Re-evaluating English Personal Naming on the Eve of the Conquest

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ABSTRACT

Between 850 and 1150, the names of the people of England underwent a fundamental transformation. The old Germanic system of dithematic naming was replaced by a system of indivisible names in which a diminishing number of names became shared by an increasing number of people. This is often seen as one of the many consequences of the Norman Conquest, and is assumed to have gone hand in hand with a switch to continental names. Analysing three corpora of names from pre-Conquest England, this article offers a re-evaluation of the transformation in medieval English personal naming.

The Norman Conquest casts a large shadow over English historiography.[1] While much work has been done in recent years to nuance the centuries-old debate around its impact, the Conquest, embedded as it is in curricula and the national consciousness, is still often seen as a dividing line between two different worlds: the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman.[2] Clearly, a number of significant transformations were brought about by the Normans – changes in language, political allegiances, ruling elites and relationships with the rest of the British Isles and Europe. Yet the fact is that the Norman Conquest occurred during a time of considerable change across the whole of Europe.[3] James Holt explained that medieval England's experience was different from the rest of Europe; that 'the Revolution of 1066' causes change to appear to us 'not as the relatively gradual process which bedevils much of the Continental evidence, but as a sharp antithesis, the new confronting the old across the divide of 1066'.[4] During a period of such widespread change, it is difficult to divorce changes which occurred as a direct result of the Conquest from those which simply occurred at the same time, or in spite of it. As a result, it is very easy to ascribe all changes as being down to Norman influence.

Indeed, to some extent, the Conquest separates the Anglo-Saxon world from everything that came after it. Ann Williams has pointed out that we even have a different name for the people who lived before 1066 – 'Anglo-Saxons', rather than 'English' – and that 'calling the people of pre-Conquest England by a different name from their post-Conquest successors encourages the assumption that "English" history begins in 1066'.[5] Yet there was no large-scale exodus of Anglo-Saxons after the Conquest, nor was there a particularly large number of Norman migrants – probably no more than 20,000, little more than one per cent of the population.[6] The English of 1150 were, by and large, the same people as in 1050 – or at least their direct descendants. But the study of their respective histories is all too often carried out separately.

Their names may well have a part to play in this divide. The names we see among the English of the twelfth and thirteenth century seem, to the modern reader, identifiably English. *William*, *Thomas* and *John* could be plucked from any period of English history over the last thousand years. They could be a grandfather, a brother, an uncle of someone living today. As a result, the individuals behind these names seem, in some ways, more identifiable as people as well – more human perhaps. In comparison, the names of their pre-Conquest counterparts often seem alien and unfamiliar to us. Names such as *Beorhtric*, *Æðelweard* and *Leofgifu* lend the Anglo-Saxons an air of fantastical detachment. So there is a perhaps an understandable tendency to see them as fundamentally different to what came later. As Williams has pointed out, 'names matter', whether they be personal names or the labels we apply to groups of people.[7] And the quite glaring disparity between the names of English people either side of the Conquest makes it easier to label those who came before it 'Anglo-Saxon', distinct and different from the English who came after it. The manner in which the changes in English personal naming have often been associated with the Conquest epitomises this divide, but it is just possible that they may be part of the solution.

A English Personal Naming: In the Shadow of the Conquest

It is widely agreed that, in the early ninth century, the people of England adhered to traditional Germanic principles of name-giving, where dithematic, compound names were created by combining two 'themes' taken from the language of everyday vocabulary. This was a feature inherited from Common West Germanic, although the genesis of such compound naming systems stretches much further back, having roots in Indo-European itself.[8] Such systems were common to most of western Europe – or at least those areas where Germanic kingdoms had come to dominate in the wake of the fall of Rome in the fifth century. Other than at its Celtic and Muslim edges, most of western Europe adhered to a compound naming system similar to that of Anglo-Saxon England, and had done so from at least the seventh century, even in areas where Germanic languages never replaced Latin dialects. In Anglo-Saxon England, which was Germanic linguistically, people at all levels of society overwhelmingly followed the rules of this system when naming their children.

The main features of this system ensured that, in general, each individual had a single name – with no surname – and names were predominantly created by combining two recognisable name elements, or 'themes', to produce 'dithematic' or 'compounded' names.[9] There was a finite number of themes, but they could be combined in a multitude of ways, with some being used only at the start of names, like *Ead-* and *Cuth-*; some only at the end, like *-ric* and *-weard*; and others which could be used either at the start or the end, such as *Beorht-/-beorht* and *Wulf-/-wulf*. There was always a small proportion of monothematic, uncompounded, names which did not follow this pattern. These included names containing an individual theme, such as *Beorht*, as well as extended or suffixed names, such as *Goda* or *Goding*. Some of these may have been monothematic in origin, while many other are likely to have been hypocoristic formations – familiar forms of dithematic names. Original bynames or nicknames were also occasionally recorded rather than a name given at birth.[10] However, the vast majority of names were

compound creations, and the flexibility allowed by this dithematic system meant it was possible for a huge number of names to be formed. In essence, a name was created for, rather than given to, each person. As a result, there was very little repetition of names and any two people within a community or family would be unlikely to share the same name.[11]

The overall picture is of a system which allowed for, and for the most part succeeded in, the creation of a unique name for each individual member of a community by combining two name themes taken from the vocabulary of Old English. In contrast, by the fourteenth century, the way in which the people of England used personal names had been fundamentally transformed. One immediately recognisable and inescapable change was the almost complete transformation of the linguistic origin of the English name stock. Whereas, in 850, the vast majority of English names were of Old English origin, by 1350, with a few rare exceptions, these names had disappeared, replaced by names of continental origin introduced into England shortly following the Norman Conquest. These included Continental Germanic names such as *William*, *Richard* and *Robert*, which had originally been formed using themes cognate with those used in England, but by this point had become indivisible names in their own right. They were later joined by 'Christian' names, those associated with biblical personages or popular saints, such as *Thomas*, *John* and *Adam*, which gained in popularity from the mid-twelfth century onwards.[12] The few Old English names that did survive into the later medieval period were also, usually, names associated with popular saints, such as *Edward* and *Edmund*.[13] Other than that, the only remnants we see of traditional Old English names are those which became patronymic surnames in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as *Lewin*, from *Leofwine*, *Goodwin*, from *Godwine*, and *Aldred,* from *Ealdred*.[14]

This transformation in naming vocabulary seems to have gone hand in hand with an evolution in the way personal names were used. By the fourteenth century, the majority of the English population shared a relatively small number of common, indivisible personal names. Not only

would most people have shared their name with any number of members of their own family, but they would also have shared it with numerous other people in their immediate vicinity. People passed down family names from father to son, from mother to daughter, and shared names with their friends and neighbours. As a result, a small number of popular names came to dominate the name stock.

As with many of the changes that occurred in English society at this time, the most prominent explanation given for this transformation is the Norman Conquest, and the replacement of the Anglo-Saxon ruling elite with a new French-speaking one, drawn from those areas of northern France which helped turn William from a Bastard into a Conqueror: predominantly Normandy, Brittany, Picardy and Flanders. Robert Bartlett has stated that:

> With the Norman Conquest, a small alien group took over the kingdom of England. Their names marked them out from the subject population just as clearly as their language…[The] process of cultural constraint was powerful enough to lead to the wholesale adoption of Norman names by the native population…This shift to Norman names seems to have been accompanied by a decline in the variety of available names.[15]

Similarly, Ann Williams suggests that:

> One of the most striking, and uncontentious, results of the Norman Conquest is the almost complete replacement of the insular name-stock with names of continental origin…It was not, however, only the name-stock which was changed. Before 1066, each individual was identified by a single, distinctive name (an idionym). This contrasts very strongly with the present-day system of naming.[16]

