Leeds Studies in English

New Series XLIV

2013

Magic and Medicine
Early Medieval Plant-Name Studies

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Leeds Studies in English

<www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>
School of English
University of Leeds
2013

Leeds Studies in English

<www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>

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Abbreviations

ADS	Archaeology Data Service
ASPNS	Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey
BML	British Medieval Latin
BSBI	Botanical Society of the British Isles
CGL	*Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*
CNo.	Catalogue Number
COD	*Concise Oxford Dictionary*
DMLBS	*Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*
DOE	*Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto)
DOEPN	*Dictionary of Old English Plant Names* (online)
DOEWC	*Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (online)
DOI	Digital Object Identifier; *Dictionary of the Irish Language Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials*
DOST	*Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*
DSL	*Dictionary of the Scots Language* (online)
EDD	*English Dialect Dictionary*
EPNE	*English Place-Name Elements* (A. H. Smith)
Gk, Gr.	Greek
HTOED	*Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
LAE	*Linguistic Atlas of England*
Lat	Latin
MCOE	*Microfiche Concordance to Old English*
ME	Middle English
MED	*Middle English Dictionary*
MHG	Middle High German
MLG	Middle Low German
ModE	Modern English
ModIce	Modern Icelandic
ModLG	Modern Low German
ODEE	*Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*
OE	Old English
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OF	Old French
OHG	Old High German
OI	Old Irish
OIce	Old Icelandic
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
ON	Old Norse
OS	Old Saxon
PASE	*Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (online)
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
PN W	*Place-Names of Wiltshire* (J. E. B. Gover et al.)
PN Wo	*Place-Names of Worcestershire* (A. Mawer et al.)

RCHM(E)	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (of England)
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*
spp.	species (botanical, singular)
ssp.	species (botanical, plural)
TOE	*Thesaurus of Old English*
VEPN	*Vocabulary of English Place-Names*

Short Titles

Old English source texts may be indicated by short titles assigned by the *Dictionary of Old English* and *Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, which refer to specific editions of the texts. They occur particularly in the appendices, and examples include: Lch II (1); Med 3 (Grattan-Singer). The key to these references can be found at the DOE website under 'Research Tools' then 'List of Texts'. See http://www.doe.utoronto.ca.

Botanical Latin

Plant-names in botanical Latin aim to provide an international identification for a particular plant or group of plants. They are followed by abbreviations indicating the botanist who assigned and/or reassigned the name, and the most common abbreviation is 'L.' indicating 'Linnaeus', the famous Swedish botanist. Examples include: *Bellis perennis* L. (daisy); *Betula pendula* Roth. (silver birch).

Dates

Manuscript dates are often given in a form beginning 's.' (for *saeculo* 'in the century'). Some examples follow:

s. xi^{in} beginning of the 11th century
s. xi^{1} first half of the 11th century
s. xi^{med} middle of the 11th century
s. xi^{2} second half of the 11th century
s. xi^{ex} end of the 11th century

An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Studies and to this Special Issue

Carole Biggam

1. The basics of plant-name studies

At first acquaintance, it would appear that the study of plant-names constitutes a branch of onomastics (name studies), but it is not in the mainstream of this subject. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines onomastics as 'The study or science of the history and origin of … proper names', and the word *proper* is crucial to the understanding of name studies. A proper noun designates an individual and specific entity, and the OED gives the following examples: a person, a tame animal, a star, planet, country, town, river, house or ship. Unlike any of these, plant-names do not label individual plants, but a *type* of plant, of which there may be tens of thousands (or more) of specific individuals.

A noun which is not 'proper' is referred to as a 'common noun', for example, *chair, sea, pen, road* and thousands more. It is possible for common nouns to designate individual examples of their type, but they need the help of additional information, for example, *my father's chair*, *the Red Sea*, *John's favourite pen*, and *the Great North Road*. Many common nouns function as superordinate terms (referred to as *hyperonyms* by linguists) which act as 'umbrella-terms' for several sub-divisions of the basic type. Thus *chair* can be subdivided into *armchair*, *Windsor chair*, *kitchen chair,* and many others, and some of these can be further sub-divided, for example, *a leather armchair*, *a reclining armchair*, *a swivel armchair,* and so on. This provides us with a semantic classification and hierarchy: *a leather armchair* belongs to the category of *armchair*, and *armchair* itself belongs to the superordinate category of *chair*. This example of chairs is simple and quite obvious to any society which uses a variety of chairs, but it should be noted that many speakers of the language will select different distinctive features, especially at the bottom level of the hierarchy. Some people, looking at the very same leather armchair, will regard its size or design as more significant than its covering material, and will refer to it by a different name. Moreover, a chairmaker or furniture dealer is likely to have a much more extensive and standardized terminology for chairs than the general public, and may even be exasperated by their lack of precision when they describe what sort of chair they want. This brief visit to the world of furniture demonstrates the way in which humans deal with a very complex world — they classify concepts and locate them in hierarchies because remembering groups of things is much easier than mentally coping with large numbers of

