Names 40.4 (1992)

Book Reviews

Die Stellung der Gewässernamen Polens innerhalb der alteuropäischen Hydronymie [*The Position of River Names in Poland within the Old European Hydronymy*]. By Jürgen Udolph. Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Lutherstrasse 59, Postfach 10 61 40, W–6900 Heidelberg, Germany. 1990. Pp. 364. Cloth, DM96.00; Paper, DM64.00.

Ever since the Indo-Europeanist Hans Krahe, in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, proposed his theory of a stratum of river names in central, western, and northern Europe, Indo-European in origin but only with difficulty or not at all explainable in terms of the linguistic development and structure of any of the individual Indo-European languages now spoken or known to have been once spoken in the area in question, scholars, this reviewer among them, have searched for evidence of this "Old European" stratum. In a sense, such searches have been conducted in conjunction with, or parallel to, less focused attempts at discovering pre-Germanic, pre-Celtic, pre-Baltic, pre-Slavonic, etc., toponymic strata of any kind, whether Indo-European or not, in Europe. Jürgen Udolph's monograph, written under the guidance of the Krahe pupil W.P. Schmid at the University of Göttingen, is a case in point, and readers of this journal interested in such early strata in general or in the situation in Poland in particular should be aware of the existence of this substantial and well-argued study.

This is not the place to scrutinize in detail the fifty individual elements which Udolph puts under the scholarly microscope. It must therefore suffice to say that, after a full account of the history of hydronomic scholarship in Poland and of the, sometimes highly critical, reception of Krahe's theory in the profession, and a rigorous examination of the inventory of Polish river names, Udolph is completely persuaded of the existence of an "Old European" stratum in the hydronomy of Poland. (For several of his examples he has found, among others, identical equivalents in Britain.) As an extension of his quest, he also examines other potentially non-Polish or non-Slavonic strata, including a German adstratum and, possibly, a pre-Indo- European substratum. This reviewer is convinced by the author's arguments but even those who might be more skeptical will be glad to have this valuable corpus of names available for interrogation.

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Place-Names of Northern Ireland. Vol. I: County Down I. Edited by Gregory Toner and Mícheál B. Ó Mainnín. 1992. Pp. xxii + 217. Vol. II: County Down II. Edited by A. J. Hughes and R. J. Hannon. 1992. Pp. xxi + 301. The Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast, Northern Ireland. Cloth, £20.00; Paper, £8.50 (per volume; discounts for purchase of the whole series).

Placename studies in Northern Ireland have a long history, either as part of such studies covering the whole of Ireland or as a separate enterprise. Only since the founding of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project in 1987, however, have they been pursued systematically by a team of researchers, largely due to the vision of Gerard Stockman, Professor of Celtic in The Queen's University Belfast. In the first five years of its existence the Project has, as the result of the recruitment of dedicated staff, rapidly developed from an agency chiefly serving the map-makers and the Celtic interests into a well-trained and well-coordinated scholarly enterprise capable of publishing the results of its research in a format which will both satisfy the specialist and please the general public. The first two volumes of a brand new series entitled *Place-Names of Northern Ireland*, the general editor of which is Gerard Stockman, are ample proof of this.

The series, when completed, will cover the whole of the "six counties," devoting several volumes to each of them. A beginning in that coverage has been made with the first two volumes of County Down which are devoted to Newry and South-West Down, and The Ards, respectively. Within each volume the material is arranged by parishes under which the names discussed are listed in alphabetical order. The information provided for each name is a name-scholar's delight, for beyond the modern spelling and map-reference it contains an actual or conjectured Irish (Gaelic) form with an English translation, the modern pronunciation (in IPA) and, above all, an extensive, sometimes exhaustive, corpus of spellings documented from the earliest written occurrence of the name to modern times. This information allows the reader to examine knowledgeably the editors' discussion which follows the primary evidence for each name and to evaluate their conclusions. In this reviewer's opinion, they will find very little to quibble about because the discussions take full account of earlier views, argue on the whole cautiously, and offer judicious conclusions. If a suggested etymology is offered with a parenthetical question mark—*An Tuar Mór (?)* 'the large field/pasture' for Turmore, let us say (I: 39), or *Baile Bláthach (?)*

'townland abounding in flowers' for Ballyblaugh (I: 92) – readers are well advised to take such reservations seriously. Since most of these "questionable" etymologies are not far off the mark or quite possibly correct. They strengthen our trust in those etymologies which the authors offer without such qualifications. The great majority of the names included refer to townlands or are witnesses to other aspects of the human presence in the landscape; only very few of them refer to natural features or are what the editors call "Other Names." Although the entries do not only refer to names which appear on maps but have sometimes been collected from oral tradition, the richness of the material which an orally maintained microtoponymy has to offer has obviously not yet been fully explored and exploited. In mitigation, one has to take into account, however, that Irish (Gaelic) is no longer spoken by speakers native to County Down and that minor names which have not, for one reason or another, been mapped have therefore often disappeared from memory.

