

Roman period. When looked at in detail, the distribution of settlement-names containing **funta* suggests that the word may have come into Old English direct from Latin, in the manner postulated for the other words discussed in this chapter. This is phonologically possible; Jackson 1953 (p. 273) says that early Latin loan-words borrowed into English had *u* substituted for *o* in certain circumstances, which include *ō* plus nasal plus consonant, and these circumstances are present in *fontāna*. Two points remain to be considered: what sort of object would be described by a loan-word from Latin *fontana*, and what are the first elements with which the word is compounded in English place-names.

It is unlikely that the Anglo-Saxons used a word of Latin origin for an ordinary spring. Bedfont MDX adjoins a parish called Stanwell, and the use of **funta* in one instance and of the normal Germanic word *wella* in the other suggests that there was something of a specifically Roman character about the spring at Bedfont. The obvious possibility is that building operations had been performed in order to make the spring easier to use. Stone troughs are common enough on Romano-British sites, and a fairly elaborate arrangement for collecting the water, perhaps with spouts, would be likely to impress barbarian settlers. One is reminded of the 'fountain' made by the Romans at Carlisle. Such a construction might survive and continue to be used in the vicinity of a derelict villa. The triple occurrence of the compound which has become Bedfont, Bedmond and Bedford (in Eastbourne) is interesting, as the first element is considered (Smith 1956, Part I, p. 72) to be Old English *byden*, 'vessel, tub, butt', which is also compounded with *wella* in place-names. In other names, such as Beedon BRK, *byden* is used in a transferred topographical sense to mean 'steep-sided valley', but when combined with **funta* and *wella* it is likely to refer literally to a trough for collecting water from a spring.

Of the remaining twelve settlement-names in **funta*, four have a significant word as first element. Boarhunt, Old English *Byrhfund*, is 'spring of the manor', Chalfont is 'calf spring', Cheshunt probably 'spring by a Roman town', and Teffont 'boundary spring'. In Funtley the word is used as first element. This leaves seven names, six of which are believed to contain Old English personal names. These are: Chadshunt (**Ceadel*), Fovant (**Fobba*), Havant (*Hama*), Tolleshunt (**Toll*), Urchfont (**Eohric*) and Wansunt (*Wont*). The remaining name, Mottisfont, probably contains Old English *mōtere* 'speaker', either used as a personal name or referring to the holding of assemblies at this spring.

Chapter 4

The Celtic Survival

The preceding chapter examined in some detail a relatively small class of English place-names, those which contain words borrowed from Latin, and which may bear a direct relationship to Romano-British institutions. These were discussed at length because this is the first work in which they have been presented as a single class of English names, and because the historical context suggested here for some of them—the period between c. AD 370 and the mid fifth century—has not been put forward in any earlier book. The much larger class of place-names to be discussed in this chapter will be dealt with in less detail, not because it is of less historical importance, but because its vital bearing on Dark Age history has been recognized for a long time. This class comprises the bulk of the names which are believed to have been acquired by English settlers from the Welsh-speaking people of the countryside. The survival of some recorded Romano-British names has been discussed in Chapter 2. Here we are concerned mainly with names which are not actually on record from the Romano-British period but which are believed to have been in use then because they are in the Primitive Welsh language. It is convenient to consider in this chapter also place-names in the English language which contain references to people of Welsh nationality.

When the study of place-names became an academic discipline it became apparent that there were enough pre-English names still in use to render untenable some of the more extreme views of nineteenth-century historians concerning the virtual disappearance of the Celtic stock from the south and east of England. Volume I of the English Place-Name Society's publications, *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, published in 1924, has for its second chapter an essay on 'The Celtic Element' by Eilert Ekwall. Here he says, 'A study of British place-names will have among its chief aims the establishment of the extent to which a British population survived after the Anglo-Saxon conquest, the relation between Britons and Saxons after that event, and similar problems. The

view often held that the British population was exterminated or swept away, seems to have lost ground of late years. The numerous British place-names in England tell strongly against it.' All subsequent writers must echo that statement. The survival of pre-English place-names, either so as to be recorded in medieval writings, or so as to be still in use today, proves that there was a period of co-existence by Welsh and English speakers. Probably no one today would wish to assert the converse, that the absence of such names from an area proves that there was no such co-existence. There are other ways in which the likelihood of continuity may be demonstrated, and one of these is discussed in Chapter 8. The positive statement—that most surviving pre-English names must have become familiar to the English as a result of peaceful intercourse with the descendants of Romano-British people—is, however, the one which concerns us in this chapter.

The identification of Celtic and pre-Celtic place-names is one of the most important tasks of English place-name studies, but it is also one of the most difficult. The scholars to whom the work of the English Place-Name Survey is entrusted are necessarily specialists in Old English and Old Norse, the languages of the vast majority of our place-names. This means that they are not well equipped to identify or interpret Celtic names.

