

Introduction

The need for a new book on Scottish place-names has been apparent for a long time. This does not mean that there are no books on the subject; indeed, there are many, and any library wishing to have a complete collection of them normally needs several shelves to accommodate them all. It does not mean either that there are no good books on Scottish place-names. The selected bibliography included in this volume shows that there are a number which are of excellent quality, both in their scholarship and in their presentation. What our initial statement does indicate, however, is the lack of a book which will make an attempt to cover all parts of Scotland equally well and which will incorporate the considerable amount of information brought to light since the early 1930s, when the publication of the third edition of James B. Johnston's *Place-names of Scotland* (London, 1934) and of W.C. Mackenzie's *Scottish Place-names* (London, 1931) signalled the last endeavour to tackle the interpretation of our Scottish place-nomenclature on what one might call a national scale. In fact, if we add to these two titles Sir Herbert Maxwell's *Scottish Land-names* (Edinburgh, 1894), we have a complete list of all the books ever published on the place-names of Scotland, without geographical, linguistic, or typological restriction. This rather meagre trinity does not make it easy for the enquirer into the subject, or for the potential supplier of reliable information, to get what he is after, and many a quest consequently ends in predictable frustration, even if the aid of the numerous more limited accounts of Scottish toponymy is employed in addition.

Perhaps we should be even more outspoken at this point and emend our first statement to read: The need for *two* new books on Scottish place-names has been apparent for a long time; one,

a dictionary, which will replace James B. Johnston's *Place-names of Scotland*, despite the date of the third edition basically a book which in contents and attitude reflects the date of its first publication – 1892; and another which will set forth in continuous narrative the nature of Scottish place-name evidence, as well as the problems, methods, and results of its study. Personally, this writer feels rather strongly that one book cannot do both jobs – certainly cannot do both of them well – and since the organisation and comprehensiveness of a dictionary of Scottish place-names demand methods of preparation which are both time-consuming and dependent on the exhaustive study of all the available evidence, it is preferable, as well as practical, that we should attend to the second task first: the narrative account. The dictionary, already a long time in the making, will then have to look after itself and will hopefully make its appearance not too many years after the publication of this volume. In a way, this procedure may give the impression of putting the proverbial cart before the equally proverbial horse. Undeniably there are good reasons why the existence of evidence in dictionary form makes it very much easier for an interpretative study to be written (as Kenneth Cameron probably found when he wrote his *English Place-names*, having available Ekwall's *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, as well as several volumes of the county series of the English Place-name Society. There are, on the other hand, equally good reasons why the absence of such a dictionary should be the guarantee that a narrative account will be something more than, or at least something different from, the mere re-arrangement of evidence alphabetically presented. This book, therefore, being denied the assistance of a reliable dictionary, will have to find ways and means of developing its own methodology and approaches and will have to stand unquestionably and precociously on its own feet.

It will also turn to advantage what might in other respects be regarded as a severe disadvantage, by deliberately avoiding anything – apart from the index and certain lists in the text – which might be construed as an echo of an alphabetical order. We have become such slaves of the alphabet that frequently we forget its very nature of mere convenience, and tend to look upon the sequence A, B, C to X, Y, Z as something which in some way classifies or categorizes beyond the order which it imposes on

words, letter by letter, from the first to the last – and that only within our own language; for we know how helpless we become when we are to place or find a German *ü*, a Danish *ø*, or an Icelandic *ð* in its proper sequence. Indeed, the seemingly convenient tool of the alphabet is the enemy of all classification. From the point of view of Scottish place-names this means that, apart from first elements in complex or compound names – and even then only to be treated with caution – it cuts across all kinds of classifications which one might be tempted to apply: linguistic, historical, geographical, social, morphological, semantic, and so on. Since, happily, such an alphabetical strait-jacket may be ignored, it is possible, then, to proceed unshackled and with expectation to whatever system seems to be appropriate for this presentation. 'System' there will have to be, however personal or idiosyncratic it may turn out to be in the end.

It may help us to isolate the 'system' by which we intend to think our way through this book by indicating at this early stage another purpose which this volume will not fulfil at all, or only accidentally and *en passant*. I am referring to the aspect of meaning. The question 'What does this name mean?' has over the centuries dominated name studies, both in the field of place-names and with regard to personal names. This is true of amateur investigations, as well as of scholarly pursuits in the realm of onomastics.* During my fourteen years in charge of the Scottish Place-name Survey, there was not a single week during which not at least one enquiry reached me concerning the meaning of a certain name, and usually there were several. Let us assume that the enquiry was about the name *Hawick* in Roxburghshire. If I was able to say that *Hawick* is first recorded as *Hawic* between 1165 and 1169 in the *Liber Sancte Marie de Melros*, and probably

*I shall, in this study, use the internationally accepted term onomastics, and the adjective onomastic, from which it is derived, to refer to the study of names in general or to anything pertaining to names. The word toponymy will be used as a synonym of 'place-nomenclature', and toponymics is the study of toponymy. Hydronymy, on the other hand, means 'water-names', i.e. the names of streams and lakes. In contrast, anything called lexical pertains to words, not names, a distinction which is of some consequence to the argument of this book. This terminology may strike some readers as new and strange at first, but since it allows for precision as well as flexibility, its employment should soon become helpful as well as familiar.

goes back to an Old English *haga wīc* 'hedge (or enclosure) farm', then the enquirer was, in the majority of instances, well satisfied. He had received an answer to his question, and perhaps even more information than he had expected; he now knew to which language the name Hawick belongs and what it 'means', or rather 'meant' when it was coined. It was the end of his enquiry.

