countries appear to be formed on roots preserved as lexical items only in eastern Indo-European languages.²⁷ The implication of this is again that there had been a split between hydronymicon and lexicon, and moreover that this split had taken place before the separation of eastern Indo-European from western Indo-European languages.

As regards the other main area of the onomasticon, the corpus of personal names or ‘anthroponymicon’, this too appears to have split off from the lexicon at an early stage. As John Insley demonstrates, correspondences between names such as Old Northumbrian *Wīgfiūs* and Icelandic *Vigfiuss*, and between Old Northumbrian *Tīdcume* and Swedish *Tiðkumi*, testify to a common North-West Germanic system of personal nomenclature in existence prior to the separation of the North and West language groups.²⁸ A small but significant number of anthroponymic isoglosses confined to Celtic and Germanic include the etymon of the Old English word *wine* ‘friend, protector, lord’, etymologically connected with Celtic **veni-* ‘one belonging to a group’, as in Old Irish *fine* from **venjā* ‘family’, and represented in names such as OE *Beorhtwine*, *Cēolwine* and *Ēadwine*, and Continental Celtic *Veni-carus*, *Veni-clutio*, and *Veni-Reius*.²⁹ Other roots, such as **teutā* ‘the body of the people’, are productive in the anthroponymica of a wider range of Indo-European languages:

The word is ... used to form personal names in Illyrian, for example, *Teuta* (fem.), *Teuti-aplos*, *Teuticus*, *Teut-meitis* ..., in Celtic, as in Continental Celtic *Teuto-malius*, *Teuto-matus*, **Touto-bogio*, etc. ..., as well as in Baltic, where we find such names as Old Prussian *Tawte-gal*, *Taute-mille*, *Taute-narwe*, *Tawtike* ... and Old Lithuanian *Towti-wil* (= *Taūt-vilas*) ... In Germanic, it is one of the most ubiquitous name elements, cf. Gothic *Theuda*, *Theudis*, *Thiudimer*, Frankish-Latin *Theudebaldus*, *-bertus*, OE (Northumbrian) *Āeodbald*, OE *Āeodhild* (fem.), OSax *Thiaddag*, *Thiadgêr*, OHG *Thiotheri*, *Thiothelm*. ... The use of **teut-ā-* to form names in Celtic, Germanic, Illyrian and Baltic suggests a type of onomastic continuum in central and northern Europe in early times, though one should not push this too far.³⁰

As with place-names, some fossilisation of the system is reflected in the restricted function of some personal-name elements as first elements or ‘protothemes’ within compound or ‘dithematic’ personal names, and of others as second elements or ‘deuterothemes’. This may be demonstrated for Old English from the list provided by Searle,³¹ where out of a total of 329 name-themes, 209 (64%) are used exclusively as protothemes, 36 (11%) exclusively as

²⁷ P. R. Kitson, ‘British and European River-Names’, *TPS* 94 (1996), 73–118. An Indo-European origin is also preferred by, amongst others, Richard Coates (e.g. ‘Four Pre-English River Names in and around Fenland: *Chater*, *Granta*, *Nene* and *Welland*’, *TPS* 103 (2005), 303–22) and Albrecht Greule (e.g. ‘Indogermanisch **ued-* : **uod-* : **ud-* – “Wasser” in der altgermanischen Hydronymie’, *Namn och Bygd* 93 (2005), 5–11).

²⁸ J. Insley, ‘Early Germanic Personal Names and Onomastic Dialects’, in *Language and Text: Current Perspectives on English and Germanic Historical Linguistics and Philology*, ed. A. J. Johnston, F. von Mengden and S. Thim (Heidelberg, 2006), pp. 113–31, at pp. 113–14.

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 116–19.

³⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 120–1.

³¹ W. G. Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names from the Time of Beda to that of King John* (Cambridge, 1897), pp. xv–xix. Searle’s catalogue is now seriously outdated, and also suffers from other flaws discussed by J. Insley, ‘The Study of Old English Personal Names and Anthroponymic Lexika’, in *Person und Name: Methodische Probleme bei der Erstellung eines Personennamenbuchs des Frühmittelalters*, ed. D. Geuenich, W. Haubrichs and J. Jarnut (Berlin and New York, 2002), pp. 148–76. However, it suffices for the present purpose. A more reliable and comprehensive list of Anglo-Saxon personal names (but without a list of name-themes) is available through the Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England database at <http://www.pase.ac.uk>.

deuterothemes, and only 84 (26%) flexibly in both positions.³² Moreover, the links between natural and grammatical gender, and between semantic and onomastic meaning, are beginning to break down. Hence masculine names such as OE *Cēolmund*, *Cēolnōþ*, *Ēadmund* and *Ēadnōþ* are formed from grammatically feminine deuterothemes, and these and many other combinations of elements in recorded names make little literal sense.³³ Again the consensus is that ‘The particular elements have nearly all continued in use since Common Germanic times, and the dithematic naming-system as such is inherited from Common Indo-European, several millennia back’.³⁴

5. Onomastic dialects

However, not all differences between the lexicon and onomasticon are attributable to linguistic pre-history. The term ‘onomastic dialect’ was first used by Nicolaisen in connection with hydronymic items in the United States, alongside the related term ‘toponymic dialect’:

A toponymic dialect would be shaped by toponymic items from the lexicon and their geographical distribution (like *creek*, *brook*, and *lick*), but also by other important factors: by the impact of linguistic and onomastic substrata (French *bayou* and Dutch *kill*), by the toponymies created by earlier settlers (*Fresno* and *San Diego* from the Spanish, but also *Susquehanna* and *Chenango* from the American Indians), by the creation of new name types through cultural transfer (*Homer*, *Syracuse*, *Marathon* from a Mediterranean civilization) or shift from personal name to place name (*Washington*, *Endicott*, *Jefferson*), by the structuring of onomastic fields (*Homer*, *Syracuse*, and *Marathon* as interdependent in meaning), by the sequence of naming, by the selection of features named ... and above all by the configuration of the topography.³⁵

Arguing that the distribution of near-synonyms such as *bayou*, *brook*, *creek*, *kill* and *lick* is determined by different factors from those underlying lexical isoglosses, he also drew a comparison with the naming strategies adopted by Norse settlers in north and west Scotland during the ninth century. Other scholars have discussed related issues, although without necessarily using the same terminology. Gillian Fellows-Jensen describes as ‘analogical naming’ what seems to me to be a similar phenomenon in areas of Danish influence in mainland Britain.³⁶ Here the Scandinavian term *gata* ‘street’ has entered the toponymicon of northern England and southern Scotland for use in street-naming, without being fully absorbed into the lexicon. Significantly, the *OED* defines sense 4 of the entry for *gate* n.² as ‘A street. Frequent in street-names of northern and midland towns (e.g. York, Nottingham, Leicester); as Gallowgate, Kirkgate, Micklegate, etc.’, and goes on to give citations from Scottish and northern English

³² Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers, and hence do not add up to 100.