The central presentation and discussion of the names included is in both volumes helpfully supported by a general introduction (by Kay Muhr, Senior Research Fellow in the Project), a basic but very useful synopsis of "Aspects of Irish Grammar Relevant to Place-Names," a summary of the nature and function of "Land Units," a list of abbreviations, primary and secondary bibliographies, a glossary of technical terms (*annates, ballyboe, metathesis, onomasticon*, etc.), a pronunciation guide for those not familiar with IPA, and a placename index. There seems to be little, therefore, that the editors have not thought of.

This reviewer, who has a long-standing interest in Scottish placenames and has, as far as Gaelic names are concerned, frequently looked across to Ireland for inspiration, greatly welcomes the appearance of these two volumes and hopes that more of them will be published at regular intervals until the series is complete. Others, too, whether because of their involvement in name studies or their personal or professional interest in Ireland will find County Down I and II and, we hope, their many successors fascinating in content and accessible in format. We wish Professor Stockman and his crew continued success in the years to come. This reviewer has already reserved shelf space in a crowded library for future volumes in the series.

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The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages. By Margaret Gelling. Studies in the Early History of Britain. Leicester University Press, 25 Floral Street, London WC2E 9DS, England. 1992. Pp. x + 221. Cloth, £45.00; Paper, £15.99.

This reviewer has, in these pages and elsewhere, so often encouraged the study of names for their own sake, in the context of an onomastic onomastics, so to speak, that it is only fair to acknowledge, indeed praise, fully the contribution the competent and imaginative investigation of placenames can make to the exploration of the history of a given region during a certain period. In the book under review, the region consists of the pre-1974 English counties of Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, and Herefordshire, and the period under scrutiny can be roughly described as post-Roman and pre-Norman. In both respects, the volume felicitously complements two earlier studies, in the same series, by Pauline Stafford of *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (1985) and by Wendy Davies of *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (1982).

That toponymic evidence, chiefly in the form of distribution maps of placename types and elements, should play so much more than a handmaiden role in this particular study is not surprising when one considers that the author, Dr. Margaret Gelling, is an English placename scholar of great distinction whose publications and service to the profession have been both extensive and highly influential. It would, however, be erroneous to assume that the book is so strongly name-oriented solely because of the author's personal scholarly pre-occupation. Rather it is to be regarded as a stroke of wisdom and good fortune that the publishers, in view of the fact that placenames were bound to be so integral to this study, secured Dr. Gelling as its author.

To prove the claim regarding the fundamental contributions placename evidence can and has to make in the reconstruction or, better, the recreation of the pre-Conquest English landscape – in this case, of the West Midlands – one has to look no further than the list of seventy-eight "figures" which illustrate the book because about a dozen of them are primarily designed to show the distribution of toponymic types and elements while several others indirectly include such information. Five maps, for example, show the location of placenames containing Old English (OE) *léah* which was particularly productive in the forming of placenames, mostly with the meaning of "clearing," between AD c. 750 and c. 950 and which is therefore, according to Gelling, "a reliable indicator of the presence of ancient woodland at the date when English speech was gaining the ascendancy in the greater part of southern

Britain" (6). Consequently, the author's discussion of ancient woodland in the landscape of the region relies heavily on the witness of a placename generic whose Old English meaning ranged from "forest" to "meadow." Similarly, a brief but intensive discussion of placenames containing OE *hláw, hlǣw* (*Taplow, Winslow, Onslow*) in reference to tumuli (48–52), is an essential ingredient in the evaluation of the Anglo-Saxon archaeology of the region.

The chapter on "The British People in the West Midlands" (53–71) is also argued mainly on the basis of the identification and scatter of "ancient Celtic names, and names which refer to British peoples" (pre-English river names like *Alne, Avon, Clun, Dee, Peover, Tame, Tern, Trent*; other placenames like *Bryn, Hodnet, Lichfield, Pemkridge, Treville*; as well as some of the *Waltons* and *Walcots*). The relevant maps are to be found on pages 58, 60, 63, 67, and 69, and a separate one devoted to *Lyme* (64) condenses visually some of the complex arguments regarding this potential name of a larger region or district. Placenames containing OE *hearg* or *wéah*, both meaning "heathen shrine" (map on page 93) are demonstrably significant pointers to the presence of Anglo-Saxon paganism.