What had been the beginning of it? Why had he wanted to know what the name Hawick 'means'? Perhaps his initial interest was created because he was born in Hawick or lived there or, not at all an uncommon stimulus, because his ancestors came from there. So there was this place-name *Hawick* without any apparent meaning or at least with none upon which the few people who had talked about it in print, had been able to agree. Our enquirer took it for granted that those who had given the name Hawick in the dim and distant past had had something 'meaningful' in mind and that it might be possible to recover this original 'meaning', so that, by the application of a certain know-how and the proper method, something which is now opaque might be made transparent again. In this respect, he was certainly in line with the accepted view, basic to all onomastic studies, i.e. the notion that, apart from certain, fairly late and sophisticated, types of names, names had meaning when first created although that meaning may now frequently be lost or obscured. Indeed, one might well say that without this maxim there would be no point in, and therefore no scholarly discipline of, the study of names. The onomastic sciences would never have been born.

Because of its earliest spelling *Hawic* and also because of its modern form, Hawick is likely to contain the two old English words *haga* 'hedge, enclosure' and *wīc* '(dependent) farm'; it must therefore have been a compound *word* as well as a compound *name*, containing two simple *words* as its first and second elements. What is being recovered, consequently, is primarily 'word meaning'; or in another sense, the search for the meaning of a name is ultimately the reduction of the name in question to the word(s) which it once was. In this process it again becomes a mere lexical item which might easily and unselfconsciously find a home in any appropriate dictionary but especially in one oriented towards ascertaining word etymologies. Here it might be placed somewhere near *haw*, *hawfinch*, and *hawthorn* with which it shares the first part *haw* (Middle English *hage*, *hawe*,

from Old English *haga* 'hedge'), an element which has not survived into Modern English as an independent word in its original usage, applying to a hedge or enclosure. Just as Old English *haga* 'hedge' is obsolete in Modern English, so Old English *wīc* 'farm' (and a number of other, related, meanings) has dropped out of use as a word. It seems to have lost its usefulness even earlier than *haga*, but whereas the latter was replaced by its cognate *hedge* (OE *hecg*, ME *hegge*), *wīc* had to make room, perhaps as early as the eighth or ninth century, for OE *tūn* (Mod E *town*, Mod Sc *soon*), and the like. Compounds such as *bailiwick* are faint reminders of a once very important word which could claim Latin *vicus* 'village' as a relative.

The name originally given to the farm from which the modern town *Hawick* descended was therefore something like *haga wīc* 'hedge farm' and it must have been descriptive of the place to which it applied; compound *name* and compound *word* were still the same, and their identity was easily recognisable. *Haga wīc* was called *haga wīc* because it was *haga wīc*! Certainly in a purely lexical and semantic sense this can no longer be said of *Hawick*. *Hawick* is not understood to be 'hedge farm', nor is it anything like a 'hedge farm' to look at. It no longer has a lexical slot, no longer has 'word meaning' but has taken on a new 'name meaning' or 'onomastic quality' which isolates it (there is an identical name in neighbouring English Northumberland) as a municipal burgh, town, and parish, of approximately 17,000 inhabitants in the Scottish county of Roxburgh, on the River Teviot, 40 miles south-east of Edinburgh, and 35 miles north of Carlisle, producing knitwear, hosiery, tweeds, woollen manufactures, and so on. It even has its own postal code now: TD9 9AA.

Hawick as a name, therefore, 'means' quite differently from the compound word OE *haga wīc*, and it is this, its onomastic meaning, which has permitted it to survive although it has become meaningless from a lexical point of view, because the two words which coined it have become obsolete in English. It is indeed its existence as a *name* which has given it a 'power of survival' which ordinary words do not have. Meaningless words die because the economy of language does not allow them to be carried as ballast when they no longer serve a meaningful function. Names, on the other hand, survive because they can be meaningful as *names* even if they have become meaningless as words.

As a result of this power of survival they form very important raw material in the investigation of the history of the language to which they can be ascribed, especially the earlier phases of the history of the vocabulary of that language. In consequence, practically all investigations of Scottish place-names, whether as units or as types or as groups, until the early 1950s paid particular, and often exclusive, attention to this lexical aspect of the names in question, to their reducibility to words, to their primary linguistic nature. It is probably no exaggeration to say that names were regarded as special or peculiar *words*, and it is in harmony with such a view that the study of names remained basically, to all intents and purposes, a handmaiden of linguistics, and no more. Very delicate and intricate procedures were developed by language historians to ascertain the original form and meaning of a given name, and modern onomastics has benefited immeasurably from such techniques of investigation and the reliability of their results. It would indeed be churlish to deny the indebtedness of onomastic studies to the pursuit of lexical etymology, for *names* are, as we have seen, after all first and foremost *words*; and the establishment of a name in its lexical and semantic context will have to remain the basic requirement of all name research. What has changed such research in the last couple of decades or so is the realisation that the answer to the question 'What does this name mean?' is no longer the end of onomastic enquiry but the beginning. We have begun to treat names as names and not just as words with rather strange qualities. The study of names has grown up.