Perhaps the most significant contribution to the study of English naming during this period has been the work of the eminent onomast and anthroponymist, Cecily Clark. Clark's work on names was ground-breaking, and her efforts to use personal naming as a means to discover more about the social attitudes of medieval people and the social composition of the

communities they lived in have been, to a large extent, the inspiration behind the research presented in this paper.[17] Much of Clark's work was done with the aim of assessing the impact of the Norman Conquest on the names of the people of England and, through their names, the impact on the lives of English people. She also developed a set of working principles that she could apply in a range of historical contexts to ensure her studies yielded consistent results. She referred to these – possibly with tongue in cheek – as 'Clark's First Three Laws of Applied Anthroponymics' in a paper given under this name in 1979.[18] These principles state that:

> In any homogenous community, naming-behaviour will remain constant, except when disturbed by outside influence…In any community previously characterised by uniform naming-behaviour, reactions to uniform outside influence will likewise be uniform…[and]…In any community originally homogenous, any variations in the effects of an outside influence on naming-behaviour will be proportional to variations in the strength of that influence.[19]

While Clark's laws are undoubtedly useful for studying the impact of naming vocabulary, they are problematic when attempting to discern changes to the nature of the system itself.[20] Their main premise holds that naming behaviour will remain constant within any community unless there is outside influence and that, by measuring the impact of naming changes on different locations, we can determine the strength of impact of outside influence on a naming system. However, we should remember that the naming system in all the areas of western Europe where Germanic naming had been predominant did change; and it did so along similar lines to that of England. Yet in Europe, these changes occurred without any obvious outside influence, and were instead brought about through internal societal changes. While Clark's three laws are without doubt useful when examining the impact of new naming vocabulary on the name stock, they are less so when attempting to measure changes to the naming system itself .[21]

Indeed, Clark's wider studies present a far more nuanced picture than. She noted that 'the shift away from single idionyms…[and] reliance not merely on a finite stock of set forms but largely on a very few disproportionately favoured ones' seems to have arisen spontaneously across most of western Europe, even in late eleventh-century England.[22] Moreover, Clark herself acknowledged that 'although, to me, these "Laws" seem wholly consonant with the findings from my studies so far, I shall scarcely be surprised if they are called into question or even comprehensively refuted'.[23] In the light of this, this paper will attempt to re-evaluate the changes that took place to the pre-Conquest English naming system, specifically in regard to the concentration of the name stock and the nature of the names within it.

A   A matter of taste?

While it is clear that the imposition of a new French-speaking ruling elite had an influence on the vocabulary of English personal naming, it is not clear how this change would, in itself, cause a reduction in the number of names used, or a concentration around a few popular names. Why would the introduction of hundreds of new names cause the name stock to shrink? If the English at the time of the Conquest were still wedded to a naming system which was designed to create uniqueness, why would they abandon it so swiftly and so completely? The amount of new names introduced into England would have allowed most communities to preserve name uniqueness had they wished to do so. Yet, apparently, they abandoned it at the first opportunity, settling on a few 'fashionable' names chosen from the ranks of invaders from across the channel.[24] Little consideration has been given to the question of how this process took place. David Postles' recent study of English naming describes how, between 1100 and 1350, English forenames 'were displaced by C-G (West Frankish) as well as Christian names', so much so that 'by the end of the twelfth century, C-G forenames had considerably displaced insular personal names and signs of a concentration of forenames were already apparent'.[25] Yet he notes that, 'whilst the extreme concentration of forenames by the end of the thirteenth century can be quantified, its causes remain to be investigated'.[26]

Postles is correct to say that this phenomenon has yet to be studied in the context of medieval England, but recent studies of naming practices in continental Europe provide a guide to how this can be done. Over the last twenty-five years, historians such as Monique Bourin, Pascal Chareille, George Beech and Régine Le Jan have been brought together by an international project, *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*.[27] This group of historians have carried out numerous studies using a clearly defined set of statistical methods.[28] Their findings have gone some way towards tracing the course and pace of the naming transformation in a number of regions of medieval Europe. Whilst there is not space to summarise all of these studies here, one representative example is Dominique Barthélemy's study of 2900 names of the Vendômois between 1000 and 1300.[29] This revealed that the proportion of the population designated by the most popular name rose steadily – although the most popular name did not remain the same throughout the period. At the beginning of the eleventh century, the most popular name (*Hugue*) accounted for five percent of male individuals. This had risen to eight percent by the twelfth century (for *Guillaume*) and thirteen percent by the thirteenth century (for *Jean*). By 1355, *Jean* alone accounted for twenty-eight percent of all male names. Similarly, the proportion of the population served by the six most popular names rose from twenty-two percent to fifty-four percent over the period in question. Furthermore, even those names such as *Hugue* and *Geffroi*, which had been popular in the eleventh century but subsequently lost ground, were still increasing in real terms, if only slowly. This shows that concentration was a general phenomenon, not one linked to specific names.[30]

The studies of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne* show clearly that, from some point in the tenth century onwards, the naming system of western Europe underwent a significant transformation. The changes were not completely uniform, did not start at exactly the same time and did not all progress at precisely the same pace. However, the overall pattern of all the areas studied was broadly similar. To begin with, there was not so much an erosion of the

repertoire of names, but rather a change in their distribution, with an increasing concentration on a few popular names being used more and more homogeneously; only later did the number of names begin to decline.[31] It is also worth noting that, at least during the early stages of this process, the turnover of the most popular name was relatively frequent – so concentration was not necessarily around the same names for the whole period. Nor were the same names popular in all regions of Europe, or even in all areas of a kingdom. There were clearly regional tastes around the choice of naming vocabulary. Yet the one common trend observed in all the studies is that, even while fluctuating tastes meant certain names declined in relative popularity, concentration around names that did happen to be popular carried on rising.

The naming transformation that took place in England has never been looked at as part of the same process. Instead, it has almost exclusively been seen as due to the influence of the French speaking ruling elite. In *Naming the people of England*, David Postles attempts to 'move away from a unifying narrative, and to restore to the elucidation of change the complexity which is perceptible'. However, he defines the starting point of his study as 1100, this being the end of the first generation after the events of 1066.[32] In doing so he explicitly divorces the Old English past from everything that came later. Any changes and variations are measured against a post-Conquest benchmark, and any changes that had begun beforehand largely ignored. This insistence on separating the history of Old English naming from what came after perpetuates the historiographical divide that presents 'Anglo-Saxons' as being distinct from their post-Conquest 'English' counterparts and, as a result, we have missed an opportunity to learn more about the nature of medieval English society. In order to understand fully the changes that took place to English personal naming, we need to examine the naming system over a much wider period than has been done until now, incorporating, where possible, data from pre-Conquest sources. To begin this process, the rest of this paper will examine three corpora of names from English sources dating from between the eighth and twelfth centuries in an attempt to determine whether any comparable changes in the naming system had taken place in England prior to the

application of the Norman Yoke. In each case, I will first examine the name stock as a whole, looking at both the size of the stock and the distribution of names within it. This should allow us ascertain whether there has been any discernible condensation of the number of available names, or any concentration around any names in particular. [33] I will also attempt an analysis of the dithematic names in the corpus, the creation of which has often been seen as the mechanism by which name repetition was avoided. This analysis will focus on the size and distribution of the stock of themes within the dithematic names to determine whether the nature of this dithematic system changes during this period.