Placenames are also important evidence for the question of pre-Offan settlement west of the late eighth-century Offa's Dyke (106–11), with names in *sǣte* 'dwellers' (120), of the *Burton* type (121), and some of the recurrent *tún-* names like *ác-tún* and *eik-tún* (123) being of special significance. The complex problems of Norse settlement in the region would also be even less tractable without the information derived from Norse placenames, like *Kirby, Meols, Thingwall, Wibtoft* (maps on pages 132, 136, 138).

In fact, there is not a single chapter in this book (see, for instance, the discussion of the name *Warwick* (155–156) in the chapter on "Towns and Trade," and the sporadic injection of placename etymologies into the chapters on "The Late Anglo-Saxon Landscape" and "The Domesday Survey") which does not benefit greatly from placenames as a source of knowledge in circumstances when there is little else to go by. One might therefore well make the claim that this book could not have been written without a knowledgeable examination of the information that can be teased out of placenames or that, if it had been, it would have been a much slimmer and less instructive explication of its topic.

If one wanted to demonstrate the significance of placename evidence in the reconstruction of prehistoric landscapes, the book under review would be an excellent example to choose. Naturally, archaeological findings and documentary testimony also play a large part in this reconstruction, and it would be foolish to assert that Gelling could have

produced this illuminating account on the basis of toponymic evidence alone. The book is therefore an instructive model of how onomastics, archaeology and (local) history, themselves inter-disciplinary intellectual endeavors, can be successfully combined to complement each other when each of them alone would have been found wanting, in the face of an almost impossible challenge.

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Publication Notes: Names Out West

Idaho Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary. By Lalia P. Boone. The University of Idaho Press, 3368 University Station, Moscow, ID 83843. Pp. xxvi + 413. Paper, $15.95.

North Dakota Place Names. By Douglas A. Wick. Hedemarken Collectibles, PO Box 7399, Northbrook Station, Bismarck, ND 58502. 1988. Pp. 237. Cloth, $29.95.

South Dakota Post Offices. By Alan H. Patera, John S. Gallagher, and Kenneth W. Stach. The Depot, Box 2093, Lake Grove, OR 97035. 1990. Pp. 400. Cloth, $45.00.

Origins: A Guide to The Place Names of Grand Teton National Park and the Surrounding Area. By Elizabeth Wied Hayden and Cynthia Nielsen. Grand Teton Natural History Association, Moose, WY 83012. 1988. Pp. 43. Paper, $4.95.

Yellowstone Place Names. By Lee H. Whittlesey. A Montana Historical Society Guide. Montana Historical Society Press, Helena, MT 59620. 1988. Pp. xviii + 178. Paper, $11.95.

Over the last few years, several studies of placenames out my way have appeared and for one reason or another have escaped notice in this journal. Many of them deserve a full-length—and much more timely—review, but on the principle that it is better to be late than not to mention them at all, I would like to offer my comments on those five that appear in the heading to this note.

Lalia Boone's study of the placenames of Idaho, which appeared a couple of years before her death in 1990, caps a twenty-year project, involving

students and many other citizens of the state. It is a major step in the goal of each state's having a scholarly placename book. *Idaho Place Names* is an alphabetical listing of some three thousand names of both natural and cultural features, concentrating on names in current use and explaining their origins, geographical location, and physical surroundings. Each entry is followed by the name of the county in which the feature is located and a notation for the township, range, and section. Boone also locates the feature in relation to other features. If there is an interesting story about the place—and there are many—an additional paragraph or two is included. A final paragraph in each entry explains the origin of the name. In a very few cases we are told how to pronounce the name: *Agatha* ("once a small town") is "uh-GATH-uh," and *Aggipah Mountain* in Lemhi County is "AG-i-pah" (2-3). Another town, *Weippe*, is pronounced "WEE-ipe" (394). This rather rough and ready transcription system would probably suffice if it were more often used. How, for example, do Idahoans pronounce *Lemhi* (a county, a range, a river, etc., all from "a character (Limhi) in the Book of Mormon" [221])? The city of Moscow, home of the University of Idaho, is "mahs-koe" (never, I suppose, *mahs-cow), and the name comes from Moscow, Pennsylvania, and Moscow, Iowa, both former residences of the first postmaster. Strangely, Boone then goes on to tell us that "Moscow is from the Finnic tongue signifying 'place for washing'; the term means 'to wash clothes" (262). How this allusion to the Russian city relates to Idaho is left to the reader to determine. It is a flaw typical of state placename books to ignore the larger onomastic picture. A minor example is in the entry for the Sawtooth Mountains, "The most magnificent group of mountains in Idaho." Boone observes that the name comes from the similarity, seen at a distance, of the peaks to "the serrated teeth of a saw" (332), but misses a chance to point out that this is the same concept that gives us the name *Sierra*, which also comes from the sawlike appearance of rugged peaks.