With regard to the name *Hawick*, we would now no longer be totally satisfied with the answer that its earliest recorded form is a twelfth-century *Hawic* and that on this basis we are entitled to believe that it is an old English name *haga wīc* 'hedge farm'. As part of an onomastic approach, we shall want to know, for instance, whether hedged in, or enclosed, farms were common in those days or perhaps, as the name appears to imply, somewhat rare because otherwise it would have been rather difficult to distinguish this 'hedge farm' from all the others in the vicinity. We shall want to find out whether, since *wīc* is an element replaced at an early stage by OE *tūn* and the like, its geographical distribution will give us a clue as to what may be an early phase of Anglian settlement in Scotland; we must therefore examine how *Hawick* relates to Berwick NTB, North Berwick ELO, Birswick

DMF, Borthwick ROX, MLO, BWK, SLK, Darnick ROX, Dawick PEB, Fenwick ROX, AYR, Fishwick BWK, Handwick ANG, Hedderwick ELO, BWK, ANG, Heatherwick ABD, Prestwick AYR, Previck AYR, Sunwick BWK, as well as such similar looking but geographically more remote names as Lerwick SHE and Wick CAL. Once it has been firmly established which of these, and possibly other, names contain OE *wīc* as a second element and which do not, one will want to look into the relationship between this Scottish name-type and its English counterpart, as represented by Alnwick NTB, Keswick NFK, and Warwick WAR, but also by Dalwich SUR, Norwich NFK, and Woolwich KNT, etc. We shall also want to ask whether, given the Scottish terrain and the peculiar history and pattern of settlement, *wīc* referred to the same kind of inhabited place in Scotland as in England. Was the cultural and material background of necessity different in Scotland or could it have been the same in at least some instances? Do places referred to as *wīc* usually occupy similar sites with regard to soil, slope value, access to rivers, etc.? How does *wīc* relate to *tūn*, *hām*, and others in the context of a 'semantic field'? Does it show symptoms of onomastic fashionableness? Where altogether in the distribution in space and time, and on the social scale, does *wīc*, and therefore *Hawick*, belong? All these questions – and there are others which one might have posed – take the name *Hawick*, and all names containing OE *wīc*, out of their isolation and place them chiefly into a historio-geographical context, into the legitimate range of enquiry by the settlement historian; this means that they go far beyond the question asked by our original enquirer: 'What does the name *Hawick* mean?' They are onomastic questions, not linguistic-etymological ones. They are therefore also proper questions to ask within the context of this narrative account of Scottish place-names, especially in the light of the next argument which we wish to advance.

In order to take the next step in this preliminary, scene-setting evaluation of names as names, we shall have to abandon the single name *Hawick*, which has taught us so much, and imagine another enquirer who, for reasons of his own, has decided to seek information about the name *Melrose*, in the same county but not on the same river as *Hawick*. In brief, the answer he would receive, would be: 'The first reference to the name goes back to the early eighth century when it is mentioned by Bede,

who calls it *Mailros*. It is a pre-English Cumbric name *Moelros* "the bare promontory", equivalent to Gaelic *maol ros*.' This simple statement makes reference to a fact not mentioned so far in our discourse: whereas the name Hawick survived the demise of the two words which coined it, within the same linguistic medium which created it, *Melrose* not only survived the obsolescence of the equivalent two lexical elements but also the death, in this part of Scotland, of the very language which coined it. Without wishing to speculate on the extent to which the name may have been understood by the incoming Angles and may have continued to live on as a meaningful compound word in an at least partially bilingual society, we must conclude that the name *Melrose* soon became a lexically opaque linguistic fossil in a new linguistic stratum: a Celtic name in an English-speaking community. This clearly enhances its value as linguistic raw material even further since other evidence of the kind of Celtic spoken in the Tweed Valley before the arrival of the Angles is very scanty indeed. It also re-emphasises our earlier contention that names do not have to be meaningful as words (although they may be) in order to be adequately useful as names. There is, in fact, no reason to believe that once the original word meaning of a name has been recovered it will therefore function better as a name. Both our Hawick and our Melrose enquirers may get an antiquarian 'kick' out of knowing what their respective objects of enquiry 'mean', it may even give them some personal satisfaction; they will however, one suspects, not be able to handle these names better as names unless they proceed beyond their etymological quests to some onomastic questioning. Making the meaningless meaningful may be a strong folk-etymological motivation observable in all languages at all times; however, it does not improve the name's ability to function, or increase its usefulness. Be that as it may, while Hawick-type names enable us to trace earlier phases of a language still spoken in the area in which they occur, the name *Melrose* is representative of the type which gives us the possibility to establish linguistic sequences and stratifications among different languages. Both types naturally allow corresponding implications concerning the settlement history of the people speaking these languages.