ungrouped different types. The classified concepts are also assigned names so they can be referred to and discussed by speakers of the same language, but it must not be imagined that the multitude of concepts, classifications and hierarchies operate in the same way in every culture or group (or, sometimes, even among individuals in the *same* group).

All that has been said above about features of the concepts and vocabulary relevant to chairs, can also be found in much more complex and extensive schemes, for example, those relating to the world of plants. Just as the chairmaker uses an expert classification of chairs, and the householder uses a popular one, so these two types of classification can be found in plant terminology. It is important to understand that the purposes of the two types of classification are completely different. The expert type, the scientific botanical scheme in the case of plants, aims, broadly speaking, to achieve two goals. It seeks to classify and place in a hierarchy every botanically distinct type of plant, and, secondly, to designate them with internationally understood (by botanists) Latin names. Thus, in a botanical hierarchy, a sub-species belongs to a species, the species belongs to a genus, and the genus belongs to a family. To take one example, a type of plant has been classified as a variety of spring crocus, and assigned the name *Crocus vernus albiflorus*. This plant features in the following hierarchy: the *Crocus vernus albiflorus* is a sub-species of the species *Crocus vernus* (Spring crocus), all spring crocuses belong to the genus *Crocus*, and this genus belongs to the Iridaceae (Iris) family (Stace 1997: 956).[1]

While botanical Latin names are not devoid of interest to semanticists, these researchers, whether concerned with historical or modern plant-names, usually research the *popular* names and the popular types of classification which occur in 'natural' speech. Examples of such classifications are often referred to as 'folk' classifications (or 'folk taxonomies') and they have an entirely different purpose from the scientific aim of providing a universal and standardized scheme based on botanical features. A folk taxonomy is not universal, or standardized, or complete, or scientific or stable. This is what makes folk classifications and popular plant-names a fascinating but frequently puzzling and frustrating subject of study.

A folk classification does not aim for comprehensiveness, but merely groups certain plants according to various aspects of significance to a particular culture. Thus they may be grouped by their use, for example, as food, medicine or timber; by their appearance, for example, their height, flower-colour or leaf-shape; or by their habitat, for example, meadows, fields or woods. The folk-names given to plants reflect these, and many other criteria, resulting in what often appears to be a chaotic variety across the country. Thus the same plant may be found with various names, one name may be applied to several different plants, the names may change over the years, and they may be (in logical terms) completely nonsensical.[2] It is probably clear by now why popular plant-names vary so much: different communities are likely to stress different features of a plant — it may be considered a medical remedy in one village, but that use may be unknown elsewhere; a plant may only be known from a folk-tale in one region but, elsewhere, be better known as a pest of the cornfields. In contrast to the multiple names of some plants, others, in spite of being native to a particular area, may not have a popular name at all, suggesting that the inhabitants do not find it visually striking, useful or even a pest.

[1] The hierarchy can be more complicated than that of the present case (including sub-families, for example).

[2] In recent years, efforts have been made to provide standardized English plant-names which can be related to botanical species (see, for example, Dony, Jury and Perring 1986). This is useful for the purpose of discussing plants using unambiguous English names, but the precision and fixedness of such schemes are not (nor are they intended to be) natural to everyday English.