Such an analysis poses a number of challenges. The English naming system was influenced by names from various linguistic origins other than English throughout the medieval period. The names introduced into England following the Conquest are, therefore, by no means the only 'foreign' names to have entered the English onomasticon, nor are these names always easy to categorise as 'Norman', 'French' or even 'continental'. Not only were the names drawn from a much wider area of the continent than Normandy itself, those names which could be categorised as 'Norman' were not linguistically uniform in origin, themselves a mélange of Scandinavian and Germanic names originating from a wide area. This makes it difficult to assign an accurate 'origin' to many eleventh-century names, particularly between names which could quite plausibly have been Scandinavian, Anglo-Scandinavian or Scando-Norman forms. Furthermore, the elements used to create both continental Germanic and Scandinavian compound names were often similar in form and meaning. There is even evidence that numerous continental Germanic names of Frankish origin were present in England prior to the Conquest.[34]

As a result, any attempt to determine the origin of every single name in a corpus from medieval England unearths names where a case could be made for two or more possible origins, and approximations must be made. That said, for the majority of names it is possible to ascertain

with a reasonable degree of certainty where they originated – at least linguistically, for the linguistic origin of a name does not necessarily equate to the ethnic origin of its bearer. As is made clear by the changes to English name choices following the Conquest, it does not take long for a once foreign name to become part of the native onomasticon. It is unlikely that English bearers of names such as *William*, *Roger* and *Richard* today think of their names as anything other than English, and as early as the late twelfth century it becomes largely impossible to determine whether an individual bearing a continental name was actually of continental origin themselves by looking at the name alone. This could equally be said of someone bearing a Scandinavian name in large parts of England by the early eleventh century. For these reasons, no names have been discounted when examining the name stock as a whole, and no assumptions have been made about the ethnic origin of the bearers.[35]

A   The Durham *Liber Vitae*

The first corpus examined comes from the Durham *Liber Vitae*, a confraternity book originating from Northumbria in the ninth century.[36] The first entries to this remarkable manuscript were made sometime in the first half of the ninth century – sometime in the 830s or 840s – at either the monastery of Lindisfarne or that of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. However, theses entries are likely to have been copied from earlier registers of names collected at some point in the preceding century at one or both of these foundations, and it is that likely the majority of these names were those of people who lived in Northumbria during the 150 year period between c.690 and c.840.[37] The book then went through a period of relative disuse, with just twenty-four names added between c.840 and c.1080 – primarily names of kings and prominent visitors to the monastery. As such, this study focuses solely on the book's oldest section, here termed the Original Core. This contains 3,120 names, including over 2,600 names of priests, monks and other ranks of minor clerics. Given the relative sparsity of the population, it is unlikely that all of these could have been members of the loftiest reaches of the ninth-century Northumbrian elite.

So, while we are certainly not looking at a full cross-section of early Anglo-Saxon society, it is likely that the names of the Durham *Liber Vitae* provide us with a glimpse of people somewhat further down the social scale than most written sources of the period allow. This confirms, at least to some extent, Patrick Geary's suggestion that by studying personal names we are able to look more closely at the lives of ordinary people, not just the kings and aristocrats.[38]

To carry out a meaningful and achievable statistical analysis for the purposes of this paper, it has been necessary to select appropriate names to study. The scarcity of female names means it is only possible to focus on male names. Furthermore, to ensure that the sample is as representative as possible of the people living in the area at the time, the lists of kings, abbots and bishops have been discounted, as too have names likely to refer to people who lived prior to c.690 or in areas further afield. The lists that have been chosen, therefore, are those of the mid- to lower ranked clergy associated with the monastery: the *Nomina praesbytorum*, *Nomina diaconorum*, *Nomina clericorum* and *Nomina monachorum*.[39] This leaves a corpus for the purposes of this study of 2,614 individuals.

[Table 1. Name stock of the Durham Liber Vitae, Original Core c.690 – c.840]

One thing that is immediately striking about the names of the Original Core is the sheer number of personal names used to denote them – a total of 711. This equates to just 3.68 individuals per name, despite the extremely large number of people in the corpus. This suggests the Northumbrian naming system was capable of producing enough names to ensure that name repetition remained very low, and that the original function of the dithematic naming system – to produce names for their bearers that were as close to unique as possible – was close to being fulfilled.

[Table 2. Top six names in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840]

This is something that is also borne out when examining the concentration of the name stock. The most commonly borne name, *Eadwulf*, occurs fifty-one times in the corpus – comprising less than two percent of the total. This means that not a single name from the Original Core qualifies as being, in the terminology of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, a 'dominant name': one that is borne by more than two percent of the individuals in the corpus.[40] This being the case, it is no surprise that the proportion of individuals denoted by the six most popular names is also very low, at just nine percent.

[Table 3. Dithematic names of the Durham *Liber Vitae*, Original Core c.690 – c.840]

An analysis of the themes used in the compound names of the Original Core confirms two things: firstly, that the number of name themes in use was very high, and also that these themes were highly productive. In total there are one-hundred and seventy-four themes in use, with one-hundred and forty-two of these used as protothemes (the first part of the name) and fifty-three as deuterothemes (the final part of the name). The flexibility allowed by the dithematic system sees them combined to create 537 distinct compound name forms which refer to some 2,295 people.[41] It is also worth noting that twenty-one themes are used as both first and second themes, showing that using name elements interchangeably in either position was relatively common. This is often seen as an important feature of Germanic naming systems – as noted by both Henry Woolf and Régine Le Jan.[42] In the Original Core, some of the most common themes are employed as both first and second elements. For example, *Beorht-/-beorht* appears in the names of 123 people as a prototheme and in the names of 379 people as as a deuterotheme. Similarly, *Frið-/-frið*, which appears one-hundred and ninety times as a second element also appears thirty-two times as a first element, and *Wulf-/-wulf* is used as a prototheme fifty-eight times and as a deuterotheme three hundred and fifty-nine times. So, while these themes were

more commonly used as second elements (in part due to the smaller number of available deuterothemes), their use as first elements was clearly not out of the ordinary.

[Table 4. Concentration of name themes in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840]

An examination of the distribution of name themes similarly demonstrates the tendency towards the creation of unique names. They show a relatively low degree of concentration, despite the large number of individuals in the corpus. The most popular first theme, *Ead-*, accounts for just nine percent of the all protothemes in the corpus, with *Ean-* in second place on six percent and *Beorht-* in third, accounting for five percent. In total, the top six protothemes combined account for thirty-four percent of the total. In contrast, the most common second element, *-beorht*, appears in seventeen percent of all dithematic names. This is closely followed by *-wulf* on sixteen percent and *-wine* on thirteen percent. In total, the six most popular deuterothemes appear in sixty-seven percent of dithematic names. This is a marked disparity, with the second elements being almost twice as concentrated than first elements, suggesting that a great deal of the variety in naming was achieved through variation of protothemes. Yet this proves that a relatively high concentration of deuterothemes did not restrict the number of names created. In fact, these figures suggest that, while perhaps not quite an 'engine which generated a constant supply of new names', the naming system in use in the names of the Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae* was to a large extent we would expect from the traditional Old English dithematic naming system.[43] While there are some names which were more popular than the others, the overall level of concentration was still very low, and the number of names in use was very high. It is possible that some level of concentration had already taken place at this point, but on the whole, name repetition on a practical level would have remained uncommon.

A   The *Liber Vitae* of New Minster and Hyde Abbey

The second corpus of names comes from another *liber vitae*, that of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, produced some two hundred or so years later in 1031.[44] The book honours Cnut and his Queen, Emma, with a magnificent illustrated frontispiece and lists hundreds of notable persons, benefactors of the abbey, as well as monks and lay brothers of the communities at Winchester and a number of other related religious houses, including at Abingdon, Ely and Romsey.[45] The names that have been selected are those which refer to men who can be identified with reasonably certainty as being part of the community of Winchester and its surrounding area in the 80 years or so prior to the creation of the book in 1031. The resulting corpus of names consists of 458 individuals, all of whom lived in or around Winchester between c.950 and 1031 – predominantly monks of Winchester and benefactors from the surrounding community.

[Table 5. Name Stock of the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031]

One immediately apparent difference between the corpus of names from the New Minster *Liber Vitae* and its Durham counterpart is the number of names. While there are some 712 unique name forms in the Durham corpus, that of New Minster has only 164. This can be attributed in large part to the size of the Durham corpus – more people obviously have the potential to bear more names. Indeed, the stock of names is actually proportionally larger in the New Minster sample, at 2.8 individuals per name. On the face of it, therefore, it appears that the naming system of late tenth- to early eleventh-century Winchester was as capable of creating unique names as that of ninth-century Northumbria.