Before we proceed to utilise Scottish place-names in the pursuit of such extra-linguistic enquiries, treating them in groups,

categories and strata rather than as isolated instances, it may be helpful to demonstrate more fully on a further individual name how the investigation of a proper name history works which alone can provide reliable answers to our fundamental questions of linguistic origin and meaning – answers which subsequently permit us to put individual names into all kinds of contexts. When, a few pages earlier, we gave reasons for postponing the publication of a so-badly needed authentic dictionary of Scottish place-names, we already alluded to the fact that, regrettably, the situation with regard to the study of individual Scottish place-names is such that often even names of larger inhabited places, such as towns and cities, at present lack the kind of near-comprehensive documentation which allows a detailed analysis. Glasgow, Dundee, Paisley, Kilmarnock, Lanark, Peebles, Kirkcaldy, Banff, Nairn and many others fall within this category. This does not always mean that the etymology of such names is not known; in fact, we can fairly confidently etymologise all the names just listed! However, the gradual development of the name, both in form and application, and the ultimate emergence of the modern spelling cannot normally be followed from any discussion of these names now available in print, and in each case it is necessary to amass one's own list of extant spellings by laboriously searching through the relevant records. Without such a list one would, of course, be omitting an essential basic step in the investigation of a name and therefore seriously endanger the conclusions one might come to with regard to its origin, meaning, and significance, quite apart from its value as evidence in such broader issues as historical stratification and geographical distribution.

One particularly fascinating name which might with justification have been added to the enumeration of major Scottish settlement-names above is *Falkirk*. It is an especially useful name for our purposes since, concerning it, we are more fortunate than with most individual Scottish names in so far as there does exist at least one quite detailed, although not totally successful, attempt at an account of the derivation and meaning of the name. This account, published in 1893, elucidates much of what we have to know about the historical background of the place called *Falkirk*, beyond the purely linguistic data necessary to establish a reliable etymology. Admittedly, *Falkirk* has had a more chequered history than most Scottish place-names and is also exceptionally well

documented, but because of its very complexity the study of its development as a name also demands special care. The various significant spellings as they occur from the twelfth century onwards may be grouped in the following way, without attempting comprehensiveness in the later stages, or overall chronological sequence:

- (a) *egglesbreth*
- (b) *Egelilbrich*
- (c) *Varia Capella*
- (d) *la Veire Chapelle*
- (e) *la Faulkirk*
- (f) *Falkirk*

Since this is the only opportunity we have in this book to elaborate on the importance of a full analysis of documentary source material and of the role which surviving spellings play in onomastic case histories, we shall allow ourselves the luxury of examining in much greater detail than would normally be justified the unusually great variety of forms and spellings associated with the name *Falkirk*, as well as the nature and reliability of the written sources and the state of the scholarship devoted to the name. Of necessity the starting-point of this discussion will have to be some comment on the identification with Falkirk of the forms listed under (a) and of their relationship to each other.

- (a) *egglesbreth* c.1120(1165–70) Symeon of Durham
c. 1150 *Historia post Bedam*
Eglesbreth ? 12th cent. (16th cent.) John Leland,
Collectanea 1, 384
eaglesuret 1185–98 *Chronicle of Melrose*
Eglesbryth 1268 *Holyrood Liber*
- (b) *Egelilbrich* 1164 *Holyrood Liber*
Eiglesbrec 1166 *Holyrood Liber*; *Eggesbrec* Stevenson,
Illustrations of Scottish History
Egelbrech 1190–1200 Roger de Hoveden
Eglesbrich 1247 *Holyrood Liber*
An Eaglais Bhreac Modern Gaelic
- (c) *Varia Capella* 1166, 1240, 1247, 1319 *Holyrood Liber*; 1242 *Pontifical of St Andrews*
Varie Capelle (gen.) 1319 *Holyrood Liber*; 1531 (1534), 1537 *Register of the Great Seal*

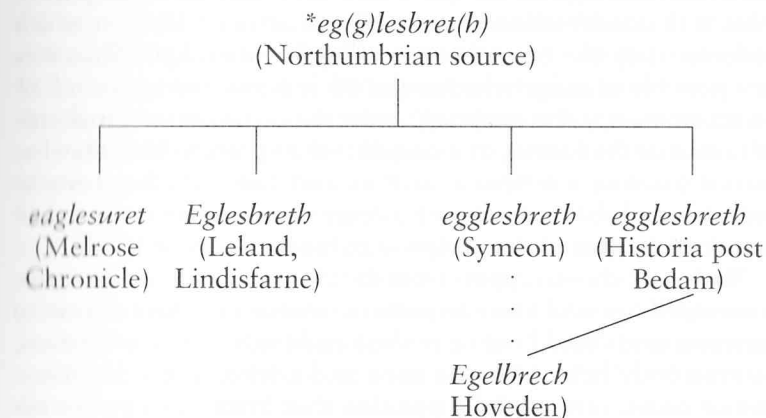
- (d) *la Veire Chapelle* 1301 Bain, *Calendar of Documents*
la Vaire Chapelle 1303–4 Bain, *Calendar of Documents*
la Veyre Chapelle 1304 Bain, *Calendar of Documents*
la Veire Chapelle 1305 Bain, *Calendar of Documents*
- (e) *la Faulkirk* 1298 Bain, *Calendar of Documents*
Faukirk s.a.1298 *Chronicon de Lanercost*; 1391, 1468
Exchequer Rolls; 1511 *Register of the Great Seal*;
c. 1564 Nowell *Map of Scotland*
Faukirk 1391, 1392, 1537, 1632, 1634 *Register of the Great Seal*
Faukirk 1391, 1392 *Register of the Great Seal*
Faukyrk 1531 (1534) *Register of the Great Seal* (twice)
Fauskyrk 1564, Mercator, *Map of British Isles*
Fauskirk 1570 Ortelius, *Map of British Isles*
- (f) *Falkirk* 1458, 1557 (1580), 1580, 1581, 1587, etc.
Register of the Great Seal;
1546 *Holyrood Liber*; 1551, 1591–2 *Exchequer Rolls*;
1594 *Brechin Registrum*