³³ It is widely recognized that other motivations, such as the signalling of kinship identity through repetition of name-elements within family groups, may have taken priority over semantic meaning in the creation of Germanic and other personal names. An authoritative account of the Anglo-Saxon naming system is C. Clark, ‘Onomastics’, in *The Cambridge History of the English Language* vol. 1 *The Beginnings to 1066*, ed. R. M. Hogg (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 452–89, at pp. 456–71 ‘Anthroponomy’.

³⁴ P. R. Kitson, ‘How Anglo-Saxon Personal Names Work’, *Nomina* 25 (2002), 91–131, at 97.

³⁵ W. F. H. Nicolaisen, ‘Onomastic Dialects’, *Amer. Speech* 55 (1980), 36–45, at 42.

³⁶ G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘The Scandinavian Element *gata* Outside the Urbanised Settlements of the Danelaw’, in *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300. A Festschrift in Honour of Dr Barbara E. Crawford*, ed. B. Ballin Smith, S. Taylor and G. Williams (Leiden and Boston, 2007), pp. 445–59.

sources from *c.*1470 onwards.³⁷ This is much too late for the meaning to have entered English direct from Old Norse, so it seems possible that the term has entered the lexicon from the toponymicon during the mid-to-late fifteenth century. It might therefore be regarded as a loan, not from one language to another, but from the toponymic register to the lexical register. Similarly, the term *homestead*, which as we have seen was limited to the toponymicon in Old English, first appears in the lexicon from the early seventeenth century.³⁸ Again, I would suggest that this does not reflect a continuous but undocumented history from Old English, as *OED* appears to indicate, but a new lexical use arising through analogy with the toponymicon.³⁹

6. Semantic change

Some of the most ground-breaking work in English name studies in recent years has been the detailed semantic analysis of topographical terms in place-names from the Anglo-Saxon period carried out by Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole.⁴⁰ Through field-work comparing the use of individual generics in place-names from different parts of the country, they have been able to demonstrate that terms previously regarded as synonyms were subtly and precisely differentiated:

Study of topographical names in relation to the actual landscape has made it clear that groups of words which can be translated by a single modern English word such as ‘hill’ or ‘valley’ do not contain synonyms. Each of the terms is used for a different type of hill, valley or whatever, and many of the words have connotations which are not simply geomorphological. Valleys called **cumb** offered totally different prospects as settlement-sites from those called **denu**; a hill called **dūn** was likely to be the site of a large village, while one called **beorg** might have a single farm or be the site of a church. Many topographical words would convey not just an image of the place but also a wealth of information about the likely size, status and pattern of farming practised by the community living there.⁴¹

The ‘Gelling and Cole approach’, as it is known, has been extended to the Germanic place-names of southern Scotland by Stella Pratt,⁴² and to both Gaelic and Scots hill-name generics by Pete Drummond,⁴³ while Sarah Semple combines it with archaeological methodologies for an in-depth

³⁷ *OED* = *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1989; 3rd ed. <<http://www.oed.com/>>). Sense 1 of the entry is defined as ‘A way’, and is attested from *c.* 1200. The *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. H. Kurath, S. Kuhn and R. Lewis (Ann Arbor, 1952–2001), s.v. *gāte* n. (2), groups together both meanings under sense 1 (a) ‘A path, road, street; the way from one place to another’. As in *OED*, the earliest citation is from *The Ormulum c.* 1200.

³⁸ *OED*, s.v. *homestead*, n.

³⁹ An alternative possibility is that the same compound was formed independently in the seventeenth century, as seems to be implied by Sandred, *English Place-Names in -stead*, p. 67. A discussion of discontinuity in the documentary record, drawing examples from entries revised for the new edition of *OED*, is P. Durkin, *The Oxford Guide to Etymology* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 68–73, who notes that ‘it is not always clear that even the entries in historical dictionaries reflect actual continuity of use, rather than a series of separate episodes of use’ (p. 68).

⁴⁰ Both have produced a number of studies of individual terms. Book-length treatments of the topic are M. Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London, 1984), and its successor, M. Gelling and A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford, 2000). Key findings are summarized in M. Gelling, with illustrations by A. Cole, ‘Place-Names and Landscape’, in *The Uses of Place-Names*, ed. S. Taylor, St John’s House Papers No. 7 (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 75–100. Although their theories are widely accepted by place-name scholars, there are dissenting voices. For instance, the interpretation of OE *beorg* discussed here is challenged by P. Kitson, ‘Fog on the Barrow-Downs?’, in *A Commodity of Good Names*, ed. Padel and Parsons, pp. 382–94.

⁴¹ Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. xiii.

⁴² S. Pratt, ‘Summer Landscapes: Investigating Scottish Topographical Place-Names’, *Nomina* 28 (2005), 93–114.

⁴³ P. Drummond, ‘Southern Scottish Hill Generics: Testing the Gelling and Cole Hypothesis’, *Nomina* 30 (2007), 85–99.

study of the Old English term *hearg*.⁴⁴ There are several points to note here. One is that the toponymic meaning is not always explicable in terms of etymological origin. OE *beorg*, for instance, derives from the Germanic word for a mountain, but in English place-names it refers to a small rounded hill or tumulus.⁴⁵ The specialised toponymic meanings, like many of the distinctions between the Old English dialects, appear to have evolved after the Anglo-Saxons arrived in Britain, and in response to the unfamiliar landscape that they encountered. As Gelling and Cole explain:

The nature of the English landscape may be of crucial relevance. It is remarkably varied, and variety often occurs within small spaces. In this it contrasts with Continental landscapes, where everything is on a much larger scale. It is likely that immigrants accustomed to the vast coastal marshes and the great plains and forests of northern Europe were impressed by this variety and found it a linguistic challenge.⁴⁶

Unlike the early use of elements from the North-West Germanic toponymicon, therefore, the subtle typology of landscape naming in Anglo-Saxon England may not be paralleled elsewhere in north-west Europe. Neither does it appear to be paralleled in the lexicon. This point is made by Philip Durkin, who notes that a much wider range of meanings for OE *beorg* is attested in literary sources, but goes on to point out that the usage in Middle English appears to be closer to that evidenced in place-names:

if the observation about the use [of *beorg*] in place names is correct, it is nonetheless uncertain how far this should apply to the general use of the Old English word. On the basis of the literary records the *Dictionary of Old English* records the much wider range of senses ‘mountain, hill; mountain range; mountain (with name specified); cliff, headland, promontory; barrow, tumulus, burial mound (both Saxon and pre-Saxon, frequent in charters); heap, pile, mound’. However, for the Middle English period the *Middle English Dictionary* records a narrowed range of senses (‘hill, mound, barrow’) much closer to that suggested by Gelling’s analysis of place names (although in the Middle English period the semantic influence of the cognate Old Norse *berg* must also be taken into account).⁴⁷

This may be an instance of toponymic meaning influencing the development of lexical meaning, a topic to which we shall return.