[Table 6. Top six names in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031]

However, the capacity of the naming system to create unique names does not appear to be present to quite the same extent – or at least it is not being exploited to the same degree. Indeed, looking at concentration of the name stock, we start to see a number of the recognisably popular

late Anglo-Saxon names standing out. Indeed, the top five names, *Ælfric*, *Leofwine*, *Ælfsige*, *Leofric* and *Ælfwine*, are all names that Ekwall noted as being common in post-Conquest London.[46] Significantly, these popular names represent a far greater proportion of the population than their counterparts in the Durham *Liber Vitae*. The top name, *Ælfric*, appears twenty-one times in the New Minster corpus and accounts for almost five percent of the population. In total, the top six names account for nineteen percent of individuals in the corpus. In addition, there are eight 'dominant' names accounting for twenty-four percent of people listed. The New Minster corpus, therefore, sees the appearance of a number of popular, or dominant names – a phenomenon not seen in the Durham corpus. This is despite the very high number of possible names from which to choose.

[Table 7. Dithematic names of the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031]

Conversely, while there is a proportionally larger stock of names in the New Minster corpus, the stock of name themes seems to be dramatically smaller than in the earlier Durham evidence. There are 414 individuals bearing dithematic names, of which there are 144 different name forms incorporating just fifty-nine name themes. The most dramatic difference is in the number of primary elements, of which there are only thirty, while the number of secondary elements is relatively unchanged, at thirty-one. It is also notable how few themes appear as both first and second elements – just four: *Beorht-/-beorht*, *Sige-/-sige*, *Wig-/-wig* and *Wulf-/-wulf*. Only one of these, *Wulf-/-wulf*, appears to be interchangeable to any degree, appearing forty-seven times as a prototheme and nine times and deuterotheme. *Beorht-/-beorht* is almost exclusively a prototheme, appearing thirty-nine times in first position and just three times in second. Conversely, *Sige-/-sige* and *Wig-/-wig* are almost exclusively deuterothemes, appearing fifty-three and eighteen times respectively in second position, and just once each as primary elements. The relatively small number of name themes, and their lack of interchangeability, seem to show a naming system that is somewhat less flexible than that of the Durham corpus.

[Table 8. Concentration of name themes in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031]

A result of this – or potentially a cause – is a significantly higher level of concentration around a small number of common name themes. This is overwhelmingly true of the protothemes. *Ælf-* alone accounts for twenty percent of all first elements, and the top six combined account for eighty percent. It seems that, in practice, only seven protothemes are used in any productive way: *Ælf-*, *Æðel-*, *Leof-*, *Wulf-*, *Beorht-*, *Ead-* and *God-*. Between them, these appear three-hundred and fifty-seven times, in over eighty-six percent of dithematic names. In contrast, the distribution of deuterothemes in the Winchester corpus is much more similar to that of the Durham *Liber Vitae*. The most popular second element is *-ric*, borne by seventy-six people, eighteen percent, and the top six second elements combined are are borne by sixty-four percent of people in the corpus.

Overall, therefore, the names of the New Minster *Liber Vitae* seem to show a naming system where there is a far greater degree of homogeneity. Whether by conscious choice, or linguistic accident, both the names and the themes which are used to create them have become increasingly concentrated. Such differences at this point in time cannot convincingly be ascribed to any 'outside influence'. Whether they reflect changes between time periods, or differences between regions, however, is difficult to say on the basis of this material. An analysis of a later eleventh-century source may help determine whether this is an anomaly or a trend.

A   The Burgesses of Colchester, Little Domesday

One of the best sources we have to examine naming practices around the time of the Conquest comes from Domesday Book. Compiled in 1086, the Great Survey was largely a record of land

and landholders, rather than the people living on it. It details what was on the land, who held it at the time of King Edward, and who held it two decades later in the time of the Conqueror. As such, while it holds a huge number of names, it does not, in general, give us the opportunity to look at the naming system in any one town, village or region. However, there is one community where this is possible – at least to some extent. While the majority of Domesday data is contained in condensed form within Great Domesday, the data from the economically advanced and socially complex areas of East Anglia and Essex is provided in less condensed form in a smaller volume, Little Domesday.[47] Amongst this data appears an uncharacteristically detailed list of the burgesses of Colchester.[48] This provides us with the names of some 274 eleventh-century Colchesterians.

The list is significant, in part, because of the date it was made. Names in Anglo-Norman England can only be very loosely equated with the ethnic origin of the bearer. So swiftly did some English people adopt continental names that, even two generations following 1066, a person bearing a French name is almost as likely to be a native Englishman as a Norman settler. However, for an individual to be a home-owning burgess of Colchester in 1086, the likelihood is that they would have been born, and therefore named, either before 1066, or very shortly after. As such, we can safely assume that the influence of Norman incomers would have be minimal, and individuals bearing continental names would most likely be of continental origin. This being the case, in studying the names in the list, we can also safely assume that we are examining pre-Conquest name choices. Unlike the previous two sources, the selection of names to include in the sample is much more simple. The only names not included are those of the twenty-three women who appear in the list, leaving two-hundred and fifty-one male burgesses in the corpus to be studied.

[Table 9. Name stock of the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086]

The Colchester list is a smaller sample than those of the *libri vitae* of Durham and New Minster. One inevitable result is that there is a smaller number of names. There are one-hundred and twelve different names held by the two-hundred and fifty-one people listed – that is 2.1 individuals per name. This means the stock of names is proportionally larger than in the previous two corpora, and as such proportionally less condensed than the previous two samples, although the smaller sample size in this case undoubtedly has a part to play in this.

[Table 10. Top six names in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086]

While there is no apparent shrinkage in the number of names available, there seems to be a significant shift in the way the available names are distributed amongst the population. The top name accounts for just over five percent of the individuals in the corpus, only slightly higher than its equivalent in the New Minster corpus. However, there are three names which jointly sit in first place of the hit parade, with *Leofwine*, *Wulfric* and *Wulfwine* all appearing thirteen times, and a further two names which appear twelve times apiece, *Ælfric* and *Godwine*. In total, the top six names account for seventy-two individuals – twenty-nine percent of the total, some ten percent higher than in the New Minster corpus. It seems that there is an increasing number of people bearing common names, something which is supported by the fact that there are nine dominant names in the sample, accounting for some thirty-seven percent of all individuals.

[Table 11. Dithematic names of the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086]

The concentration of names is mirrored in the name themes which form them. 193 of the 251 people listed bear names which are dithematic in their original formation. This equates to seventy-seven percent of the total, somewhat lower than the *libri vitae* of New Minster (ninety percent) and Durham (eighty-eight percent). The total number of themes, forty-five, is even lower than in the New Minster corpus. Twenty-seven of these are used as protothemes and just

twenty-four are used as deuterothemes. Just six themes are used as both proto- and deuterothemes: *Wulf-/-wulf*, *Mann-/-mann*, *Sige-/-sige*, *Beorht-/-beorht* and *Wine-/-wine*. However, in practice, there appears to be very little degree of interchangeability. *Sige-* and *Wine-* appear just once each as protothemes, while *Stan-* appears just twice. Similarly, *Wulf-* and *Beorht-* appear just once each as deuterothemes. *Beorht-* and *Sige-* are, in fact, both used infrequently in either position, appearing just four and five times respectively. *Mann-* is the only theme which appears to have any real level of interchangeability, appearing twelve times as a prototheme and four times as a deuterotheme – although even this is relatively rare. This suggests that there is a greater degree of conventionality in the way names and name themes are used – and potentially shows the ability, or will, to create names by combining themes in imaginative ways was being lost, and replaced with a more rigid system where the position of themes within a name was inflexible, or where names were no longer being 'created' at all.

[Table 12. Concentration of name themes in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086]

This conventionality can also be seen in the way name themes are concentrated around a small number of very popular choices. The most common prototheme, *Wulf-* appears thirty-nine times, accounting for twenty percent of all first elements, while the top six protothemes combined account for seventy-three percent of the total. The concentration within the deuterothemes is even more marked, with *-wine* alone accounting for thirty-five percent of all second elements, and the top six deuterothemes appearing in eighty-one percent of all names. In fact, the deuterothemes are almost exclusively concentrated around three extremely popular themes: *-wine*, *-ric* and *-stan*, which between them account for sixty-nine percent of the total. Even *-weard*, which is the fourth most popular second element, appears just nine times, less than five percent of the total. Furthermore, *-ing*, which appears seven times as secondary element (joint fifth overall), is technically a diminutive suffix, used in shortened forms, rather than a name theme in its own right. Whether at this date names in *-ing* can be accurately be assumed to

be short forms or patronyms is a matter for debate, and it could be argued that they are individual names in their own right.[49] In either case, it suggests an even greater concentration around a few increasingly common name forms.

