

Short Reviews and Review Notes

A recent Modern Language Association collection of *Approaches to Teaching DON QUIXOTE* reminds us of the onomastic richness of that masterpiece and that NAMES has not noticed before *Cervantes' Place-Names: A Lexicon* (Scarecrow Press, 1978, \$15.00) by Eugene C. Torbert, a book of 201 pages that undertakes for the first time to cull all the toponyms from all the works of Miguel de Cervantes, including *Don Quixote*, "continents, regions, countries, nation-states, political districts, cities, towns, villages, and specific places and edifices in them referred to by Cervantes such as monasteries, churches, parishes, neighborhoods or districts, squares, fountains, promenades, parks, gardens, gates, streets, slaughterhouses, hospitals, insane asylums, prisons, jails, and any place or building that Cervantes mentions by name." And don't forget "the names of springs, streams, rivers, valleys, mountains, and other such topographical features that Cervantes mentions."

Toponyms which are components of titles of individuals, real or fictional, are excluded, but otherwise all the placenames that could be found in the 18 volumes of the *Obras completas de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, edited by Rudolph Schevill and Adolfo Bonilla y San Martin (Madrid, 1914-1941) are duly noted, located, etymologized, given "geographical location . . . and in some cases historical data deemed pertinent," and — here is where onomasticians reading NAMES might expect the most and will get the work in which it appears and/or its relationship and significance to Miguel de Cervantes."

In point of fact, the literary onomastic aspect is very much scanted, and some scholar may wish to take Torbert's work in hand and try to bring out the way the placenames function in the *Novelas ejemplares*, the *comedias*, *Don Quixote*, and other works of the greatest of Spanish authors. It is true that placenames are not used with anything like the care and cleverness that personal names (whether for characters or even the famous horse, "formerly a nag," that becomes the knight of La Mancha's trusty charger) are given by Cervantes, but there is more to be said about them than Torbert says. Indeed, that is what onomasticians principally will want to know, not that Mecca is 110 kms from the Red Sea or that this or that monastery passed from this order to that at some date long after the life of Cervantes was over.

Cervantes' Place-Names: A Lexicon is a work of meticulous collecting, bolstered by an impressive bibliography of a couple hundred authors even though its etymologies seldom or never add anything significant to dispel the many problems that the placenames in Cervantes offer, but it cannot be said to assist much in reading the works of Cervantes as literary artifacts, in determining how these names were manipulated by the writer or fell upon the ears of his first readers.

Now if anyone wishes to address the question of how these names function in the fictions, Torbert's industry has cleared the ground for that investigation.

Leonard R. N. Ashley

Thomas Pennant (1726-1798) began the modern standardization of the names of British birds in his *British Zoology* (1766, with a new edition 1812) and it was much advanced by

William Yarrell's (1784-1856) *History of British Birds* (1843) and the British Ornithologists Union (which published an official list in 1883). Now, a century after that first such list (the latest from the group is dated 1971) comes W.B. Lockwood's *The Oxford Book of British Bird Names* (Oxford University Press, 1985, £7.95). It is a mine of curious information not only for the ornithologist but also for the onomastician. It is learned, reliable, and a bit startling.

We learn that British birds are named for color (*blackcap*) or configuration (*swallow* means that it has a tail like a forked stick) or habit (woodpecker) or source of food (*flycatcher*) or call (*cuckoo*), etc. We learn to our surprise, probably, that *throstle* and *dove* are onomatopoeic in origin and that the bird name that has the strongest "claim to be considered our most archaic" one is — *goose*. We learn that a goose used to be called a *lag* ("lag-lag-lag" was the cry in driving them) and a duck an *ende*. We learn that words as well as birds came from the Continent: *heron* and *linnet* from France, *avocet* and *garganey* from Italy, and so on. In about 175 pages there are many strange facts and startling etymologies, even though the book deals in standard English names and could be much expanded if some of the dialect names of birds were to be included (*runnock* for *robin* or *muskette* or *great sparrowhawk*, for instance).

What is needed now is for the addition to the philologist's authoritative etymologies of the countryman's quaint regional words — and their folklore. And we could use a thorough investigation of all aspects of American bird names, those imported with the English language, those named here, and even the "unofficial" country names of birds and the jokes (remember "the double-breasted seersucker" and the "full-breasted pushover" and all those rowdy jokes of decades back?) and other folklore.

Leonard R. N. Ashley

Brown, Cecil H. *Language and Living Things: Uniformities in Folk Classification and Naming*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984. Pp. xvi + 306. \$35.00.

Folk classification of plant and animal life generally belongs in the domain of anthropologists, but it also has been studied, albeit haphazardly, by folklorists and other observers of groups of humans linked together by a common language. Folk culture and cultural anthropology have become "sciences" of the same type, so much so that now the two are confined to the mother discipline of anthropology. Systematization of the study (studies) has come about only in recent years, however, although the human interaction with other living objects has been a focus of study, contemplation, and sometimes classification for ages. The term naming the study is *ethnobiology*.