Once a term was adopted into the toponymicon, then, it could develop discrete toponymic uses, just as a term borrowed from one language into another could develop meanings unrepresented in the source language. With regard to the North Germanic cognate of OE *beorg*, Staffan Nyström notes that Swedish *berg* ‘mountain, rock’ has a wider semantic extension in place-names than in lexis:

⁴⁴ S. Semple, ‘Defining the OE *hearg*: A Preliminary Archaeological and Topographic Examination of *hearg* Place Names and their Hinterlands’, *Early Med. Europe* 15 (2007), 364–85.

⁴⁵ Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 145, note that ‘As so often with place-name elements, this specialised use is not to be explained by reference to ultimate etymology’.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. xv.

⁴⁷ Durkin, *The Oxford Guide to Etymology*, p. 280.

The semantic extension (the denotations) of the generic *berg* in Swedish toponyms is much wider than that of the appellative *berg*, even if we look at it from a very local perspective and even if we consider the diachronic development that might be hidden in place-names of different ages.⁴⁸

Nicolaisen makes a similar point about the Gaelic term *sliabh* in Scotland and Ireland:

As a lexical item, *sliabhach* means ‘mountainous, abounding in extensive heaths, abounding in mountain-grass’ ...; as the toponymic item, it has the corresponding sense of ‘mountainous place, place abounding in heaths or mountain-grass’.⁴⁹

Much food for thought is provided by OE *lēah*, the most common topographical term in English place-names. The analysis by Gelling and Cole traces a sequence of meanings from ‘forest, wood’ through ‘glade, clearing’ to ‘pasture, meadow’.⁵⁰ The term is rare in Old English literature, but neither is it common in early Anglo-Saxon place-names, as Barrie Cox has shown,⁵¹ so its ubiquitousness cannot be attributed to a prehistoric toponymicon. The boom period for OE *lēah*, as regards both frequency of use and sense developments, was between about 750 and 950,⁵² and appears to have taken place within the confines of the toponymicon. Theoretically, the paucity of occurrences of OE *lēah* in literary sources might be attributed to accident of survival, but again it is significant that its use is consistently as a generic rather than as a qualifier. Despite hundreds of occurrences of OE *lēah* in English place-names — fifty-four in the county of Berkshire alone⁵³ — there is not a single secure instance as a qualifying element.⁵⁴ This fact argues strongly against any notion that it was taken from the lexicon.

A similar chronological profile is presented by OE *tūn* ‘farmstead, estate’, the most common habitative term in English place-names. Again, it is comparatively rare in the corpus of place-names compiled by Cox from Old English documents up to AD 731,⁵⁵ so like OE *lēah* it appears to have come into common use only from about the mid-eighth century. An interesting parallel is offered by the Scandinavian cognate *tún* in Iceland. As Svavar Sigmundsson notes, this was rarely used in early place-names despite being common as an appellative term:

The appellative *tún* — generally thought to refer to an enclosed hayfield surrounding a farmstead — has been common in Iceland since the first period of settlement. However, as a place-name element, either on its own, or as the second constituent of a compound, *tún* was initially only rarely used. It is scarcely

⁴⁸ S. Nyström, ‘Names in the Mind: Aspects of the Mental Onomasticon’, in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences Aberdeen, August 4–11, 1996*, ed. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 3 vols. (Aberdeen, 1998), I, 229–35, at p. 229.

⁴⁹ W. F. H. Nicolaisen, ‘Gaelic *sliabh* Revisited’, in *Fil súil nglais: A Grey Eye Looks Back. A Festschrift in Honour of Colm Ó Baoill*, ed. S. Arbuthnot and K. Hollo (Ceann Drochais, 2007), pp. 175–86, at p. 182. The interpretation and dating of *sliabh*-names is controversial, and some of Nicolaisen’s views have been challenged. An important discussion is S. Taylor, ‘*Sliabh* in Scottish Place-Names: Its Meaning and Chronology’, *Jnl of Scottish Name Stud.* 1 (2007), 99–136.

⁵⁰ Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, pp. 237–42. The issues are further explored by D. Hooke, ‘Early Medieval Woodland and the Place-Name Term *lēah*’, in *A Commodity of Good Names*, ed. Padel and Parsons, pp. 365–76.

⁵¹ B. Cox, ‘The Place-Names of the Earliest English Records’, *JEPNS* 8 (1976), 12–66.

⁵² Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 237.

⁵³ Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, p. 199.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 203; Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 240.

⁵⁵ Cox, ‘The Place-Names of the Earliest English Records’.

represented in the onomasticon from the earliest period, appearing in *Landnámabók* (ÍF I: 259) only as the second element of the farm-name *Hanatún* in Eyjafjörður.⁵⁶

Habitative terms no less than topographical terms could develop meanings in the toponymicon distinct from their lexical meanings. Hence one of the definitions for *castle* in the *OED* is ‘Applied (in proper names) to ancient British or Roman earthworks’, a usage not found outside place-names.⁵⁷ Similarly, while Cox demonstrates that ME *castel* in the names of medieval town-houses has a sense ‘fortified town-house’, there is no evidence that this meaning was current outside the toponymicon.⁵⁸

7. Body metaphors

Some of the links between the toponymica of different Celtic and Germanic languages are reflected not in groups of cognates but in underlying principles of naming practice. One such is the transferred use of anatomical terms to refer to landscape features. The place-names of north-west Europe contain terms for all parts of the external body and for some of the internal, including the arm, back, beard, blood, bone, brain, breast, brow, buttocks, cheek, chest, chin, ear, elbow, eye, face, finger, foot, hair, hand, head, heart, heel, jaw, knee, leg, liver, mouth, neck, nose, penis, shin, shoulder, side, stomach, thigh, throat, toe, tongue, tooth and vein.⁵⁹ Many are used in metaphorical senses still familiar today when we refer to the *mouth* of a river, the *foot* of a hill, the *shoulder* of a mountain, or a *neck* of land. The conventional way of expressing such a metaphor in cognitive semantics is as a proposition in small capitals: LANDSCAPE IS A BODY.⁶⁰ This metaphor is already represented in three of the cognate pairs in Nicolaisen’s list, relating to the head, back and nose.⁶¹ OE *hēafod* ‘head’ has been identified in between thirty and forty ancient settlement-names in England, with the meaning ‘projecting piece of land’.⁶² Later in the

⁵⁶ S. Sigmundsson, ‘Farm-Names in Iceland Containing the Element *tún*’, in *Names Through the Looking-Glass*, ed. Gammeltoft and Jørgensen, pp. 275–87, at p. 275.