A   An unchanged dithematic system?

The names of the burgesses of Colchester seem to show that in the decades preceding the Conquest, when most of the names in this corpus were given, the English personal naming system was no longer the classic Old English dithematic one. People were not selecting and combining themes in the aim of preserving name uniqueness, even though there were enough name themes still in use to do so. Instead, people's names had begun to display a far greater degree of homogeneity, both in terms of names, and in their constituent name themes. Indeed, not only are the levels of naming concentration in late eleventh-century Colchester considerably higher than the two other corpora examined, they are strikingly similar to the results of Barthélemy's study of the Vendômois. Far from being distinct from continental naming trends, English naming seems to have been progressing in very much the same manner. This may also suggest that the Conquest – at least in the short term – actually reduced naming concentration, rather than increasing it, due to the addition to the name stock of names of continental origin.

[Figure 1. Naming concentration in three pre-conquest English sources]

The Colchester list has previously been studied by John Insley and, while his study is predominantly a study of the naming vocabulary, he nevertheless notes that the Old English dithematic system was still 'largely intact albeit in a process of strong concentration'.[50] Insley, therefore, acknowledges the increased level of concentration, but suggests that this still occurs within the traditional dithematic system. It is a view echoed by both Postles and Clark when they speak of the late-eleventh century naming system in general. Clark stated that, 'among the mass of the population, the name system of c.1100 was still virtually the classic Late Old English

one'.[51] And Postles agrees with 'Clark's correct identification' that late Old English names 'were predominantly dithematic', even though many 'displayed marked conventionality'.[52] Indeed, Insley notes of the Colchester list that 'in keeping with the general tendency of the late OE period, the number of different first elements is restricted'.[53]

However, as has been shown here, the number of first elements in the Colchester list is little different to that of the names in the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, from several generations earlier. Indeed, it is actually the secondary themes which show the most noticeable shrinkage. Most importantly, despite the reduced number of themes in use, the number of names within the corpus is not reduced. In fact, there are still enough names and name themes to preserve name uniqueness comfortably, should it be desired – yet the choices people made seem to suggest no such desire. In this aspect, the pattern is very similar to that of naming patterns on the Continent, as explained in the studies of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*.[54] While there has been no appreciable erosion of the stock of names, there has been significant concentration around a small number of popular names.

The personal naming system of Colchester at the time of the Conquest was, therefore very different to that of ninth-century Northumbria, and even tenth-century Winchester. People were not selecting and combining themes in the aim of preserving name uniqueness. Instead, names had begun to display a far greater degree of homogeneity. It is certainly possible that name repetition occurred coincidentally, purely as a result of increasing theme popularity. But it is more likely that what we see in Colchester is evidence that the naming system of England was undergoing the same process of transformation as that of continental Europe, and at more or less the same time. Rather than choosing individual naming themes in order to create unique names, people were making naming choices that were beginning to coalesce around a few popular names – most likely repeated in their entirety as indivisible names, rather than dithematic constructions.

In reality, it is unlikely that the people of England, or anywhere in Europe, changed from one system to another overnight. Instead, it is probable that the transition happened over a period of time, with people gradually discarding the old method in favour of the new. Furthermore, the process behind how this concentration occurred could be seen, to a certain degree, as irrelevant. The end result would clearly have been a society, and communities, where a greater number of people shared a smaller number of names, with name repetition being more common. This is difficult to reconcile with the idea that the Norman Conquest causeed the disappearance of the Old English dithematic naming system.

A Repositioning English naming in a European context

Without digressing too far into counterfactuals, the evidence discussed in this article suggests it is unlikely that, were it not for the events of 1066, the people of England would have carried on creating dithematic names for their children. Rather, as elsewhere in Europe, these originally dithematic names would have mutated into indivisible forms passed on and copied in their entirety – a process I hope to have shown was already well underway by the time of the Conquest. The changes that took place in England were therefore part of a Europe-wide transformation. And these changes have significance wider than just the history of onomastics. Names do not exist in isolation – they are inextricably linked to the people they refer to and the societies in which they are created and used. As such, identifying when and how names and naming patterns change, and understanding the underlying societal transformations which brought them about, allows us to gain a clearer view of the people who bore these names and society in which they lived. It stands to reason that a Europe-wide transformation should have Europe-wide causes. Uncovering these common causes would surely enable us to shed new light on the nature of the wider social, cultural and economic changes that were taking place in England, and Europe, at this time.

A number of possible explanations have been given by scholars examining the continental evidence. Régine Le Jan sees the transformation as being caused by the transformation of kinship relationships, from a horizontal assembly of kinsmen and kinswomen into a much smaller unit governed by agnatic principles – the nuclear family – in which the repetition of names across different generations stressed one-on-one links of family relationship.[55] Monique Bourin, however, suggests that there is no clear relationship between the evolution in naming and kinship structures. Instead, in agreement with Pascal Chareille, she suggests that the most likely cause for the transformation was the process of feudalisation, or *encellulement*, which took place from the tenth century onwards and brought into being an increasingly powerful and visible aristocracy. For Bourin and Chareille, these changes engendered a 'liberation of choice', as collective constraints decreased in the face of increased individualism: people were more free to choose names that represented their family, and the names they chose were those borne by the aristocratic elite who exerted such a high level of control over their lives.[56]

There is undoubtedly some truth in these suggestions, yet there must surely be more to it. The passing down of names through a family does not explain why so many names became so common – differentiating a family through specific family names would, one assumes, inspire families to choose different names to their neighbours and make them stand out. Similarly, while the process of *encellulement* does seem to lie at the heart of the transformation, an increase in individuality cannot explain the erosion of name choices, and the tendency of so many people to choose one of just a few very popular names. Choosing the same names as one's neighbours would defeat this supposed purpose. It is my suggestion that the answers do indeed lie in processes of *encellulement* and cellularisation, as described by Bourin and Chareille, but my interpretation of how these processes ultimately caused people to change the way they used names differs somewhat.

Beginning in the mid-ninth century, there was a profound reorganisation of settlement in many areas of England. It is in this period when the pattern of large nucleated villages and small towns which provided the place of residence of many medieval people was established.[57] This transformation of the English landscape relocated a large part of the growing population from a position of relative independence and isolation to one where daily ties of dependence and interdependence would have been inescapable.[58] This interdependence is perhaps best exemplified by the development of open field farming systems – at the heart of which communities were often based, and which required the intense cooperation of community members in order to succeed.[59] However the clearest physical manifestation of the community is likely to have been the local manorial church which became a focal point for the life of the village, punctuating the lives of its inhabitants with key ceremonies, including burial in their own churchyard, and baptism at their own font.[60] While it is true that some earlier pastoral farming techniques required close co-operation, the combined effect of the transformation in lordship, settlement and economic production seems significant. I believe it is this combination of changes to the physical and social structures of English communities which caused the transformation of the naming communities connected to them, not by increasing individualism, but by creating the close-knit, stable and interdependent communities which characterised the landscape of later medieval England, and Europe.[61] A unique name emphasises or proclaims a person's individuality and uniqueness, but individuality in excess may be socially destructive or divisive. High reoccurrence names do not emphasise a person's individuality or uniqueness. They do just the opposite – they call attention to similarities between namesakes.[62]

In the close-knit communities which began to appear in late Anglo-Saxon England, where social cohesion – and quite possibly economic survival – may have depended on the close and continued cooperation of community members, a naming system that highlighted the

similarities of name-bearers may well have been more suitable than one that accentuated individuality and difference. Indeed, one key element of the naming transformation in this period was the increased use of bynames, which became used in addition to, or instead of, names given at birth. While the common explanation for the appearance of bynames is that they help aid identification of namesakes, the studies of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne* have called this theory into question. In reality, the practice of creating of bynames and nicknames seems often to have arisen before any need to distinguish people due to name repetition. Instead, these names appear to have fulfilled a number of other functions. Valeria Tóth has suggested that 'the creation of name forms is not only determined by the need for identification, but the expression of a sense of togetherness is just as important'.[63] Names do mark personal identity, but they also position individuals within the social and physical landscape of their community and, importantly, they have the power to demonstrate that a particular individual is part of that community – that they belong – and ultimately, in some cases, that they do not.[64] In this sense, both baptismal names and bynames can be seen as community items – items of social and cultural importance that were used as much to demonstrate belonging as they were to differentiate individuals. As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that the reasons behind the transformation of the English naming system lie in the gradual yet fundamental changes that took place in the communities to which these names belonged.