A few examples will suffice to demonstrate the confusing nature of English plant-names.[3] The name *witches' thimble(s)* is, or has been used of at least all the following plants: the sea campion, foxglove, ivy campanula, harebell and cornflower. If we find *witches' thimbles* mentioned in, for example, an eighteenth-century diary, how do we interpret it? Turning from a name with several plants to a plant with several names: over fifty names are recorded by Grigson (1955: 82–3) for the red campion: they include *soldiers' buttons* from Yorkshire, *plum-pudding* from Suffolk, and the intriguing *gramfer-greygles* from Dorset. These names are not uniquely attached to the red campion, however, since, to take one example, *soldiers' buttons* can refer to the marsh marigold in Somerset, and the Herb Robert in Buckinghamshire. Worse still, without leaving Somerset, we may find the name *soldiers' buttons* also used of the wood anemone, the buttercup and the columbine, to name but a few. This may seem chaotic, but it follows a different logic to that of the scientist. People may be interested in the fact that certain flowers are as bright as buttons, and they then apply the name to any plant which fulfils this criterion. If there is no practical need for a community to distinguish between such plants, its members remain content with such a scheme. A person with more specialized requirements, however, for example, a local herbalist, may well require more names. As for the researcher, it is unwise for him or her to assume (s)he knows the meaning of a particular plant-name — supporting evidence is always required.

It may seem to the reader that the above complications are bad enough but at least there are considerable surviving records from the modern period, and the possibility of asking elderly people in various English regions about the plant-names remembered from childhood. When the subject of study is the plant-names of late medieval England, however, the difficulties increase. There is less documentation, there are influences from the French dialect, Anglo-Norman, and, of course, there is nobody still alive from that period who could offer their memories to the researcher. It is inherently unlikely that the complex web of various plant-names recorded from the modern period would have been any simpler or more stable in the late medieval period. Indeed, with a complete lack of mass media at that time (printed books were still rare before 1500) it is most likely that there was an even greater regional variety of plant-names than in modern times, and a great many must have been lost to us. Relatively recently, efforts have been made to search for these names in various manuscripts, to identify them, as far as possible, and to publish them (for example, Hunt 1989).

2. Plant-names in Anglo-Saxon England

The main concern of this book, and of the Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey (ASPNS), is the plant-names of the Anglo-Saxons, in other words, names from the *early* medieval period, even earlier than the names researched by Hunt, as mentioned above. The surviving written records which can be attributed to the Anglo-Saxons date mostly from the seventh century to c. 1100. Linguistically speaking, the Anglo-Saxons spoke a phase of the English language now referred to as Old English (OE), and this language gradually evolved into Middle English (ME), which is generally recognizable by c. 1150. However, not all the plant-names known to the Anglo-Saxons were English. Some Old Norse plant-names, for example, *askr* 'ash-tree' can be found in English place-names, especially in the former Danish territories of eastern England, and Celtic plant-names, such as Primitive Welsh **coll* 'hazel-tree' occur in river-

[3] The source for all the names in this paragraph is Grigson (1955).

names in England. While it seems likely that the Old Norse names were understood by the Anglo-Saxons, this is perhaps not the case with Brittonic plant-names, but they still require investigation in the Anglo-Saxon context.

The most prolific source of plant-names in a non-English language known to the Anglo-Saxons is, however, Latin. This language provides considerable information about Old English plant-names, through the evidence of translations and glossaries, but it also points to a serious weakness in our evidence. Inevitably, the principal source of our information for Anglo-Saxon plant-names is manuscripts, and that means, of course, that the vast majority of Anglo-Saxons, who were illiterate, are excluded from passing on their local plant-names directly to us. Since this silent majority were mostly agricultural workers and country-dwellers with knowledge of regional and dialectal names, this must represent a great loss of evidence. The educated Anglo-Saxons, almost all ecclesiastics, who wrote the manuscripts and texts which survive today, certainly knew many English plant-names but, apart from the fact that they could not represent the naming systems of every English village, they were often influenced by their Latin texts, and, for example, translated some Latin plant-names literally, so that Latin *canis caput* is translated as *hundes heafod*, both names meaning literally 'dog's head'. We have to ask ourselves whether any Anglo-Saxon villager would have used this English name.[4]

Latin plant-names used by educated Anglo-Saxons are often found in medical texts. The Old English *Herbarium*, for example (translated from a Latin compilation) often gives a Latin plant-name with an English equivalent, before discussing the medical properties of the plant. Such cases would appear to provide an absolutely secure translation, enabling researchers to identify the plant indicated. Sadly, all that can be said with confidence is that the scribe who originally added the English plant-name to the Latin text believed the two names to be equivalents. The English name, however, may have had a different meaning elsewhere in England, it may have been unknown to a substantial proportion of the English population, or it may even have belonged to the technical vocabulary of a specialized group, such as physicians. Similar caveats must also be applied to Anglo-Saxon glossaries (dictionaries) which list Latin words and supply Old English equivalents for many of them. The researcher must never consider such evidence as successfully closing the case — it merely offers partial illumination on the problem of plant identification.