⁵⁷ *OED*, s.v. *castle* n., sense 8. The examples given are ‘*Abbotsbury Castle* between Weymouth and Bridport, *Maiden Castle* at Dorchester, *Round Castle* near Oxford, *Yarnbury Castle*, etc.’.

⁵⁸ B. Cox, ‘The use of Middle English *castel* in the Names of Medieval Town-Houses’, in *Names, Places and People*, ed. Rumble and Mills, pp. 50–4. Examples include names such as *the Castle of Crake* and *the Castel of Croydone*. As Cox argues (at p. 54), these names ‘suggest that we have to extend the range of meanings of ME *castel* in English toponymy’. It may not follow, however, that it is necessary or even appropriate to extend them in English lexicography.

⁵⁹ Body parts in place-names are currently the subject of a joint research project by Professor Gunnel Melchers (Stockholm) and Dr Doreen Waugh (Glasgow), on which they reported at the Seventeenth Annual Study Conference of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland held in Edinburgh from 4–7 April 2007.

⁶⁰ A ground-breaking book which stimulated an exponential growth of literature on cognitive metaphor is G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago and London, 1980). Among the most important subsequent publications are G. Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago and London, 1987), E. Sweetser, *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Semantic Structure* (Cambridge, 1990), G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York, 1999), and K. Allan, *Metaphor and Metonymy: A Diachronic Approach*, Publications of the Philological Society 42 (Chichester, 2008). Important collections of articles include A. Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1993), A. Barcelona, ed., *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (Berlin and New York, 2000), and R. Dirven and R. Pörings, eds., *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast* (Berlin and New York, 2003). An accessible account is provided by Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford, 2002).

⁶¹ See note 5.

⁶² Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 175.

Anglo-Saxon period it developed the meanings ‘end’ and ‘source’, while in medieval field-names it was used for the headland in a ploughed furlong.⁶³ OE *næss*, *ness* ‘nose’ was also used for projecting pieces of land, while its Old Norse cognate designated larger promontories.⁶⁴

There are several points to note here. One is that parallel if not identical sense developments are found in different European languages, even where the terms themselves are not etymologically related.⁶⁵ OE *hrycg* ‘back’ has a topographical sense ‘ridge’, which is also represented not only in the Scandinavian cognate *hryggr* but in the unrelated Gaelic *druim* and OE *bæc*.⁶⁶ The second point is that whereas some of these words reflect metaphorical senses also found in the lexicon, others reflect developments apparently restricted to the toponymicon. OE *mūþ(a)* ‘mouth’ can refer to the mouth of a living creature or to the mouth of a river both in place-names and in lexis,⁶⁷ but the most common use of OE *fōt* ‘foot’ in place-names is an otherwise unattested sense in relation to land at the mouth of a stream (paralleled by toponymic uses of the cognate ON *fōtr*),⁶⁸ and only in toponyms is OE *cnēow* ‘knee’ used for the bend in a river or road,⁶⁹ OE *hēafod* ‘head’ for a projecting piece of ground,⁷⁰ or OE *tunge* ‘tongue’ for a strip of land.⁷¹ Thirdly, where lexical and onomastic meanings differ, it may be the lexical use that survives into later language. OE *bæc* and OE *hrycg* both have an anatomical sense — the back of a living creature — as well as a transferred sense ‘ridge of a hill’, but whereas both meanings of *hrycg* are attested in literary as well as onomastic sources, the metaphorical sense of *bæc* appears only in place-names and charter bounds.⁷² It does not survive into Present-Day English, and similarly the meanings of terms such as *bæc*, *cnēow* and *fōt* restricted to place-

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 196–7.

⁶⁵ The same applies to other conceptual metaphors, some of which are discussed by C. J. Kay, ‘Metaphors We Lived By: Pathways between Old and Modern English’, in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. J. Roberts and J. Nelson (London, 2000), pp. 273–85. Particularly relevant in this context is her discussion of relexicalised metaphors, exemplified by words for neck (at p. 281).

⁶⁶ Anatomical terms in Scottish Gaelic hill-names are the subject of Chapter 6, ‘The Body of the Land’, in P. Drummond, *Scottish Hill and Mountain Names: The Origin and Meaning of the Names of Scotland’s Hills and Mountains* (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1992), pp. 85–94. The second edition, published in 1991 as *Scottish Hill Names: The Origin and Meaning of the Names of Scotland’s Hills and Mountains*, incorporates them within Chapter 1, ‘Hill Name Generics’, pp. 16–63.

⁶⁷ T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth* (Oxford, 1898), p. 702, has separate entries for the strong masculine noun *mūþ* ‘the mouth’ and the weak masculine noun *mūþa* ‘the mouth of a river’. However, some citations in the dative plural *mūþum* could belong to either. Also, a transferred sense for ‘an opening, door’ is attested in both weak and strong forms. The headform used by Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, II, 46, is *mūða* ‘the mouth of a large river, an estuary’, with a side-form (*ge*)*m̄jðe* ‘the mouth of a river where it runs into another, a confluence of rivers’ (II, 47).

⁶⁸ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I, 185, s.v. *fōt*. This sense does not appear in *Dictionary of Old English: A–G* on CD-ROM, ed. A. Cameron, A. C. Amos, A diPaolo Healey *et al* (Toronto, 2008), s.v. *fōt*.

⁶⁹ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I, 102, s.v. *cnēo(w)*; D. N. Parsons, *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names (Ceafor–Cockpit)* (Nottingham, 2004), p. 130, s.v. *cnēow*. The latter publication is the third (and, to date, latest) instalment of a new and authoritative dictionary of English place-name vocabulary intended to replace that of Smith.

⁷⁰ A range of other toponymic uses are also discussed in Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, pp. 159–62, and Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, pp. 175–7, some of which are shared with the lexicon.

⁷¹ Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, II, 198, s.v. *tunge*. Again, the topographical use is also attested for the cognate ON *tunga*, and Smith suggests that this may have influenced the development of meaning in the Old English toponymicon.

⁷² Charter bounds provide the only attestations for this sense in *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *bæc*¹.

names are not the ones still current today.⁷³ If place-names represented words and word meanings in common everyday use, we might expect a higher survival rate.

It is possible, though unprovable, that the LANDSCAPE IS A BODY metaphor originated in the toponymicon and only subsequently transferred to the lexicon. In later language, we may be able to see analogical changes taking place. Among Nicolaisen's list of cognate pairs are OE *botm* and ON *botn*, commonly referring in place-names to the floor of a valley.⁷⁴ The term did not have an anatomical sense at this stage. According to *OED* (s.v. *bottom*, *n.*, sense 1b), it is first recorded with reference to 'the sitting part of a man, the posteriors, the seat' as late as 1794–6, apparently as an extension of the sense 'the lowest surface or part of anything'.⁷⁵ This is why it did not act as a deterrent in the formation of surnames such as Higginbottom and Ramsbottom, both from Lancashire place-names.⁷⁶ However, I wonder whether the development of such a meaning may have been influenced by the wider network of relationships between body and landscape terms within the place-name corpus. The explanation offered by *OED* does not appear fully to account for the emergence of an anatomical sense, so I suggest that it may be an instance of back formation resulting from the LANDSCAPE IS A BODY metaphor.