Later work in folk biological taxonomy includes cognitive anthropology "which focuses on the interrelationship of cognition, language, and culture." The attempt is to "understand human cultures as systems of concepts and rules," which have to be approached through the vocabularies of language; hence, names become paramount in the order of classification. Brown has recapitulated the history and the literature of ethnobiological research and has mapped the move toward the recognition of universals in cognation, nothing really new but still startling in the gathering of groups of words that are closely connected in meaning, such as kinship terms, color terms, and other such items that focused on folk biological taxonomies.

The application here is to cross-language lexical uniformities, the finding of life-form classes and discontinuities in nature. Comparisons of languages indicate that cognation of discontinuities takes place and that universals are recognized. For the onomatologist the classification scheme opens possibilities for recognition of name classes within groupings, as well as models for categorizing. It is worth working through.

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Ryden, Mats. *The English Plant Names in the Grete Herball (1526): A Contribution to the Historical Study of English Plant Name Usage*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. (Stockholm Studies in English, LXI. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, Drottninggatan 108, P.O. Box 45140, S-104 30 Stockholm, 1984. Pp. 110. SEK 92.

The Grete Herball (1526) is a translation of *Le grant herbier*, itself an expanded version of the 12th-century manuscript *Circa instans*. It was an immediate success and went through three editions rapidly. Our concern, however, is with the many names that occur in it. The plant headings are roughly alphabetical according to the Latin name or formula, with some 70% or more of the headings having one or more English names added:

De cicuta. Hemlocke
 De Curcurbyta. A gourde.
 De Nes pilis. Medlers or open arses.
 Adianthos. Maydenwede.

Ryden works the names into categories, such as plants with three or more English names:

Achillea millefolium. bloodwort, carpenter's grass, milfoil, sanguinary, yarrow.

Lists follow of plants with two English names, and English names with two or more Latin names. Also noted are botanical references that antedate the earliest OED record or references not found in the OED. Another list covers the current English plant nomenclature (about 35%) surviving from the time of *Herball*. Some of these, obviously have been transliterated directly from the Latin: *agrimony* (*Agrimonia*), *beet* (*Beta vulgaris*), *betony* (*Betonica officinalis*), *centaury* (*Centaurium*), and similar ones.

Other lists include the plant names in the *Herball* as part of chapter headings, 315 out of the final total of all plant names (500). The main list contains all the English plant names in the *Herbal*, in a tabulated list including the name in the *GH*, modern form, Latin heading in *GH*, and the modern scientific name. What is the importance for name study? Ryden writes,

In sum, the onomastic evidence in *The Grete Herball* is significant on basically three counts: (1) as a reflex of late medieval or early 16th century plant-name usage, (2) as an indicator of the potential for English plant-name formation around 1500, and (3) as a document accessible to and utilized by the later name-recording and name-giving herbalists.

Indeed, the study is an important, even major, contribution to plant-name usage. Besides, it provides in an engaging way information that occasional divers into medieval depths enjoy.

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McArthur, Lewis A. *Oregon Geographic Names*, 5th ed., rev. and enl. by Lewis L. McArthur. Portland, OR 97205: Western Imprints, The Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1230 S.W. Park Avenue, 1982. Pp. ix + 839.

Robert M. Rennick, *Names*, 24 (1976), 57-58, recognized the Oregon text as one of the great pioneer efforts in state placename study, and also wrote, in what must have been Bob's mellowest moment, "One could even read it from cover to cover and not become bored." Then he comes back to his own self and fusses about the omission of pronunciations. One cannot have everything; although for a placename student, this book goes pretty far in replacing all other joys. A good placename text can do that, and we must not look too closely to some of our colleagues' matrimonial lifestyle.

The 5th edition, edited by Lewis L. McArthur, a scholar in his own right and an excellent person, too, is now on magnetic tape, making the task of adding or changing, or classifying, a relatively simple task. Over 5,000 entries are recorded, along with location (by county), description of community and specific spatial location, origin, and other historical matters, all written in a workmanlike style that has something of the dramatic in it, echoing Rennick's cover-to-cover statement. The unbuttoned style is most appropriate here, as it should be in other such studies, in that a clarity exists that not often is noticed. It is doubtful, however, that any other press would have given a placename author and editor such latitude. Usually space has to be negotiated as though it were plutonium, with the author having just as much chance of obtaining the cherished space.