Cross-references and name clusters enrich the already rich entries. The *Lemhi* cluster is one example; *Coeur d'Alene* is another (and Boone has not solved this well-known onomastic puzzle). Several features honor both Lewis and Clark, but we realize that first impressions can be misleading. Lewis County is indeed named for the explorer, but Clark County honors early settler Sam K. Clark (80). Lewiston (just across the Snake River from Clarkston, Washington, and "the only seaport in Idaho") was the first territorial capital and was "Named officially for Meriwether Lewis" (223–24). The two-line entry for the Idaho Falls suburb of Lewisville, however, is less helpful: we are told only that it "A Mormon community." The cross-references are sometimes not complete. Under the entry *Harvard* is the statement that this is one of eight

stations named for colleges, but it is left to the ingenuity of the reader to find the other seven. I located *Yale, Princeton*, and *Vassar*, none of which provide clues to the other four.

But altogether, the flaws are few in this excellent and very useful placename book. It is well-made, attractively printed, and beautifully illustrated with historical photographs. If all of the other states had books this good, we would be close to our goal of a national placename survey.

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The purpose of Douglas A. Wick's *North Dakota Place Names* differs from that of Boone's Idaho book, despite the similarity of titles. Wick limits his study to the names of past and present post offices and ignores the names of natural features except where the town or post office name is directly related to a feature. For example, the name *Cannon Ball*, used of two or three communities, comes from the name of the Cannonball River, which gets its name from "the many limestone boulders in its bed ... which ... resemble cannon balls" (31). Each entry is packed with readable information about the history of the town or post office, its location by township and range down to the quarter section, its railroad connections, the names of prominent settlers, citizens, and people who came from there (Lawrence Welk was born in Strasburg [187]), and much more, including a welcome awareness of the larger onomastic picture. The large format volume is printed in three columns to a page, illustrated throughout with early photographs of towns and with historical postmarks. The postmarks are a key to Wick's main interest: postal history, an important and often overlooked companion to our onomastic enterprise. *North Dakota Place Names* has an extensive bibliography, with numbered items, and each of the entries in the main text is keyed to one or more of these items. Another useful feature is a County Index (217–33). For each of the fifty-three counties in North Dakota there is a brief history, including an explanation of the name origin, a small map of the state with the county's position indicated, and a complete list of the post offices in that county. Although Wick's book is not the final word in placename studies for North Dakota, it is a wonderful start.

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Wick acknowledges help from a 1982 book on by Alan H. Patera and John S. Gallagher, *North Dakota Post Offices 1850–1982*. Patera and Gallagher, joined now by Kenneth W. Stach, have produced another

excellent book of Post Offices: *South Dakota Post Offices*. Patera and company, through The Depot Press, have produced nearly a dozen books of varying size and quality listing post office in various states. The South Dakota volume is a collection of all of the past and present post offices in "The Mount Rushmore State." The arrangement is county by county, with an alphabetical list for the whole state at the end to guide the reader to the proper county listing, where we find the date established and the date discontinued if the office is no longer open. Small rural post offices often moved from farm to farm or ranch to ranch, and fixing a location has always been a problem. Patera, et al., give all locations, by section, township, and range. *Imogene*, in Perkins County, opened on August 2, 1910, in Section 24, Township 14 North, Range 11 East (we are not told that this is in relation to the Black Hills Meridian) and closed on July 15, 1943. Clara Wheelock was the first postmistress and the proposed name was *Wheelock*, but it was apparently turned down. In 1912 the offfice moved to Sec. 31, T14N, R12E, and in 1940 to Sec. 19 of the same township. Patera et al. show this move graphically on a map of the county by the use of arrows (302–03). All post offices, in fact, are positioned on these maps, and for the most part these locations are accurate and precise.

South Dakota Post Offices provides very little information about the origins of these post office names. Such information can be inferred in many cases. For example, the short-lived office in Roberts County known as *Palm* had as its first postmaster one Emanuel J. Palm, and nearby *Otto* was served by Charles Otto (317). But to find out the origin of *Imogene*, we must turn to other sources. *South Dakota Place Names* (1941) tells us that Imogene Wheelock was the daughter of Postmistress Clara Wheelock (71).