The study was placed on a new footing in 1953 by the publication of Kenneth Jackson's *Language and History in Early Britain*, which discusses a large number of place- and personal names which are certain or virtually certain to be Celtic. Place-names included in Professor Jackson's book are awarded a sort of certificate of authenticity; but there are a great many names which were outside the scope of his inquiry, and concerning which a final decision is difficult or impossible. Professor Jackson is now vetting the English Place-Name Society's county volumes, so that recent and forthcoming surveys should be sound in their lists of names likely to be of pre-English origin. The pre-war volumes, on the other hand, are very unreliable in this respect; and even Professor Eilert Ekwall, whose enlightened attitude to this material has been quoted above, and whose magnificent pioneer work in *English River-Names* (1928) and *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (first ed. 1935) cannot be too highly praised, must be regarded as a not wholly reliable guide.

In spite of these difficulties and dangers, it is highly desirable that attempts should be made to identify pre-English names in all areas, and to draw maps which make it possible to study their distribution and their relationship to other types of place-name and to archaeological remains from the Roman and early Anglo-Saxon periods. Professor Jackson provided only one distribution map (reproduced here as Fig. 3), showing rivers which have British names. This class of evidence is much more

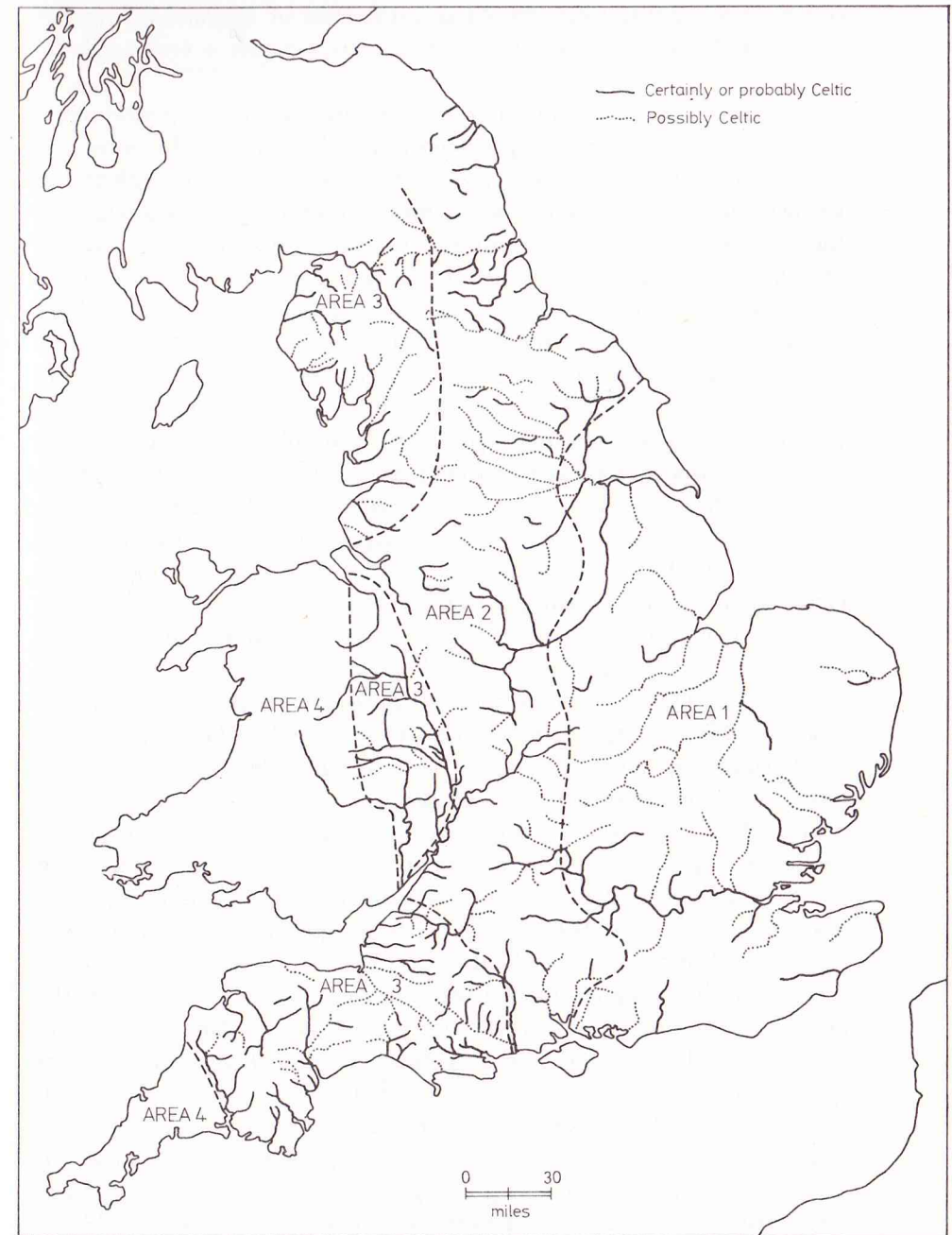


Fig. 3 British river-names (from Jackson 1953, by permission of Edinburgh University Press)

some of the names for reasons which have little scientific basis. For this reason it is important that each item shown on such a map should be named in full, not represented by a symbol. This map may provide a useful starting point for further study, but a person using it may well disagree about the status of some names shown, and may wish to add names which have been omitted. Names previously considered Celtic which have been omitted include Cannock STF (for reasons set out in Gelling 1970), Lizard STF (for which Old English spellings in *Lus-* seem to preclude Welsh *llys* as first element), Ercall and Ewdness SHR (which are more easily explained as Old English than as Welsh), Ismere WOR (the first element of which is a river-name, Ouse, which is of obscure origin), and a number of WAR names—Brailes, Cosford, Dassett, Dosthill—discussed in Gelling 1974b (pp. 74–5). Arden WAR is included against the current of recent opinion, and the reasons for this are given in Gelling 1974b (p. 74).