Clearly, more studies of this kind are needed to determine the precise nature and pace of change that took place to the naming system in medieval England. Such studies will need to incorporate more varied types of communities over a more extended time period, as well as include bynames and surnames.[65] Most importantly, they must facilitate comparison with similar studies from across continental Europe, rather than looking at English naming in isolation. As Chris Wickham has suggested, without comparison across these boundaries, we create 'a Europe – a world – of islands, with no relationship to each other, in each of which not only are the patterns

of social change wholly distinct, but so even are the questions historians ask'.[66] The results of wide-ranging study into English personal naming would add to the growing body of work re-evaluating the long-term impact of the Norman Conquest on English society, building on the efforts of scholars such as Ann Williams, Christopher Loveluck, John Blair and Christopher Dyer, who have shown that the traditional picture of a violent break in all aspects of English life is far from accurate.[67] Their work has revealed that change was much more gradual than had previously been suggested and, in many cases, had begun well before William's fleet landed at Pevensey. They present a view of English social, economic and religious history as one where change, while considerable and profound, was not necessarily swift nor violent, and one in which Anglo-Saxon England was not as different from the rest of western Europe as it is often presented. A new study of medieval English naming would allow us not just to reevaluate the impact of the Norman Conquest on England, but it could also allow us to gain valuable insight in the minds and relationships of the people of medieval England: the relationships they shared with families and neighbours, their interactions with social superiors and inferiors and how they lived their day-to-day lives.

[1] Marjorie Chibnall provides an excellent survey of the historiographical development of the debate on the Norman Conquest and the impact upon this debate of the historical context in which they were written in *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester, 1999).

[2] Ann Williams has shed new light on the lives the English aristocracy and the changing nature of lordship, drawing comparisons with their continental counterparts, in *The World Before Domesday: The English Aristocracy, 900–1066* (Woodbridge, 2008). John Blair has written extensively on the development of English parish churches from the tenth century onwards in *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005) as well as *Early Medieval Surrey* (Stroud, 1991) and *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Oxford, 1994). Christopher Dyer has demonstrated the slow pace of economic change that took place across the British Isles from 850 onwards and its similarities with the economic development of the rest of western Europe in *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain, 850–1520* (Yale, 2002). Christopher Loveluck work has attempted to combine historical work with archaeological evidence from across Britain, France and Germany, in order to explain interconnected patterns of gradual change across a wide area of Europe in *Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. AD 600–1150* (Cambridge, 2013).

[3] Robert Bartlett has also outlined many of these far-reaching changes in *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London, 1993), and offered an alternative explanation based on outward expansion from a central Frankish core.

[4] J.C. Holt, 'Feudal Society and The Family in Early Medieval England I: The Revolution of 1066' in J.C. Holt (ed.), *Colonial England, 1066–1215* (London 1997), pp. 161-78 (see p. 167).

[5] A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 1-2.

[6] D. Kibbee, *For to Speke Frenche Trewely* (Amsterdam, 1991) p. 9.

[7] Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 1.

[8] Common West Germanic is the linguistic ancestor of the modern Germanic languages of English, Dutch, German, Frisian and Low German. It is distinct from the northern branch of Germanic languages which includes Danish, Swedish and Norwegian. Both branches are descended from Germanic which is, in turn, descended from Indo-European. See C. Clark, 'Onomastics' in R. Hogg (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume I: The Beginnings to 1066* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 452-87, here pp. 456-9; also R. Coates, 'Names' in R. Hogg and D. Denison (eds), *A History of the English Language* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 312-351 (see p. 319) and F. Colman, *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England: The Linguistics and Culture of the Old English Onomasticon* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 101-150.

[9] M. Redin, *Studies on Uncompounded Personal Names in Old English* (Uppsala, 1919), pp. xxii-xxvii.

[10] For more details on name types see J. Insley, 'Pre-Conquest Personal Names' in J. Hoopes (ed.), *Reallexikon Der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 23 (Berlin, 2001), p. 375, Redin, *Uncompounded Personal Names*, pp. xxvii-xxxix and Colman, *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 101-150.

[11] For more on the Old English dithematic naming system see: H.B. Woolf, *The Old Germanic Principles of Name-Giving* (Baltimore, 1939); F.M. Stenton, 'Personal Names in Place-Names' in D.M. Stenton (ed.), *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 84-105; J. Insley, 'Pre-Conquest Personal Names' in *Reallexikon Der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 23 (2001), pp. 367-96 and 'The study of Old English personal names and anthroponymic lexika' in D. Geuenich, W. Haubrichs and J. Jarnut (eds), *Person Und Name: Methodische Probleme Bei Der Erstellung Eines Personennamenbuchs* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 148-76.

[12] This is a change documented by many historians, philologists and onomasts, including: C. Clark, 'Onomastics' in N. Blake (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume II 1066-1476* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 542-606 (see pp. 551-4), D. Postles, *Naming the People of England, c. 1100-1350* (Newcastle, 2006), p. 49 and R. Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 538-540.

[13] C. Clark, 'Willelmus Rex? Vel Alius Willelmus?' in Peter Jackson, (ed.), *Words, Names, and History: Selected Writings of Cecily Clark* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 280-300 (see p. 281).

[14] Eilert Ekwall notes some of these in *Early London Personal Names* (Lund, 1947), pp. 126-30 and Bo Seltén provides a detailed survey of by-names formed using Old English personal names in medieval East Anglia in *The Anglo-Saxon Heritage in Middle English Personal Names* (Lund, 1972).

[15] Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin* Kings, pp. 538-40.

[16] Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 206-7.

[17] C. Clark, 'Early Personal Names of King's Lynn: Baptismal Names' in Jackson (ed.), *Words, Names and History*, pp. 258-79 (see p. 242).

[18] C. Clark, 'Clark's First Three Laws of Applied Anthroponymics' in *Words, Names and History*, Jackson (ed.), pp. 77-83.

[19] Clark, 'Clark's First Three Laws', pp. 77-79.

[20] Clark, 'Clark's First Three Laws', pp. 77.

[21] See Jackson (ed.), *Words, Names and History*, for a collection of Clark's work covering both Scandinavian and Norman impact on English naming.

[22] Clark, 'Onomastics' II, p. 553. (Clark's chapters of the same name in volumes I and II of *The Cambridge History of the English Language* will be referred to as 'Onomastics' I and 'Onomastics' II).

[23] Clark, 'Clark's First Three Laws', p. 77. R. Coates in 'Names', a chapter of R. Hogg and M. Denison, *A History of the English Language* (Oxford, 2006), cites Clark's first law on p. 20 as an explanation for

changing naming patterns following the Conquest. See also S. Lewis-Simpson, 'Assimilation or Hybridization? A study of Personal Names from the Danelaw' in W. Hoofnagle and W. Keller (eds), *Other Nations: the hybridization of insular mythology and identity* (Heidelberg, 2011), pp. 13-44, who cites Clark more appropriately in an examination of Scandinavian naming in the Danelaw.

[24] For example, see Clark, 'Onomastics' II, p. 553.

[25] Postles, *Naming the People of England*, p. 49.

[26] Postles, *Naming the People of England*, p. 66.