Research into Anglo-Saxon plant-names is clearly not a straightforward matter. All the problems mentioned in the first section of this introduction, in connection with Modern English plant-names, such as their ambiguity, variability and geographical limitations, also apply to Anglo-Saxon names, but the latter present additional problems to the researcher, of which the most serious are the random and sparse survival of manuscripts, and the rarity, within those manuscripts, of the voice of the common people. It is pointless to weep tears over this difficult situation, since nothing can be done about it, but researchers and readers should always bear in mind the limitations of the evidence.

[4] The best source for the plant-names of the ordinary Anglo-Saxon people is place-names, provided they feature in early medieval sources, or in the land boundaries of early charters.

3. Research into Anglo-Saxon plant-names

Anyone who wants to know the meaning of an Old English plant-name can look it up in an appropriate dictionary. So, looking up *clæfre* in the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) will produce the definition 'clover, trefoil'. This may seem convincing, but dictionary definitions may be based on minimal research. Sometimes the lexicographer benefits from an existing detailed semantic study of a particular plant-name, but many plant-names have never been investigated, and the lexicographer has to review the evidence and come to a conclusion, almost certainly without the luxury of as much research time as (s)he would like. Old English dictionaries compiled before 1980 were not based on a complete Old English concordance, so the lexicographer would frequently have to operate on the basis of incomplete evidence.[5] In earlier times, it was easy to assume that, where an Old English plant-name had an obvious modern descendant, as with *clæfre* and *clover*, the designated plant must be the same in both cases. Such a conclusion was correct for some plant-names but not for all. In addition to this variable reliability of dictionary definitions, there are many cases in which the lexicographer admits defeat or near defeat, entering definitions with a question-mark, or simply concluding 'a plant'. It should be understood, therefore, that there is much more work to do on Anglo-Saxon plant-names, either in terms of revision of existing definitions, or in terms of supplying a definition for previously undefined names. It should also be understood that the aim of research is to reach the most likely conclusion we can from all the available evidence.[6] Even when that often sparse evidence has been thoroughly investigated, however, it cannot reveal the full extent of the name's regional and dialectal varieties as they were used in the living language of the Anglo-Saxons.

A number of scholars have been involved in researching individual Anglo-Saxon plant-names over the years, and much of their work can be found recorded in the *ASPNS Bibliography* at <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/STELLA/ihsl/projects/ASPNS/bib.htm> (under construction) and in *The Dictionary of Old English Plant Names* (DOEPN) at <http://oldenglish-plantnames.org> (online only). Such work is vitally important, but this section of the introduction will present just three major attempts to understand plant-names through different approaches. The first project to be mentioned here is the work of Peter Bierbaumer of the University of Graz, Austria who, between 1975 and 1979, published three volumes of Old English plant-names (Bierbaumer 1975–9). Each volume presented names in alphabetical order from particular Anglo-Saxon medical and glossarial sources, along with brief explanatory and comparative notes, and an attempt to identify the designated plants as precisely as possible. Bierbaumer's volumes are still vitally important to the subject, and are regularly consulted by researchers in this field. It seems churlish, therefore, to offer criticisms of such a seminal work, but it is worth pointing out that there is a tendency to aim for a species definition for each plant-name, when it is likely that many names were broader in application. Furthermore, because of the broad coverage of Bierbaumer's volumes, it is unrealistic to expect in-depth research to have been done on each plant-name.

[5] A complete concordance was established by the *Dictionary of Old English* team in the University of Toronto for the purpose of basing the definitions in their new dictionary on as much textual evidence as possible. This was made available to the public on microfiches in 1980 (Healey and Venezky 1980), and is now available online as the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (DOEWC) at <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/pub/corpus.html>.

[6] Some guidelines for Anglo-Saxon plant-name research, often followed in ASPNS studies, can be found in Biggam (2007).

His volumes have since provided the basis of DOEPN, mentioned above, which is a joint project with Hans Sauer of the University of Munich, Germany. This valuable online resource incorporates research carried out after the publication of Bierbaumer's work, including Sauer's morphological studies (described below), a bibliography for each plant-name, and illustrations of the potential identifications.