Since the text has already been reviewed (4th edition, that is), little more can be said here, except that the new 5th-edition preface notes that the U.S. Geological Survey has listed 32,000 names, while Lewis L. McArthur has now listed almost 35,000, which means that the figure for the state may be just that. McArthur also lists the percentages for the language of origin, the percentages for types, and traces the six periods of history of the state. Finally, I recommend that this book be made a part of the library of all who are interested in onomastics and for everybody in the state of Oregon.

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Robert Meyer, Jr., obtained and sent to me a copy of The Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 6*, Vol. II, Part 14, Ch. 4, "Code Word, Nickname, and Exercise Term Report (Short Title - NICKREP)," 14-4-1 - 14-4-28, which contains the procedures for registering and maintaining such "names" for use within the Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS) and other data systems within the Department of Defense. The authority for the report is DOD Regulation 5200.1r, 15 November 1973, and MJCS-308-75, 8 September 1975. All the terms are defined: code word, nickname, and exercise term, with sub-item definitions also. Nicknames, for instance, must not express a degree of bellicosity inconsistent with traditional American ideals or current foreign policy, convey connotations offensive to good taste, or offensive to our allies. Also, nicknames will not be classified; code words and exercise terms usually are TOP SECRET.

In another context, and rather surprising, are two lists (again from Robert Meyer, Jr.) from *Harper's*, October 1984, p. 20, one of military exercises held last year (1983?) and one of equestrian names taken from the Daily Racing Form on August 13, 1984. The two

are so much alike that they could be interchangeable. Here's a mixture: *Proud Saber*, *Norman's Land*, *Sign Language*, *Bar Frost*, *Bold Bird*, *Reptile*, *Foal*, *Eagle*, *Cobra Gold*, *Salty Bee*, *Icy Art*, and more in the same vein, maybe. Which ones are which?

In the light vein, what has happened to Hollywood? Names like Nastassja Kinski, Allen Goorwitz, Meryl Streep, Bruce Boxleitner, and other such turn-ons, dominate the market. Charles Champlin, "A Name by any other Name would Sell as Sweet," *Smithsonian*, April 1985, p. 216, addresses the problem. He believes that the preservation, or resurrection "of real names, says a good deal about the changing nature of Hollywood and the shifting (declining) role of the movies in society." Perhaps.

A new journal, *Studies in American Drama, 1945-Present*, needs (and its editors solicit) scholarly articles on theatre history, dramatic influence and technique, performance, biography, and interpretation. Edited by Philip C. Kolin (member of ANS and contributor to *Names*), English, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS 39406, and Colby H. Kullman, English, Univ. of Mississippi, University, MS 38677. Subscriptions begin at \$10.00, payable to the journal and sent to J. Madison Davis, Business Manager, English/Communications Div., The Behrend College, Erie, PA 16563.

We hope to obtain a Canadian review of Floreen Ellen Carter's *Place Names of Ontario* (London, Ont.: Phelps Pub. Co., 1984), 2 vols., \$195. A review by Alan Rayburn will appear in *Onomastica Canadiana*, 67 (1985).

The ANS member who sent the following will not be named here: J.R. Schwartz, *The Traveller's Guide to the Best Cat Houses in Nevada* (Sun Valley, ID 83353: Straight Arrow Publishing, Box 1467, 1984, pp. 168, \$4.95 + \$2.00 handling), lists the names, and other essential information, of all the brothels in Nevada. Safe names include *Shamrock*, *Green Lantern*, *Carlín Social Club*, and *Hacienda*. For the unsafe ones, buy book.

David Gold notes a new source for Jewish onomastic research: *The Jewish Language Review*, which is devoted to the study of the inner and outer linguistic history of the Jewish people and related groups, has a queries-and-reply section (like that of *Notes & Queries*, *Translation Inquirer*, and other publications), to which anyone may submit a query or reply to a published query. Several thousand Jewish surnames, forenames, and placenames are mentioned in this section (as well as other parts of the *JLR*). For information write to Association for the Study of Jewish Languages, 1610 Eshkol Tower, University of Haifa, Mount Carmel, Haifa 31 999, ISRAEL.

Wayland D. Hand states that "ANS members will be pleased to know that the files of the *Encyclopaedia of American Popular Beliefs and Superstitions* are literally 'loaded' with material on names." He points out, too, that the collection of Ohio popular beliefs and superstitions made by Newbell N. Puckett (a member of ANS until his death) and published by G.K. Hall in 1981 (3 vols.) contains large amounts of onomastic material. For information, write to Dr. Hand at Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, 1037 Library Wing, University of California, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024.

Place Names of the Outer Banks, by Roger L. Payne, available from Thomas A. Williams, Pub., 201 W. Main St., Washington, NC 27889, \$14.95 hardbound, \$6.95 firmbound, will be reviewed by Richard R. Randall. Payne is also the chief of the Geographic Names Information System, U.S. Geological Survey.

Please send information concerning theses and dissertations — and other onomastic items — to me.