8. Generics and qualifiers

Most research in this area to date has focused on place-name generics. It is generally considered that whereas generics may have been drawn from the toponymic register and provide evidence for onomastic dialects, qualifiers or 'specifics' were drawn more freely from the lexicon, and provide evidence for contemporary lexis. Nicolaisen has argued this on many occasions, most recently in his discussion of the distribution of Gaelic *sliabh* in Scotland and Ireland:

Undoubtedly, both the use of *sliabh* as a toponymic specific ... and in its adjectival or locational derivative *sliabhach* witness to the existence of the term as a lexical item in the Gaelic dialect of the places where it occurs, ... but not necessarily to its productive usage as a toponymic generic.⁷⁷

⁷³ Different issues are raised by OE *tunge*, since the topographic sense 'strip of land' is current in Present-Day English. As Smith notes, however, 'such a use is not found in O[ld] E[nglish] or M[iddle] E[nglish]', and it is therefore uncertain whether the present-day usage represents a survival of an unattested colloquial use, a later independent meaning development, or — as I have suggested above for the terms *gate* and *homestead* — a transfer of meaning from the toponymicon.

⁷⁴ Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 98, explain that 'in most instances in major place-names, and in early-recorded minor names, the terms refer to "a flat alluvial area, restricted in size, moist and often easily flooded and with a marked change of slope at the valley sides"'.

⁷⁵ Like place-names, most if not all lexical items must have been in use before they are first recorded, and there has been some discussion as to whether the anatomical sense may already have been current when Shakespeare created the name of Nick Bottom for the weaver in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As noted by James Orchard Halliwell, *An Introduction to Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, 1941), repr. in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. J. M. Kennedy and R. F. Kennedy, Shakespeare: The Critical Tradition (London and New Brunswick, NJ, 1999), pp. 132–6, the immediate source is a metonymic occupational surname from the term *bottom* in the sense 'ball of thread'. However, the name of Mistress Frigbottom in Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600) has been used as evidence of an anatomical use in Shakespeare's time (e.g. *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. S. Wells (London, 1967; reissued 2005), p. 96), and this view is argued strongly by C. Watts, 'Fundamental Editing: In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Does "Bottom" Mean "Bum"? And How About "Arse" and "Ass"?' , *Anglistica Pisana* 3 (2006), 1–5. Had Shakespeare been aware of such a usage, however, it seems unlikely that he would have resisted the opportunity for a pun.

⁷⁶ The majority of English surnames were created before 1500. An authoritative and highly readable account is R. McKinley, *A History of British Surnames* (London and New York, 1990).

⁷⁷ Nicolaisen, 'Gaelic *sliabh* Revisited', p. 182.

There are certainly many instances where this is true. For instance, the qualifying element of the place-name Cotterstock in Northamptonshire is OE *corþer* ‘dairy’, a term otherwise known only from the *Corpus*, *Épinal* and *Erfurt* glossaries.⁷⁸ It can scarcely be a coincidence that these glossaries are among the earliest sources for the Mercian variety of Old English, while Cotterstock is within the Mercian dialect area. Even qualifiers, however, may not display a direct correlation with lexis. Some of my work suggests that qualifiers are taken from a limited subset of the lexicon, and that they too may develop differently in the toponymicon.

Two examples may serve to illustrate this. The first is a study of Old English colour terminology in English and Scottish place-names.⁷⁹ Here some individual terms turned out to be very common, with up to thirty-nine occurrences, yet the entire corpus contained only seventeen separate colour terms, as follows (with number of occurrences in brackets):

blæc (7), blāw (1), blēo (2), brūn (5), fāh (2), fealu (5), geolu (1), græg (4), grēne (14), hār (13), hwīt (39), mæle (5), rēad (16), rust (2), salu (1), seolfor (1), tēafor (2)

The level of repetition is in marked contrast with the wide range of colour terms attested in the Old English lexicon, running to four pages of *A Thesaurus of Old English*.⁸⁰ To some extent this may reflect the characteristic use of what is known as ‘basic level’ vocabulary in place-names, as opposed to semantically superordinate or subordinate categories, but we should still expect a higher proportion of the overall lexis to be represented.⁸¹ Place-names from Scottish Gaelic feature a similarly small number of colour terms with a still higher incidence of occurrences.⁸² Unfortunately there is as yet no Gaelic thesaurus to facilitate direct comparison between the range of colour terms represented in the lexicon and those represented in the toponymicon. Scholars of Old English are unusually fortunate in having a resource that displays all the words available within individual semantic fields, making this kind of investigation possible.

My second example is a study of English and Scottish place-names containing the term *lady*.⁸³ This element was productive from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards, with a range of different kinds of names deriving either from the Old English etymon or from its various derivatives in Middle English, Middle Scots and Early Modern English. What I was looking for here was evidence of diatopic and diachronic variation. The term *lady* was chosen because it can

⁷⁸ C. Hough, ‘The Place-Name Cotterstock’, *ES* 77 (1996), 375–8.

⁷⁹ C. Hough, ‘Colours of the Landscape: Old English Colour Terms in Place-Names’, in *Progress in Colour Studies. Volume 1. Language and Culture*, ed. C. P. Biggam and C. J. Kay (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 181–98.

⁸⁰ J. Roberts and C. Kay with L. Grundy, *A Thesaurus of Old English*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 2000), I, 144–7 (<http://leo.english.arts.gla.ac.uk/oethesaurus>).

⁸¹ The term ‘basic level’ refers to the range of lexis most salient to native speakers. Examples from Present-Day English are *dog* and *walk*, as opposed to the superordinate *animal* and *move*, or the subordinate *poodle* and *amble*. Basic level vocabulary is alternatively known as the ‘prototype category’, and I have suggested elsewhere that prototypicality plays a greater role in place-naming than has been recognised by modern scholarship (‘Commonplace Place-Names’, *Nomina* 30 (2007), 101–20).

⁸² Drummond, *Scottish Hill and Mountain Names*, p. 71, observes that ‘There are literally hundreds of Scottish hills, mountains and corries named after their colours or hues’, yet only seventeen separate entries appear in the section on ‘Gaelic Colours’ (pp. 72–81).