The second important project on Old English plant-names is the work of Hans Sauer, who has concentrated on the morphology (structure) of the plant-names, and it will be useful for readers of the following papers if a flavour of his findings is given here (principally from Sauer 2003).[7] The principal division in the forms of the plant-names is between simplex and complex. Simplex names are those which are not, or are no longer, analyzable, such as *rose* 'rose'. Complex names, which form the majority of Old English plant-names, consist of at least two elements, and such names can be further classified into various types depending on the nature of the elements.[8] They can be formed, for example, with two nouns, such as *beo-wyrt*, literally 'bee-plant'; with an adjective and a noun, such as *wilde-popig*, literally 'wild poppy'; or with a verb stem and noun, such as *spring-wyrt*, literally 'spring-plant'. Plant-names can also be formed with prefixes, such as *sin-grene*, literally 'ever-green', and with suffixes, such as *apul-dor*, literally 'apple-tree'. In addition, there are several Old English names which represent loan-words from Latin, such as *bete* from Latin *beta* 'beetroot', and there are also translations, such as *dæges eage* from Latin *oculus diei*, both names meaning literally 'eye of the day'. Some plant-names are hybrid formations from both English and Latin elements, such as *leon-fot* based on Latin *pes leonis*, literally 'lion's foot', but with Latin *pes* 'foot' translated into Old English *fot*. The analysis of a name's structure in this way offers many insights into the naming process, including the concepts involved in plant recognition, the elements which needed to be adopted from other languages, and the presumed basicness of the simplex names.

The third project to be mentioned here is the Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey (ASPNS), set up in late 1999 as a research project of the Institute for the Historical Study of Language, based in the University of Glasgow. As Director of ASPNS, I planned the work as a long-term project with a particular philosophy of approach, namely, to make maximum use of the appropriate surviving evidence, regardless of the discipline in which it could be found. ASPNS should be seen, therefore, as a primarily lexical semantic project in which the plant-name interpretations are influenced by the findings of any other appropriate discipline. The ASPNS researchers are, of necessity, supported in their work by an international team of advisors. These are scholars representing many disciplines who have kindly agreed to guide the researchers in subjects which may be unfamiliar to them. This extra dimension is vital, and often saves the unwary semanticist from falling into fatal traps. The linguistic evidence may suggest a particular plant, but a botanist may inform us that that plant was introduced into Britain as late as the eighteenth century; or a landscape specialist may explain that the plant requires a heathland habitat while the location referred to in the text was woodland in earlier times; or the records may imply a lack of that plant in a particular area but an archaeobotanist may be able to show material proof that it did exist in that location at the appropriate time. Many more examples could be given here of the value of consulting specialists in the history of food, medicine, agriculture, art, place-names and many other subjects, where those subjects are appropriate to a particular word-study. ASPNS also seeks to broaden the knowledge base

[7] The account which follows merely offers a selection from Sauer's full classification of forms.

[8] A former doctoral student of Hans Sauer's, namely Ulrike Krischke, has recently published an impressive study of Old English complex plant names (Krischke 2013).

about early medieval plants in another way, namely, by including in its remit, not just Old English plant-names, but names in any other language, provided they were understood or used by the Anglo-Saxons.

In-depth multidisciplinary research of this nature requires a great deal of time, and none of the ASPNS researchers are full-time employees of the project. Nonetheless, the Survey has already held two international conferences, and published the proceedings. The first conference took place in the University of Glasgow in 2000 (see Biggam 2003), and the second in the University of Graz in 2007 (see Bierbaumer and Klug 2009). The principal purpose of the first book is to explore the potential of multidisciplinary studies for plant-name research, while the second presents several case-studies and the progress of lexicographical and digital approaches to the subject.

4. The present special issue

As mentioned above, the first book from ASPNS explored the various disciplines which could be brought to bear on the problem of elucidating Anglo-Saxon plant-names. The disciplines represented were landscape studies, place-names, botany, archaeobotany, food studies, pharmacy, semantics, morphology, lexicography, art history, and literary studies. One paper presented a full-length multidisciplinary word-study (of OE *æspe*), as an example of a possible research methodology (Biggam 2003: 195–230; see also Biggam 2007). With the present special issue, the ASPNS authors have produced a number of word-studies which all include any supporting evidence which helps the linguistic approaches at the core of the investigations. The subjects cover a wide range of plants concerned with, among other things, hallucinatory plants (Hall), climbing plants (Wotherspoon), poisonous plants (Wotherspoon, Meaney), a plant involved in a puzzling place-name (Coates), and an exotic, medicinal shrub (Biggam). The papers uncover a number of problems of interpretation which their authors have valiantly tackled. Both the problems and the approaches to them will provide valuable help in future ASPNS research.