The names shown on Fig. 4 include not only fully Celtic names, like Penn, Barr and Malvern, but also hybrid compounds with one English and one Welsh element. Bredon WOR and Breedon LEI, which consist of Welsh *bre* and English *dūn*, both meaning 'hill', are typical specimens of the tautological hybrids discussed in Jackson 1953 (p. 245). It looks as if the local British people spoke of 'the hill', and the English, not realizing that *bre* was a common noun, took it for the name of the hill. A later failure to understand the meaning of Old English *dūn* has caused the Leicestershire name to become Breedon on the Hill. Similar tautological compounds elsewhere include Pendle Hill LNC ('hill called *Pen*' to which modern *Hill* has been added), Cheadle CHE ('wood called *Cēd*') and Cheetwood LNC. Other hybrid compounds, not of this special type, shown on Fig. 4 include Coundon WAR, much corrupted from earlier forms such as *Condelme*, *Cundelma*, which show it to refer to the source (Old English *æwielm*) of a river with the pre-English name Cound; Doverdale WOR, in which Old English *dæl* 'valley' has been added to the Celtic river-name Dover; Crookbarrow and Churchill WOR, which are discussed in Chapter 6; and Charnwood LEI, which has as first element Welsh *carn* 'rock'. Lichfield and Mancetter are hybrids of the sort discussed in Chapter 2, in which an English word has been added to a Romano-British town-name. Worcester has a pre-English first element, apparently identical with the name of Wyre Forest, but this was probably not the name of the Romano-British town at Worcester. Penkridge, which looks superficially as if it might be a hybrid, is actually the Romano-British name *Pennocrucium* with both elements of the British name preserved (see Chapter 2).

In addition to the British names, and the hybrid British/English names shown on Fig. 4, there are two categories of names in the English language

which have been included because they are thought to refer to people of British nationality and to British institutions. The first category consists of the names in Wal- and Cumber- or Comber-, the second comprises the three names, Eccleshall and two instances of Exhall, which are thought to refer to Celtic Christian churches. Both categories deserve to be discussed in some detail.

The names shown on Fig. 4 which may refer to people of wholly or partly British descent fall into two groups. One group includes Walton (four in Staffordshire, one in Derbyshire), Walcot (one in Worcestershire, two in Warwickshire) and Walsall STF, all probably containing Old English *walh* used either as a noun or as a personal name; and the other includes Cumberhill DRB, Comberford STF and the two Worcestershire examples of Comberton, containing Old English *Cumbre*, which may also be used either as a noun or as a personal name.

There is a division of opinion concerning the significance of *walh* (plural *walas*, genitive singular *wales*, genitive plural *wala*) in place-names. In written Old English the word has two meanings, 'Welshman' and 'serf'. It is the former meaning which has survived in modern English, Wales being the plural, and Welsh the derivative adjective. The plural, *walas*, is also the second element in the name Cornwall. This word *walh* is a Germanic formation from Latin *Volcae*, the name of a Celtic tribe. It was applied in Germanic languages to the speakers of Latin, as well as to the speakers of Celtic languages, and Professor Tolkien (1963, p. 26) suggested that this was due not only to the fact that Latin eventually became the language of most areas of Celtic speech known to Germanic peoples, but also to the ability of the Germans to recognize similarities between Latin and Gallo-Brittonic speech. As regards the Old English use of *walh* to mean 'slave', Professor Tolkien considered that this was not a total generalization of the national name (as *slave* is from *Slav*), but that it must often have involved a recognition that particular serfs were Welsh speaking.

A recent discussion of the problem, Faull 1975, provides a careful analysis of all the linguistic evidence relating to the use of *walh* (and the West Saxon form, *wealh*) in legal codes, literature, personal names and place-names in the Anglo-Saxon period. This establishes that *walh* meant 'a Celt' when the English entered Britain during the course of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. It is likely that in the earliest settlement period the majority of slaves would be British, being either the descendants of people who had that status during the Roman period, or people reduced to it during the wars which led to the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, so it was natural that the secondary sense 'slave' should develop. The racial meaning persisted, however, and Miss Faull demon-

strates that the sense 'Briton' is clearly apparent in the laws of King Ine of Wessex (dating from AD 688-94), which provide for free *wealas*, who may or may not be owners of land, to have a lower social status (measured by their *wergild*, the compensation paid for killing them) than Englishmen in equivalent positions. When these laws use the term *wealh* of a slave, it is clear that they refer to a Welsh slave as opposed to an English one. The date at which the two senses became separate, so that a slave referred to as a *walh* need not be Welsh, is not ascertainable on account of the shortage of eighth-century evidence, but the separation appears to have occurred by the second half of the ninth century. At the end of the ninth century there is some evidence that *Wealas* could still be used of Britons living within the English territories, but by the eleventh century *Wealas* as a racial term could only be applied to the Celts of Wales and Cornwall. Miss Faull considers that *walh* 'slave' was not very widely adopted in Old English, the alternative term, *thēow*, being usually preferred. This excellent article provides the sober documentation for Professor Tolkien's inspired rhetoric. As regards the use of *walh* in place-names and personal names, Miss Faull's views coincide very closely with my own, and no attempt is made in the following paragraphs to distinguish between her ideas and mine. She is rather more definite than I feel able to be about the likelihood of *walh* meaning 'Welshman' in some examples of the place-names Walcot and Walton.