The four spelling variants under (a), as well as Hoveden's *Egelbrech* under (b), occur as part of an annal for 1080 which in more or less identical terms states that '*Quo anno idem rex Willelmus autumnali tempore Rodbertum filium suum Scotiam contra Malcholmum misit. Sed cum pervenisset ad Egglesbreth, nullo confecto negotio reversus, Castellum Novum super flumen Tyne condidit.*' From this entry it is, of course, by no means clear where in Scotland *Egglesbreth* lies, and it is only natural that at first it should have been looked for in the most southern parts of the country. In 1776, Sir David Dalrymple, for instance, equated it with Bridekirk near Annan, regarding *Eggles-* as standing for *Ecclesia* and the whole name for Latin *Ecclesia Bridgidae*, and in his index to the works of Symeon of Durham in 1885, Arnold thinks of a possible identification with Eccles in Berwickshire. Whereas *Egglesbreth* led Sir David Dalrymple to Bridekirk, the reading *Egglesbrech* suggested '*Eggesbrec*, the old name of *Falkirk*' to Chalmers, who in 1807 argued that 'if Robert had penetrated to *Annan*, he must have entered Scotland, from Cumberland, on the west: but, as his irruption was bounded by Falkirk, he must have come down to this well-known town, the scene of so many

conflicts, through Northumberland, whither he certainly returned', to found Newcastle. Chalmers' view has become the generally accepted one, but although we are in agreement with it, too, it was necessary to point out the, at least partly, extra-linguistic nature of the argument.

Although a detailed account of the history of the chronicles involved cannot be part of this discussion, it is however essential to give a brief survey of the relationship of the spellings to each other in order to assess their value and standing as the earliest, and therefore extremely important, forms of our name. The main question which arises in this respect is whether these spellings have come down to us independent of each other or have some kind of connection. The fact that they all occur in practically identical annals referring to the same year (1080) rules out the first alternative or at least makes it very unlikely; what we must determine therefore is the nature of the connection which exists between these five spellings. This in turn depends on the nature of the relationship of the sources. As far as Hoveden is concerned, both the *Historia Regum* ascribed to Symeon of Durham and the so-called *Historia post Bedam* are considered to be among his sources, a supposition supported by the presence of the phrase '*autumnali tempore*', which only occurs in these three versions. For the *Chronicle of Melrose*, the existing version of Symeon, and the *Historia post Bedam*, Anderson claims that the relationship is collateral and that for their northern English and Scottish material they all go back to a Northumbrian source of which no surviving text is known and which probably included a chronicle that ended before the annal for 1130. This would mean that the *egglesbreth* which occurs in that part of the *Historia Regum* for which Symeon himself is thought to have been responsible, the *egglesbreth* of the *Historia post Bedam*, and the *eaglesuret* of the *Melrose Chronicle* derive from the same original spelling, whereas Hoveden's *Egelbrech* derives from the *egglesbreth* of Symeon and the *Historia post Bedam*. Little appears to be known about the exact source of Leland's *Eglesbreth* which is said to have been extracted '*ex libro incerti auctoris de episcopis Lindisfarnensibus*'. It is the same annal but without the Symeon/*Historia post Bedam* addition and is undoubtedly derived from the same source as the Melrose and Symeon passages, although

perhaps closer to the first. The genealogy is therefore to be taken to be something like this:



Consequently, all these entries have to be taken as *one* which is rather important when it comes to the assessment of the final consonant. This is clearly *-t* in the *Melrose Chronicle* and *-th* in Symeon and the *Historia post Bedam*. For the *-th* of the Lindisfarne spelling we have to take Leland's word, for the time being. On the basis of these four independently derived forms it appears reasonable to assume that the Northumbrian source also had *-t(h)*. Curious in this respect is Hoveden's *-ch* but if *-t* and *-c* were similar in the Symeon and *Historia post Bedam* MSS – and our extant manuscripts seem to confirm this – then *-ch* could easily have been misread for a *-th*. In this connection, it is interesting that Leland, according to the 1770 edition of his works, read the Symeon spelling as *Egglesbirch* and copied the Hoveden form as *Egelbereth*, which is at least a measure of the difficulty by which readers of the respective manuscripts were confronted when trying to distinguish between *c* and *t*, or other letters for that matter, since the *eaglesuret* of the *Melrose Chronicle*, if found in isolation, would hardly have allowed even the most daring scholar to amend it to **egglesbret(h)*. With this background in mind, we have to take our starting point to have been a spelling ending in *-bret(h)*. Seeming confirmation of such