The collection opens with a tour-de-force essay by Markey which acts as a European (and a little beyond) cultural background to the other contributions, presents and utilizes important ethnobiological research techniques, and shows most clearly the power of etymology to uncover semantic shifts that may otherwise appear somewhat puzzling. Markey's co-star is the humble leek which is revealed as a member of an early 'grerb' package (a term denoting grass+herb+weed) which later gained its nomenclatural independence, extended its influence from southern Europe to the north, became a medical and ritual stalwart of female fertility and reproduction, and provided a metaphor for sexuality, virility and even nobility. If anyone doubts the crucial role of certain plants in early societies, Markey's biography of the leek will convince them otherwise.

The second and third contributions to this collection are by Alaric Hall, who has tackled an example of the problem, described in Section 1 above, of plant names which refer to more than one plant. That name is Latin *elleborus* in an Anglo-Saxon context. In his first article, Hall presents *elleborus* in the sense of 'woody nightshade' as a plant which seems to have been both the cause and cure of madness (often associated with elves), and which acted (by intention or by accident) as a mind-altering agent and promoter of prophetic states. In his second article on *elleborus*, however, Hall shows that the meaning(s) of this name in tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon texts vary considerably from those of the earlier period, and appear to

represent a deliberate break from the earlier Latin scholarship of the age of Aldhelm. He hunts down every last clue from the three extant forms of the problematic Old English plant-name *tunsingwyrt* and reveals it as an allium, probably specifically wild garlic. In the process of his investigation, he also provides a window on the developing (and sometimes stumbling) text of the Old English *Herbarium*, a crucial document in our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon herbal medicine.

Irené Wotherspoon contributes two papers on superficially similar plant-names: *hymlic* and *hymele*. *Hymlic* has traditionally been interpreted as 'hemlock' but apparently straightforward identifications such as these need to be questioned in case other species are hiding within the often broader semantics of Old English names. Wotherspoon navigates her way through various plant-name confusions and errors in the earlier records, considers several similar-looking *hymlic*-candidates with their white-lace flower-heads, and discusses the three most important associations with such plants in later times, namely, edges and borders, poisonous qualities, and long, hollow stems. Such associations, even of a post Conquest date, reveal the most memorable features of a plant within an English rural community, and this can offer clues to Anglo-Saxon impressions of the plant. In her *hymele* paper, Wotherspoon uncovers a veritable jungle of climbing, creeping and trailing plants, several of which seem to have an affinity with wet and marshy locations, and each one appearing at various times to provide the solution for problematic Greek, Latin and Old English names. One of these plant-candidates is of particular interest, namely, the hop, which leads to an investigation of Anglo-Saxon beer-making, and discussion of the long-term quandary as to whether hops were cultivated in England at such an early date.

The next contribution, by Richard Coates, is also involved in watery areas, especially in Lincolnshire where a parish- and village-name incorporates a difficult plant name. Thanks to some meticulous botanical, topographical and dialectal studies, Coates unearths the marsh marigold as the most likely plant denoted by the Old English word *bulut*.

Audrey Meaney then heroically tackles the long-standing mystery of what exactly is (or are) *lybcorn*? She reviews over thirty plant-names which appear to have some relationship with *lybcorn*, and uncovers a panorama of changing meanings, the vicissitudes of early medieval trade with Asia, and the worrying apparent confusion of a flavouring with a poison. In the process, the reader is treated to fascinating, but sometimes disturbing, details of early emetics and purgatives.

Finally, my own paper turns to shrubs and trees, and tackles the question as to which type of juniper figures so strongly in Anglo-Saxon medicine. The trail leads to Dorset, involving the topography of Purbeck, memorial stones at Wareham, and the ancient shale industry. It may surprise the reader that such studies lead to a consideration of enlarged livers and spleens, and to the probable recognition of an exotic 'expeller' medicine, but that journey is typical of Anglo-Saxon plant-name investigations in which the most unlikely clues, retrieved from disparate types of evidence, can illuminate a semantic problem.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this volume for their detailed research into problematic subjects, and their laudable patience in staying with a long-term project. All the authors are most grateful to Alaric Hall who has seen our work through to publication in *Leeds Studies in English*.

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