The occasional use of *walh* to mean 'serf' in Old English means that the Waltons and Walcots marked on Fig. 4 are ambiguous. If they were coined in the first years of the use of English speech in the area they may well mean 'farm and cottages of the Britons', but if they are of later origin they need mean no more than 'farm or cottages where there are serfs'. There is some reason to think that place-names which refer to owners or inhabitants of a particular social class, such as priests, *ceorls*, 'knights', were coined at a rather late stage of English name-giving (this point is discussed in Chapter 5), and Walcot and Walton could be considered to belong to this category, and so to have arisen at a date when the meaning 'Briton' is not certain to be the operative one for *walh*. In addition to this doubt about the historical significance, there is some difficulty in deciding whether or not a modern Walton or Walcot certainly contains this word. There are several other Old English compounds which yield these modern forms, and a Walton may be a farm near a forest (Old English *wald*), a farm near a wall (e.g. Walton CMB) or, in the Mercian dialect area, a farm near a spring. It is generally assumed that names which have a majority of Middle English spellings with *Wale*-, as opposed to *Wal(l)*-, contain the word which means 'Briton' or 'serf'.

The meaning of *walh* may be less ambiguous when it occurs in the genitive singular in a place-name than it is when it occurs in the genitive plural. The only name of this type marked on Fig. 4 is Walsall STF, but there are a few others in the country, such as Walshford YOW and Walls-worth GLO. Walsall STF means 'sheltered place belonging to a man named *Walh*'. Both *Walh* and *Welisc* are on record as names of people in the Old English period. A priest named *Welisc* is one of the witnesses to the charter issued c. 685 by King Ceadwalla of Wessex (who himself had a British name) granting land for the foundation of a monastery at Farnham SUR. The theme *W(e)alh*, besides occurring several times as an uncompounded personal name, is the first element of a number of compound names, such as *Wealhheard*, *Wealhhere*, *Wealhhūn*, and occurs as the final element in the names of two seventh-century kings of Sussex and Wessex, *Æthelwalh* and *Cēnwalh*, and in the names of several members of the royal house of Mercia. It is unlikely that it was used as a personal-name theme without any reference to its meaning. It cannot be assumed that all Old English personal names were bestowed on account of the meaning of the elements (this point is discussed in Chapter 7), but it seems most unlikely that a word primarily understood to mean 'serf' would have been used in the naming of a male child, and unthinkable that such a meaning would enter into the names of Saxon princes. The word *thēow*, also meaning 'serf' is used in personal names, but this is associated with the verbs *thēowan*, *thēowian*, which are used of the most dignified forms of service as well as the servile ones. Probably the Saxon royal families in which the *-walh* theme occurs were acknowledging a Celtic strain in their ancestry. In the names of non-royal persons it seems possible that *W(e)alh* and *Welisc* are nicknames, corresponding to modern Taffy. The Old English word *wealhstōd* 'interpreter' is used as a personal name, one of the bearers being the first known Bishop of Hereford. This may well have been a name acquired in adult life by a man who spoke Welsh and English. The first known king of the Magonsæte, whose territory was north Herefordshire and south Shropshire, was named *Merewalh*, literally 'famous Welshman', and it is possible that an English prince adopted this name as a matter of political expediency.

No ambiguity attaches to the Old English term *Cumbre*, which enters into a number of names shown on Fig. 4. This is an English borrowing from the Primitive Welsh form of Modern Welsh *Cymro*, 'Welshman'. It is the first element of Cumberland, 'land of the Welsh', and enters into names in Cheshire (Comberbatch, Comber Mere), Lancashire (Comberhalgh), Herefordshire (Comberton), Wiltshire (Cumberwell), Gloucestershire (Cumberwood), and the West Riding (Cumberworth), as well as into

the Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Worcestershire names shown on Fig. 4. A personal name *Cumbra* is on record, and here again it probably refers to the ancestry of the bearer. Whether it is in the genitive plural, as probably in Comber Mere and Comberford, or used as a personal name, as probably in the two instances of Comberton in Worcestershire, there is little reason to doubt that the place-name element refers to people of British descent.

Cumbre was perhaps a politer term for a Welshman than *walh* when English speech became current in the west Midlands, by which time the servile connotation of *walh* may have been stronger than it was when English kingdoms were established in the south and east. But although *Cumbre* appears to be best represented in the west Midlands and the north-west, it does enter into some names in eastern England, such as Cumberlow in Rushden HRT, Cumberton in Great Chishall ESX, Comberton CAM, Cumberworth LIN. A complete distribution map of names containing *Cumbre* and *walh* would probably be interesting. Professor Smith's map referred to above uses the same symbol for names in *walas*, *Brettas* and *Cumbran*. The element *Brettas* is not relevant here, as it is not certainly evidenced in place-names until the time of the Scandinavian settlements in the ninth century, which are discussed in Chapter 9.