a form comes from a much later and completely independent source, a charter in 1268 by Gamline, Bishop of St Andrews, to the Church of Holyrood, listing amongst other possessions '*Ecclesiam de Eglesbryth que hodie varia capella nuncupatur*'. This is in confirmation of an earlier charter of 1240 in which unfortunately the name becomes illegible after *Egl-*. Thus it is not possible to judge whether the *-th* is a misreading for *-ch* or an accurate copy. It is tempting, under the circumstances, to decide in favour of the former, as a singular *-th* appears to be somewhat out of place in a series of charters and bulls which otherwise only show *-ch*, but certainly its existence must be taken into account in any evaluation of the *-th* spellings for the annal of 1080.

With or without support from the Holyrood charter, however, these spellings and their hypothetic source are there for us to interpret and should not be pushed aside lightly by emendation, as everybody before Watson used to do, who, in his discussion of our name, offered the suggestion that Symeon's *Egglesbreth* might be a British form, a proposal which prompted Johnston to add to his earlier derivation as Gaelic *eaglais breac*, the alternative 'or W[elsh] *eglwys brith*', 'speckled church' in the third edition of his dictionary. How serious and acceptable is the notion that a spelling occurring in a late eleventh- or early twelfth-century Northumbrian (monastic) annal might represent a genuine *p*-Celtic British (=Cumbric) place-name in Central Scotland? First of all, as *eglwys* < Latin *ec(c)lesia* is feminine in Welsh, the adjective would be *braith* < *breith* and not *brith*, and also should show soft mutation after a feminine noun, i.e. *fraith*. Presumably a late eleventh-century form would have been something like **egluis breith*. However, as the corresponding mutation is never shown in the Gaelic form of the name (where one would have expected at least the occasional anglicised **vrech*, or the like), it is perhaps not necessary to take the apparent non-lenition of the initial consonant too seriously in this context. Perhaps more difficult to accept is the representation of *-ei-* by *-e-* in *-breth* for *-breith*, although this would seem to have a parallel in *Eden-* < *Eidyn* in the twelfth-century forms of the name Edinburgh; nor is it easy to understand why the alleged Cumbric name should have contained an adjective etymologically less closely related (*brith* < **brikt-*) to Gaelic *breac*, rather than the cognate *brych* (feminine *brech*) < **brikk-*.

In addition to these two arguments, even bearing in mind the great power of survival inherent in place-names, it is not at all plausible that, unless a Strathclyde source with a Strathclyde version of the name was involved, a Northumbrian chronicler of the late eleventh century would retain a pre-Gaelic Cumbric form of the name at a time when Gaelic must have been spoken in the Falkirk area for at least 300 years, at the most conservative estimate. In our opinion, the Northumbrian source which provided the *Chronicle of Melrose*, Symeon of Durham, the *Historia post Bedam*, and the Lindisfarne chronicle quoted by Leland with the spelling **eg(g)lesbreth* was probably a fair copy of either a whole chronicle or, which is more likely, a number of draft annals, including the one for 1080, in which a copyist unfamiliar with the place-name misread a *-c-* in the draft version for *-t-*. We would therefore put a draft annal, perhaps not written much after the year 1080, before the fair annal in the Northumbrian source which all three (or four) chroniclers used, and assume that **eg(g)lesbreth* was a misreading for **eg(g)lesbrech*. This would, of course, not turn it into a Gaelic name but would at least allow us not to attach too much importance to the Northumbrian spelling as an indication of the survival, and therefore previous existence, of a Cumbric name for Falkirk. The isolated *Eglesbryth* in the Holyrood charters could be explained in a similar fashion. This does not mean that we are ruling out the possibility of a pre-Gaelic Cumbric name altogether, but we are not compelled by the spellings ending in *-t* or *-th* to presume Cumbric origin. Although in 1887 Skene considered our name in conjunction with the personal name *Brychan*, making the church of Falkirk 'the chief church' in *Manau Guotodin*, there is no indication in any of the primary sources to substantiate such a claim or to show that the church at Falkirk did exist in the time of the Cumbric-speaking Gododdin, i.e. *circa* AD 600.

Concerning the apparently Gaelic forms of the name, the spelling in the confirmation charter of 1166, by Bishop Richard of St Andrews to the canons at Holyrood, is the most straightforward, for it presents us with an unequivocal *-brec* as the second element. The fact that the editor of the Holyrood charters read *Eigles-* whereas Stevenson has *Eggles-* has no influence on the etymology and only illustrates the difficulties even nineteenth-century and earlier experts encountered when transcribing these