[27] The works of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne* have been published in a collection of articles under this name in 6 volumes between 1990 and 2008. For an overview of the statistical methods used in their studies, see Pascal Chareille's 'Eléments pour un traitement statistique des données anthroponymiques' in volume II, Tours 1992, or a more detailed description in volume VI, *Le Nom: Histoire et Statistiques* (Tours, 2002). A summary in English can be found in P. Chareille, 'Methodological Problems in a Quantitative Approach to Changes in Naming' in G. Beech, M. Bourin and P. Chareille (eds), *Personal Name Studies of Medieval Europe* (Kalamazoo, 2002), pp. 15-27.

[28] G. Beech, 'Preface' in Beech et al. (eds), *Personal Name Studies of Medieval Europe*, pp. ix-xvi.

[29] Full details of Dominique Barthélemy's study can be found in 'Vendômois: Le système anthroponymique (Xème - milieu XIIIème siècles' in M. Bourin (ed.), *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne,* I (Tours, 1990), pp. 35-60.

[30] Barthélemy, 'Vendômois', pp. 45-49.

[31] M. Bourin, 'How Changes in Naming Reflect the Evolution of Familial Structures in Southern Europe (950-1250)' in Beech et al. (eds), *Personal Name Studies of Medieval Europe*, pp. 4-5.

[32] Postles, *Naming the People of England*, p. 7.

[33] The condensation and concentration of the name stock are the two key indicators developed by *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne* for examining the naming system. Condensation is determined by calculating the average number of individuals for each name in the corpus. Concentration is determined by determining the proportion of individuals designated by a set number of names at the top of the 'hit parade of names' (in this case six). The work of Pascal Chareille, amongst others, has determined that the concentration indicator is very accurate, and is largely unaffected by sample once over a threshold of a thirty names. The experience of the author confirms that this is indeed the case. Condensation, as noted by Chareille, is more affected by the size of the sample. As the size of the sample grows it becomes more difficult for the number of names to keep up, so very large samples tend to suggest a more condensed name stock than the reality (conversely a very small sample may suggest a stock much less condensed than it actually is). However, with some interpretation and allowances for the size of the stock, it is still possible to draw some conclusions based the results of such an analysis, as has been attempted in this article. For further explanation, see Chareille, 'Methodological Problems', pp. 16-19.

[34] See T. Forssner, *Continental-Germanic personal names in England: in Old and Middle English times* (Upsala, 1916), as well as O. von Feilitzen's analysis of the names of Winton Domesday in F. Barlow, *Winchester in the early Middle Ages: an edition and discussion of the Winton Domesday* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 179-191, where he notes up to eight per cent of the individuals listed bore names of continental Germanic origin as early as 1057.

[35] The aim of this paper is not to examine the extent of the impact of foreign names on English naming vocabulary. As such, a detailed breakdown of the linguistic origin of the names in each corpus is not provided. However, it will be noted in each case what number and proportion of names are of Old English origin and which originate from elsewhere. When examining the distribution of themes within dithematic forms, it has been necessary to exclude those names which were not Old English dithematic names. In addition to the editions cited for each source, the identification and lemmatisation of name

forms and name themes has been carried out with the help of O. von Feilitzen's, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday* (Uppsala, 1937) and T. Forssner, *Continental-Germanic personal names in England: in Old and Middle English times* (Upsala, 1916), as well as the extensive linguistic commentary contained within L. Rollason (ed.), *The Thorney Liber vitae : London, British Library, Additional Ms 40,000, fols 1-12r: edition, facsimile and study* (Woodbridge, 2015), compiled by Olaf von Feilitzen and John Insley. Etymological origins of many of the names listed are now also listed online in the *The Dictionary of Medieval Names from European Sources*, edited by S.L. Uckelman, available at http://dmnes.org/.

36 London, British Library, Cotton MS Domitian A VII. This is now available in a comprehensive edition including codicological, linguistic and prosopographical commentaries as well as a digital facsimile: D. and L. Rollason (eds), *Durham Liber Vitae: London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.VII: edition and digital facsimile with introduction, codicological, prosopographical and linguistic commentary, and indexes* (London, 2007). The 'Original Core' comprises fols 15r to 47v. The excellent linguistic commentary on the names, compiled by Peter McClure, John Insley and David Rollason, is contained within Volume II.

37 For a more detailed history of the life of the Durham *Liber Vitae*, see E. Briggs, 'Nothing But Names: The Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae*', in Rollason et al. (eds), *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 63-85 and L. Rollason, 'History and Codicology' in Rollason and Rollason (eds.), *Durham Liber Vitae*, pp. 5-42 (here p. 7.).

38 P. Geary, 'Foreword', in Beech et al. (eds), *Personal Name Studies of Medieval Europe*, pp. vii-viii.

39 It is probable that a significant number were based in the monastic houses of Lindisfarne and Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, although Andrew Wareham suggests, because of the exceptionally high number of entries, they are likely to include names of monks and priests from associated churches and monasteries within Northumbria, and potentially even further afield. Nevertheless, it seems fair to assume that the majority will have hailed from Northumbrian communities. As such, these four lists of clergymen provide us with the best opportunity of analysing the naming system of Northumbria in the eight and

ninth centuries. See A. Wareham, 'The *Ordines* of the Original Core' in Rollason and Rollason (eds.), *Durham Liber Vitae*, vol. III, pp. 7-12.

[40] For example, see Barthélemy, 'Vendômois: Le système anthroponymique', p. 51.

[41] There are four names forms in the corpus that appear to be Old English in origin and may be dithematic in formation but of which the constituent themes are unclear. As such, these have not been counted as dithematic for the purposes of this study. The names are *Herred* (which appears three times), *Alwih* (which appears twice) and *Wigfus* and *Onboth* which appear once apiece.

[42] Woolf notes the ability in Old English to transposition name themes which enable families to link children's names to both male and female lines of descent as part of the practice of variation. See Woolf, *The Old Germanic Principles of Name-Giving*, pp. 1-3. Le Jan notes that the same practice of variation was widely practiced in Frankish society from the sixth century and suggest it reflected the overlapping circles of kinship around the individual. See R. Le Jan, 'Personal Names and the Transformation of Kinship in Early Medieval Societies (Sixth to Tenth Centuries)' in Beech et al. (eds), *Personal Names Studies of Medieval Europe*, pp. 31-49.

[43] Coates, 'Names', p. 319.

[44] London, British Library, Stowe 944. This is available in a facsimile edition: *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester, British Library Stowe 944, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A.viii and British Library Cotton Titus D.xxvii*, ed. Simon Keynes, (Copenhagen, 1996). A digitised version of the manuscript is now online at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Stowe_MS_944 [accessed 19 February 2016]. Information on dating comes from Simon Keynes, 'The *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, Winchester' in Rollason et al., *The Durham Liber Vitae and its context*, pp. 149-163 (see pp. 149-50).

[45] The names that have been selected are those which refer to men who can be identified with reasonably certainty as being part of the community of Winchester and its surrounding area in the 80 years or so prior to the creation of the book in 1031. As such, names of all women have been discounted, as well those mentioned in historical lists stretching back beyond the original compilation in the middle of the tenth century, and people in places further afield, including the monks at Ely and Abingdon. The remaining names are, therefore, predominantly those of the monks of Winchester listed between 964 to 1031, and benefactors from the surrounding community. It has been possible to reasonably accurately discount the names of persons from the sample who do not fit the criteria listed above thanks to Simon Keynes' remarks in the facsimile edition and his chapter in Rollason et al. (eds), *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context* and the prosopographical data available on the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* online database (*PASE*).

[46] E. Ekwall, *Early London Personal Names*, pp. 1-69 – although these are usually in Middle English forms, such as *Alfric*, *Lewin*, *Alsi*, *Lefric* and *Alwin*.

[47] S. Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement* (Oxford, 2014), p. 7. For a general overview of Domesday and recent research into it see this new work by Harvey.