Eccleshall and the two instances of Exhall marked on Fig. 4 contain Old English **ecles*, which (with the possible exception of three instances discussed in Chapter 3) is a borrowing from the Primitive Welsh ancestor of Modern Welsh *eglwys* 'church'. Most of the names known to contain this word were listed in Cameron 1968, and Professor Cameron's map is reproduced here as Fig. 5. Another probable instance, Eaglesfield CMB, has been brought forward by Mr P. A. Wilson since this map was compiled. This is one of our most evocative place-name elements, as it suggests that Celtic Christian churches continued to function in the post-Roman period in some areas, and that they were recognized and respected by the pagan Anglo-Saxon settlers.

The corpus of **ecles* names is not certain, but the six examples of Eccles seem absolutely safe, and those compounds which are repeated seem reasonably so. This is a word which appears in place-names either by itself or as the first element of compound names with a limited range of second elements. The fact that it is not used as a second element means that the Anglo-Saxons never felt moved to bestow a distinguishing name on one of these churches, but they sometimes used the church as a defining feature when naming something else. The compound of **ecles* with Old English *tūn* is found in Lancashire (three examples, one west of St Helens, another west of Chorley, and Great and Little Eccleston near Poulton) and in Cheshire (Eccleston south of Chester). The compound with *halh*, the

meaning of which is discussed below, is found in the West Riding (Eccleshall south-west of Sheffield), Staffordshire (Eccleshall south-west of Stone), and Warwickshire (two examples of Exhall, one near Alcester and the other north of Coventry). A compound with *feld* gives Ecclesfield north of Sheffield yow and probably Eaglesfield south-west of Cockermouth CMB, and a compound with *hyll* gives Eccleshill near Darwen LNC and Eccleshill north-west of Bradford yow. The repetition of these compounds makes it less likely that the first element is a rare Old English personal name **Eccel*, which would be a derivative of the recorded *Ecca*, and which may enter into some boundary-marks in Anglo-Saxon charters. There appears to be only one example of each of the following compounds: with *clif* 'bank', in Eggescliffe south-west of Stockton DRH; with *lēah* 'clearing', in Exley south of Bradford yow; and with *wælle* 'spring', in Eccleswall south-east of Ross HRE. In these a stronger case could be made for the first element being the genitive of a personal name **Eccel*.

It is surprising that there are four examples of the compound of **ecles* with *halh*, and that three of the four should lie in the area shown on Fig. 4. Old English *halh* is usually a topographical term. It is very common in English place-names in the sense 'sheltered place', often with reference to situation in a small valley or a hollow. Eccleshall near Sheffield lies in broken country, where this sense would be appropriate, and it seems reasonably suitable for Eccleshall STF, which occupies a shallow curve in the contours of the gently rising ground south of the River Sow. It is not, however, obviously appropriate to the situations of the two places in Warwickshire called Exhall. Exhall near Alcester and Exhall near Coventry both lie on low, flat shelves of land. Another of the senses of *halh* evidenced in place-names is 'land in the projecting corner of an administrative unit'. This use is discussed in Gelling 1973a (p. 116), under the Berkshire name Bracknell. Although this is probably a relatively late meaning of *halh* it may not be totally irrelevant to the two Warwickshire names. A sense 'land not included in the general administrative arrangements of an area' might be conjectured as one of the earlier meanings of *halh*, preceding the well-evidenced sense 'land in an angle of a parish or county', and this might be appropriate to an area surrounding a Celtic Christian centre. This is highly conjectural, however.

The possibility of **ecles* referring to churches which had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a wide area has recently been explored by Professor G. W. S. Barrow (Barrow 1973, pp. 26ff.) After discussing the districts in the north called 'shires' (for which see Chapter 8) he says:

Hallamshire with its hall at Sheffield and its mother church at Ecclesfield

prompts us to look at the 'Eccles' names of Lancashire. They were surely not scattered about the county at random. From the twelfth to the nineteenth century South Lancashire was divided among five hundreds, Salford, West Derby, Leyland, Blackburnshire and Amounderness. Eccles is in Salford Hundred, just west of Salford. Eccleston in West Derby Hundred lies only a few miles east of West Derby, the hundred capital, but in 1086 it formed part of the small hundred of Warrington, afterwards merged with that of West Derby. Eccleston in Leyland Hundred is immediately south-west of Leyland. It was, indeed, the site of the three-weekly hundred or wapentake court in the thirteenth century. Eccleshill in Blackburnshire is not only in Blackburn parish but was immemorably linked to the Celtic-named township of Mellor which occupies a hill on the opposite edge of Blackburn. As for Amounderness Hundred, it has twin Ecclestons, Great and Little, adjacent but in different parishes, the ancient parishes respectively of St Michael on Wyre and Kirkham. The survival of 'Eccles' names in each of the hundreds of medieval Lancashire is paralleled, most interestingly, in Kent, where Eccles is and was in Aylesford parish, while Aylesford itself was the capital of one of the older lathes of Kent, the *locus* of a court by 961 and no doubt from much earlier, and still royal demesne in 1086. Other English evidence seems equally suggestive. Eccleston in Cheshire, for example, is two miles south of Chester itself and was in Chester Hundred. The Staffordshire manor of Eccleshall, though it does not seem to have been in any sense the 'capital' of Pirehill Hundred, was nevertheless the centre of an exceptionally large estate with twenty berewicks. It was part of the endowment (probably the early endowment) of the seventh-century church of Saint Chad at Lichfield.