⁸³ C. Hough, ‘“Find the Lady”: The Term *lady* in English and Scottish Place-Names’, in *Names in Multi-Lingual, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Contact: Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, August 17–22, 2008, York University, Toronto, Canada*, ed. W. Ahrens, S. Embleton and A. Lapierre (Toronto, 2009), pp. 511–18.

have a variety of applications, including a reference to a known or unknown woman, to womankind in general, to dowry land, or to the Virgin Mary. I had anticipated that these uses might vary across time and space, with place-names from certain periods and areas containing a higher proportion of references to ownership, to marriage customs, to religion, and so on. What I found instead was a striking uniformity across the areas of England and Scotland investigated, and very little diachronic variation except as regards obvious cultural developments such as the change from the Anglo-Saxon system of *morgengifu* to the later system of dowry.⁸⁴ Throughout the place-name corpus, the strong preponderance of use of *lady* is with regard to the Virgin Mary. This stands in marked contrast to the prototypical uses of the term in contemporary language. At no time in the history of English or Scots has this been the main sense of *lady* in the lexicon.⁸⁵ Again the toponymicon has developed semi-independently.

Studies such as these, where toponymic usages are demonstrably different from lexical usages, provide a context for suggesting that other place-name qualifiers too may have a different profile from their lexical counterparts. An example is OE *cild*, where the senses ‘child’, ‘offspring, descendant’ and ‘a youth of noble birth, prince’ attested in literary sources do not yield convincing interpretations of place-names such as Chilcote, Chilford, Chilly, Chilton and Chilwell.⁸⁶ I have suggested elsewhere that the primary sense of the term was ‘young living creature’, which narrowed to ‘young human’ in the lexicon and to ‘young animal’ in the toponymicon, a development supported by contextual evidence and by Germanic cognates.⁸⁷ The theoretical implications go beyond the re-interpretation of a problematic group of place-names, to raise the possibility of further divergences between qualifying elements and lexical items. As Margaret Scott has recently observed in the context of a discussion of the term *sanctuary* in English and Scottish place-names, ‘toponymic and lexical usage of the same term may differ as a matter of course’.⁸⁸

9. The later toponymicon

Differences between lexical and toponymic usages continue to be evidenced up to modern times. The term *boulevard* entered English from French during the eighteenth century to refer to a broad street or promenade,⁸⁹ but is now used almost exclusively in street-names, the most productive area of the toponymicon at the present day.⁹⁰ Other terms have developed different meanings in the present-day lexicon and toponymicon. The term *avenue* is used literally in street-names, although the metaphorical meaning has largely taken over in other contexts. The following

⁸⁴ Place-names from OE *morgengifu* are discussed in my article ‘Place-Name Evidence Relating to the Interpretation of Old English Legal Terminology’, *Leeds Stud. in Eng.* 37 (1996), 19–48, at pp. 20–1 and 30–1.

⁸⁵ This is abundantly clear from the major historical dictionaries. Those for English have already been cited above; for Scots, the main resource for both historical and modern lexis is *Dictionary of the Scots Language* <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>>.

⁸⁶ Definitions are from *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *cild*.

⁸⁷ C. Hough, ‘Chilton and Other Place-Names from Old English *cild*’, *JEPNS* 36 (2003–4), 63–82.

⁸⁸ M. Scott, ‘Words, Names and Culture: Place-Names and the Scots Language’, *Jnl of Scottish Name Stud.* 2 (2008), 85–98, at p. 96.

⁸⁹ *OED*, s.v. *boulevard*.

⁹⁰ Although outnumbered by field-names, street-names are also one of the main sources for Middle English terms attested uniquely or earliest in place-names. These are catalogued in my article ‘Onomastic Evidence for Middle English Vocabulary’, in *Middle English from Tongue to Text: Selected Papers from the Third International Conference on Middle English: Language and Text, held at Dublin, Ireland, 1–4 July 1999*, ed. P. J. Lucas and A. M. Lucas (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), pp. 155–67.

examples are from the British National Corpus, a 100 million word collection of late-twentieth-century British English:⁹¹

A0D 2954 ‘I say, Inspector, that does rather leave every avenue explored, doesn’t it?’

CA8 363 ‘A’ Flight encountered four Bf110s over the island on 28th., but despite a general mix-up, heavy cloud allowed any pilot who felt threatened a quick avenue of retreat, and no claims resulted.

CBF 10229 Another avenue is the unfolding vista of charity, community and social work.

CD3 1308 The words ‘lined with lead’ open a new avenue.

CEC 45 Nader Nadirpur stood by the balcony window looking out over the avenue.

CFE 1224 Private homes increasingly provide another avenue for such old people because of the availability of social security payments without functional assessment for those eligible.

CM4 610 The very walls of the avenue seemed likely to burst.

FRG 515 Yet another avenue of explanation might develop from a comparison of certain properties of the language of care-takers of young children (who are usually women) with the language of women generally (Snow and Ferguson 1979; J. Milroy 1985).

GUC 1191 Indeed, we fully recognize that the model about to be discussed is only suggestive of one avenue of development and is not conclusive.

GW0 3011 The more she thought about it, the more certain she became that there was really only one avenue open to her.

H8P 402 We walked together to Serpentine Avenue.

HCI 627 But a plea for formalised plea bargaining by Bar Council chairman, was strongly repudiated by his successor, a strong civil rights activist, who told the Criminal Law Solicitors Association conference, ‘I can think of no greater avenue for injustice than plea bargaining’, which he described as mixing ‘quantum with liability’.

HD7 748 Fernhill Rise meets Fernhill Avenue at a T-junction.

HX8 101 If you have not taught a Special Needs class why not come along and find out about it this may be another avenue of teaching for you.

J9X 517 What do you think in your opinion or in your experience would the best avenue be for me to follow?

J53 276 One avenue for provision of such resources may be through collective bargaining.

JYM 943 The road was bendy and twisty with large shady trees on either side forming a beautiful avenue.

K4W 3945 North Housing Association is building 24 flats on a former play area in Miers Avenue.

K5A 3798 It will never be easy but you have to try to give the players every avenue and every support to achieve that,’ he explained.

KM4 1006 Certainly, we explore this as an avenue towards getting a job specification in place for everybody in the Company.

KRF 134 No, I think probably over the years every avenue, other than perhaps this one, has been exploited to the full.

Similar results are obtained from the Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech (SCOTS), which although considerably smaller contains much twenty-first century data.⁹²

Returning to the *OED*, the entry for *circus* identifies a meaning ‘A circular range of houses’ which is rarely attested outside urban names, again suggesting a predominantly onomastic usage.⁹³ *OED* records a range of meanings for the polysemous word *court*, but does not include the sense ‘block of flats’ which is its most common meaning in street-names.⁹⁴ It is of

⁹¹ <<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>>

⁹² <<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/>>

⁹³ *OED*, s.v. *circus*, sense 7. Examples cited are Oxford Circus and Regent Circus.