charters. Undoubtedly *Eiglesbrec* (*Egglesbrec*) stands for something like **Eaglais B(h)rec*, which must have been the twelfth-century Gaelic form of our name. The charter spelling is vital when it comes to the interpretation of the respective references to Falkirk in the bulls of Pope Alexander III in 1164 (*Egelilbrich*) and Pope Innocent IV in 1247 (*Eglesbrich*) as both of these, on the surface, show Brythonic rather than Gaelic forms of the adjective 'speckled'. The final *-ch* does not seem to have presented a problem to any other scholar discussing this name, but is in need of some explanation. Everything hinges, of course, on the question as to whether it represents an unvoiced spirant [x] or the homorganic stop [k] in pronunciation. Unfortunately there is nothing in these two bulls to indicate what *ch* normally stands for, but as the names were presumably not taken down from oral dictation but copied from documents which had reached Rome from Scotland previously, it is perhaps not the orthographic habits of the scribes at the Holy See which matter here, but rather the significance of these spellings within a Scottish context. It should, however, be noted that Heriot appears in both bulls as *Herth*, which undoubtedly means a voiceless dental stop [t] (perhaps with strong post-aspiration), and that Bathgate is given as *bathcat* and *Bathketh*, respectively, where both spellings must have the same phonetic value. It is reasonable to assume that like *-th* and *-t-*, Anglo-Norman *-ch* and *-c-* might also be interchangeable in final position, or at least that *-ch* does not indicate a spirant. Then there are, if our previous arguments are acceptable, those two other spellings in *-ch* in addition to those occurring in the bulls, i.e. the **egglesbrech* of the Northumbrian annal and the emended **Eglesbrych* of the charter of 1268 (and its predecessor of 1240). As far as the latter is concerned, the same situation appears to have existed as in the bulls, i.e. both charters have *Herth* and *Bathketh* for Heriot and Bathgate, respectively.

The *Eglesbryth* for *Eglesbrych* (= *Eglesbryc*) sequence gains support from the spellings which are found in the same chartulary for the name Kirkcudbright which, after being mentioned properly as *Kyrkecuthbert* in the twelfth century, is shown as *Kyrcudbryth* and *Kircudbrich* in the fourteenth and finally as *Kyrkcuthbryt* in the sixteenth. For Symeon's version *egglesbreth* = *egglesbrech*, it is significant that in the same annal he has *Malcholmum*, which is rendered by Hoveden and the *Melrose*

Chronicle as *Malcolmum*, and that elsewhere he has *Uchthredum* against Hoveden's *Uchtredeum*. It is therefore not unlikely that his source had *-brec* and not *-brech*, and that the ending *-et* in the *eaglesuret* of the *Melrose Chronicle* is a copy of an earlier *-ec*. There seems consequently little doubt that the spellings in question are various versions and developments of an original final *-c*, or rather a velar voiceless stop [k], which points to a Gaelic *-brec* as the second element in our name.

This leaves the presence of the vowel *-i-* (or *-y-*) in the spellings found in the two bulls and in the charter of 1268, and presumably also that of 1240. It is difficult to think of this as a mere spelling variation, as the full stress would be on this syllable, and one can only assume that this might be a reflection of a dative used as a locative, although Modern Gaelic appears to have standardised the nominative in this particular name.

The Latin versions of Falkirk are invariably *Varia Capella* in the nominative and *Varie Capelle* in the genitive. They all occur in Latin texts, and *Varia Capella* is usually translated as meaning 'the spotted or speckled church'. Fortunately, the existing documentary evidence provides us with a very good insight into the exact usage and meaning of this strange description.

One important pointer in this respect is the observation that, from the very first, *Varia Capella* almost exclusively occurs in the phrase *Eiglesbrec que Varia Capella dicitur* (1166). Sometimes the word *nuncupatur* is used instead of *dicitur* and the charters of 1240 and 1268 even add the word *hodie* 'today' before the Latin name. Only in the charter of 1319, the *Pontifical of St Andrews* (1242), and in the reference in the *Register of the Great Seal* of 1531 does the term appear alone; and only in one instance, the last, is it linked with Faw Kirk (1537 RMS: *apud ecclesiam Varie Capelle alias Fawkirk*).

Obviously the phrase '*Eiglesbrec* which is (now) called *Varia Capella*' implies that a change of name has taken place. It does not mean, as has been alleged, that medieval records use the Latin synonym. As *Varia Capella* in this phrase fills the exact slot normally allotted to the vernacular term in Latin documents of this kind, the conclusion is not that the Gaelic name has been translated into Latin but that *Varia Capella* is the Latin version of the new English translation of the Gaelic name, *Faw Kirk*. It is therefore evidence of the fact that by 1166 English was already

so widely spoken in the area that, in a bilingual situation, the Gaelic place-name could be translated into the incoming language, whereas there was probably very little, if any, English influence in the Falkirk region in 1080. On the evidence of the 1080 annal, the district of Falkirk was still largely monoglot Gaelic in that year or a little later. The peculiar function of the phrase *que (hodie) Varia Capella dicitur* also evidently rules out the theoretical possibility that *Fawkirk*, although not recorded until the medieval period, is really some centuries older and goes back to the time when the Falkirk region was part of English-speaking Northumbria, before the Scots crossed the Forth to the south. After 1268, nobody seems to have used the Gaelic name anymore, and by 1319 *Varia Capella* is probably accepted scribal and ecclesiastic usage for *Faw Kirk*. That this is likely to have been the case is supported by the Norman French form *la Veire Chapelle*, which, with variations, appears in Norman writs of the first decade of the fourteenth century. The Latin term bows out in 1537 when *Fawkirk* is acknowledged to be the (vernacular) alternative.