In this discussion Professor Barrow is mainly concerned to establish that the Scottish place-names in Eccles- have a similar significance to the English ones, and that previous authors have been over-cautious in emphasizing that some of the Scottish names could be relatively late Gaelic formations, rather than Primitive Welsh ones.

Before leaving the subject of **ecles* it is necessary to utter the usual caveat about the danger of mistaking other place-name types for this one. Ekwall 1960 (p. 159) considered that Ecchinswell HMP (*Eccleswelle* 1086), Ashford MDX (Old English *Ecelesford*, *Echelesford*) and the River Ecclesbourne DRB contained a river-name **Ecel*. It is certainly necessary to regard Ecchinswell and Ashford as distinct from the **ecles* 'church' names, as their development shows that they had palatal *c*, but this does not apply to Ecclesbourne DRB, which could reasonably be ascribed to **ecles* 'church'. Professor Cameron pointed out that one of the most marked features of the **ecles* names was proximity to water, and the River Ecclesbourne may have been named from a lost settlement called *Eccles*. Ekwall's suggestion

that some names in Eccles- contain an Old English personal name has already been mentioned. Caution is required when dealing with field-names on the line of Roman roads known as Icknield or Ryknield Street, or on the line of the Icknield Way, as these sometimes have spellings suggestive of **ecles* though they actually contain a corrupt form of the road-name.

A name of particular historical significance on Fig. 4 is Pensax WOR. This Welsh name means 'hill of the Saxons', and it must have been coined at a time when English settlers were in the minority in north-west Worcestershire. Moreover, this situation must have lasted long enough for the name to obtain general currency, so that it survived the eventual change of language from Welsh to English. Names of this kind are very rare in England—Nansawsen CNW, 'valley of the English', is the only example to hand—but there are similar ones in southern Scotland, such as Pennersax and Glensaxon DMF, and Glensax PEB. Welsh speakers did not retain the *x* of *Saxon* for very long (cf. Modern Welsh *Sais*, 'Englishman'), so Pensax must have been coined in the early years of the contact between Welsh and English. The hill in question is probably the massif now called Clows Top. Another village on the side of Clows Top is Mamble WOR, and it is likely that this derives from the ancient Celtic name of the hill, the base being British **mammā* 'breast', which is found also in Manchester (see Chapter 2). This may have been displaced by the name Pensax at a time when the main distinguishing feature of the hill appeared to be the presence in its vicinity of some English settlers. At a later stage both hill-names, one certainly and the other possibly unintelligible to the English, were understood as referring to ancient settlements near the hill, and the massif itself acquired its modern name Clows Top from a settlement higher up on its slope called *clūs*, 'the enclosure'.

The order of elements in Pensax—noun first and qualifying element second—provides a useful contrast to that in Malvern, also near the south-west edge of Fig. 4. In Malvern ('bare hill') the adjective comes first and the noun second. The change in the Welsh manner of making names is believed to have occurred in the sixth century AD, so the order of the elements would disqualify Pensax from being an ancient British name, even if it did not refer explicitly to English settlers. If the map showing Celtic names were continued to the west, however, a number of Herefordshire names would be brought within its scope, and some of these exhibit the modern Welsh word-order without the reason for it being so obvious. Dinmore north of Hereford is an example. This must be 'great fort', Welsh *din mawr*, but it is not clear why the later type of compound should be evidenced here when an ancient British name, becoming something like

**Morthine*, would have seemed most appropriate. It can only be noted that many names in Wales itself exhibit this 'late' order of elements, as if there had been extensive re-naming after the Roman period. The phenomenon has not been observed in any ancient name in Shropshire (where British names are surprisingly rare), and it appears to be evidenced in Worcestershire only in the special instance of Pensax. The modern Welsh word-order in place-names is a characteristic of areas where the Welsh language survived.

Pensax can be assigned a relative chronological position with regard to other British and Primitive Welsh names by three criteria—the order of the elements, the explicit reference to English settlers, and the preservation of the *x* of *Saxon*. It is likely that a number of Celtic place-names in England could be assigned relative dates on phonological criteria, but most English place-name students are not sufficiently skilled in the details of Celtic phonology to attempt this exercise. A few such points have been raised by Celtic experts about names on Fig. 4, and these deserve mention here.