[48] This list appears on fols 104r–106r of Essex section of Little Domesday. This study has been carried out with the help of the following editions: Domesday Book: Essex, eds J. Morris and A. Rumble (Chichester, 1983); Domesday Book: A Complete Translation, eds A. Williams and G. Martin (London, 1992). I have also been kindly provided with digital images of the folios by the *Open Domesday* project (http://domesdaymap.co.uk/), courtesy of Professor J. Palmer and G. Slater.

[49] Fran Colman suggests this as a possibility in *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 217.

[50] J. Insley, 'Some Aspects of Regional Variation in Early Middle English Personal Nomenclature' in *Leeds Studies in English* 18, (1987), pp. 183-199 (see p. 191).

[51] Clark, 'Onomastics' II, p. 552.

[52] Postles, *Naming the People of England*, p. 13.

[53] Insley, 'Some Aspects of Regional Variation', p. 190.

[54] See M. Bourin, 'Bilan de l'enquête: de la Picardie au Portugal, l'apparition du système anthroponymique à deux éléments et ses nuances régionales', in *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, I, pp. 233-246.

[55] Le Jan, 'Personal Names and the Transformation of Kinship', p. 45.

[56] Bourin, 'How Changes in Naming Reflect Evolution', p. 11-12. Also see, Bourin, 'Bilan de l'enquête', pp. 242-243 and Pascal Chareille, 'Introduction: Vingt Ans Après' in *Noms, prénoms, surnoms au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2014), pp. 11-22.

[57] Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages*, p. 2.

[58] Much valuable work on changing patterns of settlement and lordship in Anglo-Saxon England and parallel developments in Europe have been carried out in the last forty years, of which the following represent just a selection: Williams, *The World Before Domesday*; Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, *Early Medieval Surrey* and *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*; Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages*; A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005); P. Sawyer, *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change* (Leeds, 1976) and P. Sawyer (ed.) *English Medieval Settlement* (London, 1979); D. Hooke, *Landscape and Settlement in Britain: AD 400–1066*; R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1999).

[59] It is likely that such communal farming practices would have already been in place by the tenth century and they became commonplace across large swathes of England. See Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages,* pp. 19-22; Williams, *The World Before Domesday*, p. 86.

[60] Hundreds of such manorial churches were founded in this period. See Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 456-461.

[61] For more detail see J. Chetwood, 'Tom, Dick and Leofric: The Transformation of English Personal Naming, 850–1350', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2016), pp. 186-215.

[62] R. D. Alford, *Naming and Identity: A Cross-Cultural Study of Personal Naming Practices* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 73-74.

[63] V. Tóth, 'The questions of name theory related to the giving and use of anthroponyms', paper delivered at the XXV International Congress of Onomastic Sciences (29th of August 2014). The text of this paper was kindly provided by the author.

[64] For more on nicknames and their relation to demography and social structure see S. H. Brandes, 'The Structural and Demographic Implications of Nicknames in Navanogal, Spain' in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1975), pp. 139-148 and R. A. Barrett, 'Village Modernisation and Changing Nicknaming Patterns in Northern Spain' in *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1978), pp. 92-108.

[65] A comprehensive study mapping the pace and nature of the transformation of English personal naming over the period c.800 to c.1300, as well as attempt to explain the causes behind this process will be completed by the author in 2016.

[66] C. Wickham, 'Problems in Doing Comparative History' in P. Skinner (ed.), *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 5-28, (see) p. 6.

[67] See Williams, *The World Before Domesday*; Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*; Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages*; Loveluck, *Northwest Europe*.

Table 1. Name Stock of the Durham Liber Vitae, Original Core c.690 – c.840

Individuals	2,614
Name forms	711
Individuals per name	3.68
Dominant names as % of corpus	0%
% of corpus bearing OE names	99%
% of corpus bearing non-OE names	1%

Table 2. Top six names in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840

	Theme	Frequency	Proportion of total
1	*Eadwulf*	51	1.95%
2	*Eadbeorht*	45	1.72%
3	*Ealdwulf*	39	1.49%
4	*Hygbeorht*	39	1.49%
5	*Eanwulf*	36	1.38%
6	*Ælbeorht*	29	1.11%
	Total	**239**	**9.14%**

Table 3. Dithematic names of the Durham *Liber Vitae*, Original Core c.690 – c.840

Individuals with dithematic names	2,295
As % of corpus	88%
As % of individuals bearing OE names	89%
Dithematic name forms	537
Dithematic names per indivual	4.27
Individual themes	174
Protothemes	142
Deuterothemes	53

Table 4. Concentration of name themes in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840

	Prothemes			Deuterothemes	
	Theme	Frequency %		Theme	Frequency %
1	*Ead-*	9.28	**1**	*-beorht*	16.56
2	*Ean-*	6.06	**2**	*-wulf*	15.64
3	*Beorht-*	5.36	**3**	*-wine*	13.16
4	*Cuð-*	4.49	**4**	*-frið*	8.28
5	*Cyne-*	4.36	**5**	*-ræd*	7.32
6	*Eald-*	4.36	**6**	*-weald*	6.36
	Total	**33.90**		**Total**	**67.32**

Table 5. Name Stock of the New Minster *Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031

Individuals	458
Name forms	164
Individuals per name	2.79
Dominant names as % of corpus	24%
% of corpus bearing OE names	95%
% of corpus bearing non-OE names	5%

Table 6. Top six names in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031

	Theme	Frequency	Proportion of total
1	*Ælfric*	21	4.59%
2	*Leofwine*	17	3.71%
3	*Ælfsige*	15	3.28%
4	*Leofric*	14	3.06%
5	*Ælfwine*	11	2.40%
6	*Godric*	10	2.18%
	Total	**88**	**19.21%**

Table 7. Dithematic names of the New Minster *Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031

Individuals with dithematic names	414
As % of corpus	90%
As % of individuals bearing OE names	95%
Dithematic name forms	144
Dithematic names per indivual	2.88
Individual themes	59
Protothemes	30
Deuterothemes	31

Table 8. Concentration of name themes in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031

	Prothemes			Deuterothemes	
	Theme	Frequency %		Theme	Frequency %
1	*Ælf-*	25.85	**1**	*-ric*	18.36
2	*Æðel-*	13.29	**2**	*-wine*	13.29
3	*Leof-*	13.29	**3**	*-sige*	12.80
4	*Wulf-*	11.35	**4**	*-stan*	7.49
5	*Beorht-*	9.42	**5**	*-weard*	6.04
6	*Ead-*	7.00	**6**	*-mær*	5.80
	Total	**80.19**		**Total**	**63.77**

Table 9. Name stock of the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086

Individuals	251
Name forms	119
Individuals per name	2.11
Dominant names as % of corpus	37%
% of corpus bearing OE names	86%
% of corpus bearing non-OE names	14%

Table 10. Top six names in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086

	Theme	Frequency	Proportion of total
1	*Leofwine*	13	5.18%
2	*Wulfric*	13	5.18%
3	*Wulfwine*	13	5.18%
4	*Ælfric*	12	4.78%
5	*Godwine*	12	4.78%
6	*Manwine*	9	3.59%
	Total	**72**	**28.69%**

Table 11. Dithematic names of the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086

Individuals with dithematic names	193
As % of corpus	77%
As % of individuals bearing OE names	89%
Dithematic name forms	87
Dithematic names per indivual	2.22
Individual themes	45
Protothemes	27
Deuterothemes	24

Table 12. Concentration of name themes in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086

	Prothemes			Deuterothemes	
	Theme	Frequency %		Theme	Frequency %
1	*Wulf-*	20.21	**1**	*-wine*	34.72
2	*Leof-*	13.99	**2**	*-ric*	23.83
3	*God-*	12.95	**3**	*-stan*	10.36
4	*Alu-*	10.36	**4**	*-weard*	4.66
5	*Al-*	9.33	**5**	*-ing*	3.63
6	*Ead-*	6.22	**6**	*-sunu*	3.63
	Total	**73.06**		**Total**	**80.83**

Figure 1. Naming concentration in three pre-conquest English sources

Top 1 name %
Top 6 names %

Durham
Liber Vitae
c.690 – c.840

New Minster
Liber Vitae
c.930 – 1031

Little Domesday
Colchester
1086