⁹⁴ *OED*, s.v. *court*, n.¹

course important to remember that many *OED* entries even from the integrated edition of 1989 reflect early twentieth-century definitions that may have been overtaken by later developments. However, the draft revision of June 2009 for *mead*, *n.*² describes it as ‘Now chiefly *poet.* and *regional*’, although as Adrian Room notes, the term ‘has been exploited in modern times to serve as a street name’ and ‘is characteristic of suburban residential areas’.⁹⁵

There is some evidence, then, to suggest that qualifiers no less than generics may reflect onomastic uses distinct from those found in the lexicon — and moreover, that such distinctions are not restricted to ancient place-names, but continued to develop through the medieval and early modern periods. There has as yet been no sustained investigation of the relationship between lexical and onomastic sense development, and none that includes the wider (and usually later) corpus of minor names alongside early settlement- and river-names. Following Nicolaisen, the majority of work on the toponymicon as a discrete entity has focused on its genesis and early history: when did it split off from the lexicon, and what does that tell us about the origins of the Indo-European languages? Just as interesting, in my view, is the later history of the toponymicon: in what ways has it continued to exist in a symbiotic relationship with the lexicon, and how, at different stages of language development, do related terms function differently in onomastic and lexical contexts?

Until recently, the tools for such research have not been available. This situation has now changed. *A Thesaurus of Old English* was the precursor to the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, published in October 2009 as the culmination of a forty-five-year research project in the Department of English Language at the University of Glasgow.⁹⁶ The *Historical Thesaurus* offers a comprehensive classification of the recorded lexis of English. Words are arranged in conceptual categories according to their meanings, and are then arranged by dates of use, making it possible to see how the vocabulary for any topic has developed from Anglo-Saxon times to the present day. Whereas *A Thesaurus of Old English* has revolutionised approaches to the language of the Old English period, the *Historical Thesaurus* will have an even greater effect on the study of the English language through time.

Amongst other things, it will enable us to examine more closely the relationship between onomastic and non-onomastic language. By displaying the range of terms available within the lexicon for a particular concept at any given period in the history of the English language, the *Historical Thesaurus* facilitates comparison with the range of terms used within the toponymicon. It will thus be possible for the first time to undertake a systematic comparison of lexical and toponymic terms within the same semantic field, in order to establish the extent to which they overlap or diverge. Indeed, such an analysis may not only provide a methodology for the investigation of differences between the lexicon and onomasticon, but suggest a means of accounting for them. According to field-theory, changes to one member of a semantic field have an effect on other members, so that the addition of a new term may result in an existing term narrowing in meaning, while if one term falls out of use, another may broaden in meaning to cover the gap.⁹⁷ It may therefore be reasonable to suggest that contrasting influences on lexical

⁹⁵ A. Room, *The Street Names of England* (Stamford, 1992), p. 9. Other street-name generics are discussed at pp. 1–16.

⁹⁶ C. Kay, J. Roberts, M. Samuels and I. Wotherspoon, eds., *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*. 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009).

⁹⁷ OE *rēad*, for instance, covered a broader part of the spectrum than its Present-Day English reflex *red*, which has narrowed in meaning in response to the introduction of other colour terms such as *orange* and *pink*. Field-theory is discussed in most general books on semantics. A classic text is A. Lehrer, *Semantic Field and Lexical Structure* (Amsterdam, 1974).

and onomastic fields, such as the retention within the toponymicon of place-name-forming elements from earlier linguistic strata, could result in related terms developing along different lines.⁹⁸

As well as reflecting the degree of semantic congruence between the two registers, a systematic comparison will also reveal the extent to which place-name elements were either selected freely from the contemporary lexicon, or drawn from a limited sub-set of terms. Such a study can only be undertaken for English, since this is the only world language for which a comprehensive diachronic thesaurus is available. However, the results of such an investigation should inform our understanding of other toponymic strata within the North Sea Littoral and beyond.

10. 'Ever-changing connection'

How then can we characterise the connection between toponymicon and lexicon in north-west Europe? Fran Colman uses the term 'cognate' to refer to the relationship between personal name elements and lexical words, stating that 'Anglo-Saxon (and cognate Germanic) personal names were formed from elements cognate with common words'.⁹⁹ This neatly encapsulates the notion of independent development from a common ancestor, but it may be less appropriate for place-names. A crucial distinction is that personal name elements did not need to be understood to be used, whereas place-name elements did. Moreover, the semantic salience of place-name elements meant that they in turn could influence the lexicon. While it is routinely accepted that terms enter the toponymicon from the lexicon, with an increasing realisation that once in the toponymicon, they may develop independently of the lexicon, the possibility of influence in the other direction appears rarely if at all to have been considered. But it can scarcely fail to have occurred. There are many instances of place-names providing the earliest evidence for the use of a term recorded later in literature. In most cases this is attributable to the accident of survival: as we have seen, an inherent feature of place-names is that they deal more closely with certain areas of vocabulary than do literary texts. However, there may be other instances where a word or meaning is first recorded in the toponymicon because it occurred there first, and was only later transferred into the lexicon. Some possibilities have been put forward during the course of this lecture, but these are intended to be illustrative only, demonstrating the potential for such transfers to occur.

In sum, the connection between place-name elements and lexical items is closer than that between personal name elements and lexical items. Once the anthroponymicon had split off from the lexicon, it could continue to develop independently. The toponymicon, on the other hand, was — and is — constantly in a relationship with the lexicon, most obviously taking from it, but sometimes contributing to it. As Rösel suggested for the Germanic dialects, they 'streben ja nicht

⁹⁸ This suggestion follows on from Nicolaisen's allusion to the 'structuring of onomastic fields' quoted above in Section 5, and from a more extensive discussion in his 'Lexical and Onomastic Fields', in *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Cracow, August 21–25, 1978*, ed. K. Rymut, vol. 2 (Cracow, 1982), pp. 209–16. The latter is an important article which is unfortunately not widely available and appears to have received little attention.

⁹⁹ F. Colman, 'Names Will Never Hurt Me', in *Studies in English Language and Literature. 'Doubt Wisely': Papers in Honour of E. G. Stanley*, ed. M. J. Toswell and E. M. Tyler (London and New York, 1996), pp. 13–28, at p. 13. Similar statements appear in her other publications, e.g. *Money Talks: Reconstructing Old English* (Berlin and New York, 1992), pp. 13 and 22–3.

voneinander weg, sondern bleiben in wechselnder Verbindung miteinander’ ‘do not strive to part from one another, but remain in ever-changing connection with one another’.¹⁰⁰

11. Language contact

Finally, we turn to the issue of interaction between different groups of Celtic and Germanic speakers in north-west Europe. Important sources of evidence for language contact are terms taken from one language into another, whether as lexical items or as place-name-forming elements. Here too the distinction between generics and qualifiers is considered significant. It is generally held that the occurrence of a loan word as a place-name generic indicates that it had entered the lexicon of the host language, whereas terms used exclusively as qualifiers may have been taken over as existing names without understanding of semantic content. Hence Fellows-Jensen cites occurrences of ON **ðergi* ‘shieling, pasture’, a borrowing from Common Gaelic *áirge* used as a place-name generic by Scandinavian settlers on the Isle of Man, the Northern and Western Isles and northern England, as evidence that they had adopted it as a lexical item:

Of greatest significance for the demonstration of the fact that the Vikings adopted the word *ærgi* into their normal vocabulary ... is its occurrence in place-names in England, always in areas where there was considerable Scandinavian influence and generally compounded with Scandinavian specifics¹⁰¹

Similarly, Nicolaisen takes it as axiomatic that if Gaelic speakers in north-east Scotland used the Pictish generic **pett* in place-name formation, it must also have been current in speech:

It is ... likely that the Pictish word *pett* was borrowed and applied by the incoming Gaelic population as a convenient toponymic generic while seemingly also current for a while in everyday speech ... it is ... likely that ... most ... *Pit*-names originated in, let us say, the ninth to the eleventh centuries, when Gaelic gradually established itself in the north-east, first in a period of bilingualism when Pictish and Gaelic were spoken side by side in the area.¹⁰²

In light of the current paradigm, this view may require revision, and alongside it the notion that the *Pit*-names are indicative of a period of bilingualism, whether from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, as Nicolaisen suggests, or at some time between the fifth and the ninth, the dating preferred by Barrow for a more gradual takeover of Pictland by the Gaelic-speaking Scots.¹⁰³

The issues are particularly acute with regard to the nature and extent of contact between Anglo-Saxons and Britons, a controversial area with implications both for the scale of the Germanic settlements and for the fate of the earlier inhabitants of southern Britain. As has often

¹⁰⁰ L. Rösel, *Die Gliederung der germanischen Sprachen nach dem Zeugnis ihrer Flexionsformen* (Nürnberg, 1962), p. 120; translation from E. Haugen, *The Scandinavian Languages: An Introduction to their History* (London, 1976), p. 112.

¹⁰¹ Fellows-Jensen, ‘Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles’, p. 164. Other important discussions of the loan element include M. C. Higham, ‘The “erg” Place-Names of Northern England’, *JEPNS* 10 (1977–8), 7–17, G. Fellows Jensen, ‘A Gaelic-Scandinavian Loan-Word in English Place-Names’, *JEPNS* 10 (1977–8), 18–25, and G. Fellows Jensen, ‘Common Gaelic *áirge*, Old Scandinavian *ðergi* or *erg*?’, *Nomina* 4 (1980), 67–74.

¹⁰² W. F. H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, new ed. (Edinburgh, 2001), p. 200.

¹⁰³ G. W. S. Barrow, ‘The Uses of Place-Names and Scottish History — Pointers and Pitfalls’, in *The Uses of Place-Names*, ed. S. Taylor (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 54–74, at p. 56.

been noted, borrowings from Brittonic into Old English are exceptionally sparse.¹⁰⁴ One of the few currently taken to be securely established is the topographical term *cumb*, a Brittonic place-name element used by the Anglo-Saxons for a type of valley identified by Gelling and Cole as a ‘short, broad valley, usually bowl- or trough-shaped with three fairly steeply rising sides’.¹⁰⁵ Because *cumb* was used as a generic in Anglo-Saxon place-names, the general view, as expressed by Richard Coates, is that it had become ‘fully lexicalized’ — in other words, that it formed part of the standard vocabulary of Old English:

We ... need to consider what information can be gleaned from the borrowing by the English of functioning Brittonic place-name elements. Two words were borrowed which joined the English onomasticon, became fully lexicalized, and were used as place-name generics: *cumb* and *torr*.¹⁰⁶

However, the *Dictionary of Old English* shows no evidence for its use outside place-names and charter bounds.¹⁰⁷ It might therefore be more appropriate to describe it as having become fully toponymicized. Since it occurs in around 150 charter bounds¹⁰⁸ and more than 180 place-names,¹⁰⁹ it seems an extraordinary coincidence that there is not a single occurrence in non-onomastic language until the sixteenth century.¹¹⁰ I would suggest that this is a late borrowing from the toponymicon into the lexicon, and that the term cannot be taken to have been current in Old English. If this suggestion is correct, there are even fewer Brittonic loan words than we thought.

12. Conclusion

In conclusion, ongoing work within place-name studies suggests that the relationship between toponymicon and lexicon is more complex and dynamic than was previously realised, and forces us to rethink some of the established ideas relating to the linguistic history of north-west Europe. Considerable advances have been made in recent years, but there is much more still to be done in

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. R. Coates, ‘Invisible Britons: The View from Linguistics’, in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. N. Higham (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 172–91, at pp. 177–81, and M. Filppula, J. Klemola and H. Pitkänen, ‘Early Contacts between English and the Celtic Languages’, in *The Celtic Roots of English*, ed. M. Filppula, J. Klemola and H. Pitkänen (Joensuu, 2002), pp. 1–26, at pp. 1–3. As the sparsity of borrowings appears to be at odds with a growing body of evidence for interaction between Anglo-Saxons and Britons, serious attempts have been made in recent years to investigate other types of evidence for language contact, for instance by various contributors to the two volumes mentioned in the previous sentence, and in a special issue of the journal *Eng. Lang. and Ling.* 13.2 (2009) entitled *Re-Evaluating the Celtic Hypothesis*, ed. M. Filppula and J. Klemola. It may also be relevant to note, however, that Old English appears in general to have been less receptive to borrowing than were later stages of English. This point is made by J. J. Smith, *Old English: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 64: ‘In OE, borrowing was somewhat less common [than in Middle or Present-Day English], and largely restricted to particular registers of language where available native words for modification through affixation or compounding were few. The main languages involved were varieties of Celtic and Norse, French, Latin and Greek, *although the impact of all of these languages on OE vocabulary, with the exception of Latin, was small*’ (my italics). In this context, the small number of borrowings from Brittonic may appear less surprising.

¹⁰⁵ Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ R. Coates, ‘Invisible Britons: The View from Toponomastics’, in *Language Contact in the Place-Names of Britain and Ireland*, ed. P. Cavill and G. Broderick (Nottingham, 2007), pp. 43–55, at p. 48.

¹⁰⁷ *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *cumb*¹.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, p. 89.

¹¹⁰ *OED*, s.v. *coomb*².

this area, in an international as well as an interdisciplinary context. The appearance of new resources, such as electronic corpora and the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, alongside new theoretical insights — notably in the articulation of onomastics and semantics, and in the raised profile of onomastics within historical linguistics more generally¹¹¹ — facilitate approaches unavailable to earlier generations of scholars. It is an exciting field to be working in.

¹¹¹ This is explored further in my article ‘The Role of Onomastics in Historical Linguistics’, *Jnl of Scottish Name Stud.* 3 (2009), 29–46.

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