Lichfield STF (see Chapter 2) appears in the two earliest manuscripts of Bede's Ecclesiastical History as *Lyccidfelth*, *Lyccitfeld-*, and *Licidfelth*, *Licittfeld-*. The possible significance of the use of *-y-*, *-i-* to represent the first vowel in the Primitive Welsh name **Lētgēd* is discussed in Jackson 1953 (pp. 332–4). The symbols *ē* and *ē* used in this spelling are Professor Jackson's representation of two distinct vowels. The first is a long *e* of the sort called 'close' by philologists, the second is a long 'open' *e*. These symbols are explained in Jackson 1953 (p. 7). If the Old English form really was **Lyccid* for this name (as it certainly was for Lytchett DOR which has Middle English spellings *Lechet* 1269, *Luchet* 1291), it seems likely that this was borrowed from Primitive Welsh **Luitgēd*, a form which shows the development of Welsh *ē* to *ui* which Jackson dates about AD 675. This chronology offers little difficulty in the case of Lytchett DOR, as English speech may only just have been gaining ascendancy in the south-west at this date; but the development of *ē* to *ui* in the first part of Lichfield can only be postulated on the assumption that an enclave of Welsh speech persisted in this part of Staffordshire long after the first coming of the English to the surrounding areas. In fact, if the Welsh sound-development had really occurred before the name was taken over by the English speakers, the hybrid name Lichfield was probably coined by English people at the time of St Chad's appointment to the Mercian bishopric in 669, when he selected the place as his seat. The possible reasons for St Chad's choice of Lichfield are discussed in Chapter 6.

West of Lichfield, on the extreme edge of Fig. 4, is the name Neen, a river-name preserved by the two settlements of Neen Savage and Neen

Sollers SHR, though the river itself has been re-named Rea. The British river-name had the same vowel as the first part of **Lētgēd*, but the early spellings for Neen make it clear that the name was adopted by English speakers before the development to *ui* occurred. This appears to mean that Welsh speech persisted longer round Lichfield than it did round Pensax, which is not impossible, but implies that we should be thinking in terms of enclaves of Welsh speakers rather than a steady east to west progression of English speech. I am indebted to Mr Victor Watts for pointing out to me the potential historical significance of the different treatment of Primitive Welsh *ē* in Lichfield and Neen; his observations are now published in Watts 1976 (pp. 213–14).

Another name on Fig. 4 which is relevant to the possible late survival of Welsh speech in the Lichfield area is Hints STF, which lies on Watling Street. This was included on the map on the assumption that it derives from the Welsh word *hynt* 'a road', which is from British **sento-*. The vowel development would be regular in this case, but the initial H-requires comment. If the derivation from **sento-* be correct, the name must have been used by Welsh speakers up to the completion of the change of *S-* to *H-* which is seen in *Hafren*, the Welsh form of the river-name Severn. This change is dated by Jackson 1953 (p. 521) to the middle or second half of the sixth century, so the assumption that it occurred in Hints does not require us to postulate anything like so late a Welsh survival as may be implied by the earliest spellings of Lichfield, but it is a scrap of evidence pointing in somewhat the same direction. There were English-speaking people in the valley of the Warwickshire Avon a good deal earlier than this, certainly from the beginning of the sixth century, when the pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at such sites as Baginton, Stratford and Bidford were in use, and these are only about thirty miles south of Hints. There is another Hints in Shropshire, about three miles west of the name Neen on Fig. 4, and this may have the same derivation as the Staffordshire name; it is difficult to think of any alternative etymology. The preservation of *S-* in Severn is doubtless due to the name of this great river being familiar to many people in Europe during the Roman period.

The possibility of determining the approximate date at which a Welsh name was adopted by English speakers by studying the stage of development which the vowels or consonants of the Welsh name had reached when the English encountered it is one which deserves attention by philologists. The subject cannot be thoroughly explored in the present study because it is a field for the Celtic rather than the Old English specialist; but one more instance may be cited here of a west Midland name which presents special phonological problems as regards the date of

transfer from Welsh to English speakers. This is Maund HRE, a name borne by two small settlements, Maund Bryan and Rosemaund, lying some six miles north-east of Hereford. Maund is stated in some reference books to be the source of the name *Magonsāte*, borne by the small sub-kingdom of Mercia which lay between the Welsh district of Archenfield and the River Severn, comprising an area which is now the northern half of Herefordshire and the southern half of Shropshire. On this assumption, *Magonsāte* would mean 'dwellers by Maund'. This type of group-name is well evidenced in the west Midlands, other examples being *Wreocensāte* 'dwellers near the Wrekin' and *Tomsāte* 'dwellers near the River Tame'. There is a noteworthy line of such names running along Offa's Dyke from Oswestry SHR, which was in the Hundred of *Merseite*, to the River Wye, where there was a Hundred of *Stepelset*. Usually it is easy to identify the pre-English place-name (such as Wrekin, Tame) which is the basis of these group-names, or to point to an Old English topographical term (such as *gemære* 'boundary', *stēpel* 'steep place') from which they are formed, but *Magonsāte* is more difficult to explain than most names of this type.

Some authorities (e.g. Williams 1949, p. 39) have considered that the *Magonsāte* derived their name from *Magnis*, the Romano-British town at Kenchester HRE (see Chapter 2). *Magnis* is probably a British name meaning 'the rocks', perhaps originally the name of the fort at Credenhill. This was subsequently rejected as the source of *Magonsāte* on the grounds that the British name would not have had *-g-* when the English reached that part of the country in the second half of the seventh century. Much earlier than this, in the second half of the sixth century, the *-gn-* of *Magnis* would have reached the stage of development which Professor Jackson spells *jn*, as the word from which it derives was on its way to becoming Modern Welsh *maen* 'stone, rock'. More recently, perhaps because of this objection, the alternative suggestion has been preferred which gives Maund as the source of *Magon-* (e.g. Smith 1956, Part 2, p. 94). It seems to have escaped notice that as the only etymology so far suggested for Maund is that it is derived from the same word meaning 'rock, stone' as *Magnis* (Ekwall 1960, p. 318), exactly the same objection applies to derivation of *Magonsāte* from Maund as to the old derivation from *Magnis*.