Without the Latinised evidence we would not have known of the existence of the English name until 1298, when significantly it first appeared with the (French) definite article; and another century goes by before it is quite frequently found in official documents. The first element in *Faukirk*, *Fawkirk* is Middle English *fawe*, *faze* 'variegated, of various colours', which is not unknown in Scottish place-nomenclature, one of the chief examples being a compound with *side*, as in Fallside LAN, Falside ELO, FIF (2), ROX and WLO, Fawside BWK and Fawside KCD. Various forms of the English name are used right into the seventeenth century, including the curious *Fauskyrk*, *Fauskirk*, which only occurs on maps and clearly shows that the adjective *faw(e)* is no longer understood, so that on the analogy of other names it seems to have been taken to be a personal, perhaps a saint's, name.

The last important phase of the history of our name starts in 1458 with the first isolated instance of the spelling *Falkirk*, which from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards dominates the scene, although as late as 1634 it shares the references to the place with *Fawkirk* in one and the same charter. This new spelling must be understood as a result of false analogy because the first element of our name was obviously considered to be in the same category as Scots *ba'* < *ball*, *wa'* < *wall*, *fa'* < *fall*, etc. An

TABLE 1
Early Forms of the Name *Falkirk*

Century	Gaelic	Latin	Norman French	English Faw-, Fau- Fal-	
11	* <i>egglesbreth</i> (= <i>egglesbrec</i>) (1080)				
12	<i>egglesbreth</i> (?) <i>Eglesbreth</i> <i>Egglesbrec</i> <i>Egelilbrich</i> <i>Eglesbrich</i> <i>eaglesuret</i>	<i>Varia Capella</i> (1166)			
13	<i>Eglesbryth</i> (1298)	<i>Varia Capella</i>		(<i>la</i>) <i>Faukirk</i> (1298)	
14		<i>Varia Capella</i> <i>Varie Capelle</i>	<i>la Veire</i> <i>Chapelle</i> etc. (1301-1305)	<i>Faukirk</i> <i>Faukirk</i> <i>Faukirc</i> (1391)	
15				<i>Faukirk</i>	<i>Falkirk</i> (1458)
16		<i>Varie Capelle</i> (1531, 1537)		<i>Faukirk</i> <i>Faukirk</i> <i>Faukyrk</i> <i>Fauskirk</i> <i>Fauskyrk</i>	<i>Falkirk</i> (1546, etc.)
17				<i>Faukirk</i> (1622, 1634)	<i>Falkirk</i>
18					<i>Falkirk</i>

unhistorical *-l-* was therefore introduced into the 'standard', non-dialect spelling and has remained there ever since. In its turn it has produced the modern pronunciation-spelling [fɒlkɜrk] which is now used by everybody except the inhabitants of the town itself who still call it Fawkirk [fɔ: kɜrk]. How long they will be immune to the influence of the spelling is another question.

The name *Falkirk* can therefore demonstrably be shown to have started out as a Gaelic **Eaglais B(h)rec* before 1080 (with a reasonable possibility of an earlier Cumbric name) and to have been translated into English by 1166, although there is initially only indirect evidence for this in the Latin *Varia Capella* and the Norman French *la Veire Chapelle*. This new English name is *Faw Kirk*, which like the Gaelic and the Latin names means '(the) speckled church', a meaning which must have been derived from the peculiar aspect of the church, perhaps through the use of two kinds of stone occurring in the same quarry, unless a painted wooden church or one built in wood and stone can be envisaged. By false analogy, a new spelling *Falkirk* is produced from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards which in turn has given rise to a new pronunciation [fɒlkɜrk] although this is seldom used in *Falkirk* itself. The Gaelic name has survived as *An Eaglais Bhreac*, but because of the modern English spelling and pronunciation the connection between *Breac* and *Fal-* is now obscured and no longer immediately discernible.

In summary, the table on p. 19 may help us to understand the chronological sequence of the documentary evidence reflecting the development just described.

Falkirk is an exceptional name, and its chronological depth and linguistic variety are not paralleled by many other names on the Scottish map. For this reason it is both a good and bad example of the kind of detective story involved in the full documentation and analysis of early written evidence; good, because it does demonstrate the potential complexity stemming from an operation in the face of a large variety of spellings involving a number of languages – bad, because for most Scottish place-names the documentary evidence is so much more limited, both chronologically and linguistically. These limitations sometimes facilitate the investigation of a name with regard to its linguistic origin and meaning, especially when the elements in question are fairly straightforward, but more often than not they lead to a

frustrating experience in this respect because the paucity of suitable spellings will not permit anything like a fully documented historical outline. Nevertheless, whether complex or simple, whether straightforward or obscure, the most comprehensive list of early spellings possible under the circumstances must be compiled before even a tentative pronouncement can be made concerning the etymology of a name. Such a list can also have a second function which, as in the case of *Falkirk*, can allow us at least to speculate on the type of language spoken in a given area at a given time, while also permitting us to establish a relative, if not an absolute, linguistic stratification; and that is, after all, one of the chief aims of this book.