But this book, and others like it throughout the country either published or in progress, will be extremely useful in locating early towns and communities and in supplying the dates that the names first appeared. The information is all available in the archives of the Post Office Department, but the convenience of having it all in one handy volume is considerable. For post office historians, the list of the first few postmasters and even their annual compensation should be useful. In addition to the maps showing the location of each office, each county section includes a state outline map showing the location of the county. Photographs—most of them taken by the authors—of some of the more interesting post offices and copies of postmarks add visual interest to this useful, well-edited book.

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Placename studies of limited regions give researchers a chance to go into much more detail – to discuss microtoponyms – than is possible in state-wide books. And if the region is a popular tourist destination, these studies have a chance for wide distribution (I should say "sales"). The book devoted to placenames in the Grand Teton National Park is little more than a pamphlet, but it is beautifully printed, with historical photographs on almost every page. The first author, the late Elizabeth Hayden, who did most of the research, was a long-time resident of the Park, married to Park Ranger Dudley Hayden, for whom Dudley Lake is named. Dudley Hayden was apparently not related to the famous geologist Ferdinand V. Hayden, who figured prominently in the creation of Yellowstone National Park and who also led expeditions to the Grand Tetons in 1872 and 1877. Although the map on the wrap-around cover of the book shows "Mt. Hayden" as one of the most prominent features, there are no "Hayden" placenames listed. This map is not specifically identified but it probably is the 1877 map drawn by Orestes St. John, for whom Mount Saint John is named. The so-called "Mt. Hayden" is in fact The Grand Teton, the highest and most majestic in the range. Apparently members of Hayden's 1872 party bestowed the name to honor its leader, but Hayden rejected the honor (20). Less modest were Thomas Moran, the expedition's artist, whose namesake Mount Moran is the highest peak in the northern part of the range, and paleontologist Joseph Leidy, whose mountain rises above Antelope Flats east of the park.

The placename cover of the Tetons is a roll call of Westerners. John Colter, who said goodbye to Lewis and Clark at the Yellowstone River and was probably the first white man to see what became Yellowstone Park and the Tetons (in 1807–08), is remembered in *Colter Bay*, although this name was not bestowed until 1948. Mount Meek commemorates *Joe Meek*, who was anything but. And *Mount Jedediah Smith* honors one of the West's most famous fur trappers, who visited this area in the company of David Jackson, whose name is scattered all over the area, including the largest town, the largest lake, and the largest hole. The term *hole*, by the way, was used by trappers for a "mountain-ringed valley" (23). Westerners of a much more recent era are also honored. Mount Wister is named for New Yorker Owen Wister, whose 1902 novel defined the cowboy as a Western hero. Wister spent his summers in Jackson Hole, and readers of *The Virginian* will remember that the final chapters of the novel are set in that idyllic environment.

Though small in size, *Origins* packs a great deal of useful and interesting information into its forty-three pages.

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Lee Whittlesey's *Yellowstone Place Names* is the most interesting and arguably the best of the books in this assorted list. For a number of years Whittlesey has worked in Yellowstone Park as a tour guide and ranger, and he spent many years researching and recording the origins of names in this, America's premier national park. This is a substantial book, but even so it includes only a fraction of the names that Whittlesey and others before him have collected and identified the origins of; an "unabridged edition" of over 2,000 pages is available from the Montana Historical Society. This bit of information appears in a section called "Yellowstone Place Names Committee," one of several one-page asides scattered throughout the book. Also scattered throughout the book is a generous collection of beautiful black and white photographs, mostly from the early days of the park.

But it is the entries on individual names which are the book's best feature. They are models of clear, concise, yet expansive writing. For well-known features, such as Mammoth Hot Springs, Old Faithful, or Yellowstone River and Yellowstone Lake, the entries are long and full of historical and geological information. Old Faithful Geyser, whose "name is practically synonymous with Yellowstone National Park," got that name from members of the 1870 Washburn Expedition. Interestingly, it is not the most "faithful" of the geysers (that distinction belongs to Riverside Geyser), but the myth that it erupts "every hour on the hour" is part of American culture (115).

While aimed at a popular audience, this book manages to be very scholarly in an unobtrusive manner. Most of the entries explain not only for whom or for what reason the feature is named but also detail the circumstances and in many cases cite the official report from which this information has been gleaned. At the end of the book we find an extensive bibliography and a long note on where unpublished material on Yellowstone Park is located. Whittlesey has blended responsible scholarship with popular appeal, and the result is a wonderful book which should find a place on every onomast's shelf and in the luggage of all visitors to Yellowstone National Park.

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If you would like to have a brochure or a bibliography of current holdings, please write to:

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