Early spellings for Maund HRE are *Mage*, *Magene* 1086, *Magena* 1161, *Magene* 1187. If this were an Old English name, as opposed to a British name adopted by English speakers, the preservation of *-g-* until the Middle English period would offer no difficulties. In English the consonant *-g-* was vocalized in this position after the Norman Conquest. Because of this vocalization in Middle English we have Modern English *draw*, *haw*, *own*, *bow* from Old English *dragan*, *haga*, *āgen*, *boga*; but the *-g-* of these and of

similar words and names would be preserved throughout the Old English period. In Maund, to judge by spellings *Marwene* 1240, *Maune* 1337, the vocalization seems to have taken place late in the Middle English period. If Maund were an English name coined in the seventh century its development would offer no serious phonological problems, but there is still the etymological problem of finding an Old English word which is a possible source. The only English word known which could give the spellings noted above is *maga* 'stomach', modern *maw*. On strictly formal grounds, the name could derive from the dative of this word, *magan*, giving a meaning 'at the stomach'. Place-names from the dative of an uncompounded element are more often in the plural, however, which in this instance would be *magum*. This last could be spelt *magan* in late Old English, and would probably have given *Magen* in post-Conquest spellings. The final *-e* of most of the Middle English spellings for Maund could be explained as an inorganic letter added because most place-names have a final *e* in Middle English. The addition of *-d* is a modern development which is of no importance for the etymology.

The questions arising from this are, first, is 'at the stomach(s)' a credible place-name etymology, and second, is the superficial resemblance between Maund, *Magonsāte*, and the Romano-British *Magnis* to be dismissed as a coincidence? The answer to the first question is probably in the negative. Old English terms for items of human and animal anatomy are frequent in place-names, including such words as *bæc*, *bile*, *brægen*, *bræw*, *brū*, *ceole*, *clā*, *cneo*, *ears*, *flære*, *fōt*, *hals*, *hēafod*, *horn*, *hraca*, *mūtha*, *steort*, *swēora*, *tægl*, *tunge*, *wrōt*. These are all external features of the body, however, the only possible exception in the list being *brægen* 'brain', which probably means 'crown of the head' in place-names. The word *maga* refers to an internal organ, and if Old English speakers were coining a place-name referring to a physical feature which reminded them of that region of the body they would have been more likely to use the word *belg*, modern *belly*, which also meant 'bag, sack, bellows', and which occurs in a few place-names, such as Ballidon DRB, Belluton SOM. The topographical use of *maga* is unlikely, and it has not been noted in any other place-name. On the other hand, if the name Maund could be understood as referring originally to the flood-plain of the River Lugg, on the eastern edge of which the settlements lie, and which is the sort of geographical feature likely to be mentioned in a *-sāte* name, a meaning 'at the stomach(s)' is perhaps not quite outside the range of credibility. A verdict of 'unlikely, but not totally impossible' may be given on the suggestion that Maund and *Magonsāte* derive from an Old English topographical term.

What of the other possibility, which is that Maund and *Magonsāte*



Fig. 5 Eccles in English place-names (from Cameron 1968, by permission of Leicester University Press)

derive from a British term? If this is postulated, then there is no need to separate these names from *Magnis*. The British name could be seen as that of a district, referring (if it means 'the rocks') either to Credenhill camp or to all the hilly ground which lies north of Kenchester, but being liable to appear in settlement-names on the other side of the River Lugg because the district extended that far to the east. This is in many ways a more attractive solution. But it is only possible phonologically if it be assumed that *Magnis* became known to English speakers before AD 550, and that their knowledge of the name was preserved without influence from British speakers after that date. Probably the only way to explain this would be to assume that *Magnis* was known to federate Germans who were in the west Midlands at the end of the Roman period. The types of decorated metal-work which may indicate such a presence (see Chapter 3) are well represented at Caerwent MON and Cirencester GLO, and occur sporadically at sites further north in Gloucestershire. These places are well to the south of Kenchester, but it is likely that troops stationed at Caerwent or Cirencester would know the name *Magnis*. If they and their descendants remembered it as the name of a district on the rivers Wye and Lugg, it is perhaps not inconceivable that it was used again as a district-name in the seventh century when English-speaking people became the rulers of the district, and that it was then used in its archaic form, without the development to **Main* which would have taken place if it had been preserved by Welsh speakers.

These are alternative desperate solutions to difficult problems, and the reader may well reject both on the grounds that they outrage common sense. The main task of the philologist is to clarify the problems, and in the case of Maund-*Magnis*-*Magonsāte* philologists may fairly be accused of failing to do this. It was not a sound solution to bring forward Maund as an alternative to *Magnis* as the first element of *Magonsāte*, unless some suggestion was made to account for the preservation of *-g-* in Maund until it became incorporated in the name of the kingdom. Similar points have probably been overlooked in other instances owing to the lack of detailed understanding of Celtic phonology which characterizes most of us who study English place-names.