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

**ABSTRACT**

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

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

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

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

## A English Personal Naming: In the Shadow of the Conquest

In many ways, the historiography of English personal naming epitomises the divide caused by the events of 1066. One clear and uncontested fact is that, during the medieval period, English

personal naming underwent a number of profound changes which fundamentally transformed the way in which people chose and used personal names.

It is widely agreed that, in the early ninth century, the people of England adhered to traditional Germanic principles of name-giving. This was a system common to most of western Europe – or at least those areas where Germanic kingdoms had come to dominate in the wake of the fall of Rome in the fifth century. Aside from its Celtic and Muslim edges, where other naming systems dominated, the evidence we have suggests that people across most of western Europe adhered to this system, and had done so from at least the seventh century. The system itself was a feature inherited from Common West Germanic, yet it came to prevail even in areas where Germanic languages never replaced Latin dialects.[8] In Anglo-Saxon England, which was Germanic linguistically, people at all levels of society overwhelmingly followed the rules of this system when naming their children.

The main features of this system ensured that, in general, each individual had a single name – with no surname – and names were predominantly created by combining two recognisable name elements, or 'themes', to produce 'dithematic' or 'compounded' names.[9] There was a finite number of themes, but they could be combined in a multitude of ways, with some being used only at the start of names, like *Ead-* and *Cuth-*; some only at the end, like *-ric* and *-weard*; and others which could be used either at the start or the end, such as *Beorht-/-beorht* and *Wulf-/-wulf*. This flexibility allowed a huge number of names to be formed. In essence, a name was created for, rather than given to, each person. As a result, there was very little repetition of names and any two people within a community or family would be unlikely to share the same name.[10]

The overall picture of this system is of one which allowed for, and for the most part succeeded in, the creation of a unique name for each individual member of a community by combining

two name themes taken from the vocabulary of Old English. In contrast, by the fourteenth century, the way in which the people of England used personal names had been fundamentally transformed. One immediately recognisable and inescapable change that took place was the almost complete transformation of the linguistic origin of the English name stock. Whereas, in 850, the vast majority of English names were of Old English origin, by 1350, with a few rare exceptions, these names had disappeared, replaced by names of continental origin – those introduced into England following the Norman Conquest, such as *William*, *Richard* and *Robert* – and 'Christian' names – those of biblical personages or popular saints, such as *Thomas*, *John* and *Adam*.[11] The few Old English names that did survive into the later medieval period were also, usually, names associated with popular saints, such as *Edward* and *Edmund*.[12] Other than that, the only remnants we see of traditional Old English names are those which became patronymic surnames in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as *Lewin*, from *Leofwine*, *Goodwin*, from *Godwine*, and *Aldred*, from *Ealdred*.[13]

This transformation in naming vocabulary seems to have gone hand in hand with an evolution in the way personal names were used. By the fourteenth century, the majority of the English population shared a relatively small number of common monothematic, or uncompounded, personal names.[14] Not only would most people have shared their name with any number of members of their own family, but they would also have shared it with numerous other people in their immediate vicinity. People passed down family names from father to son, from mother to daughter, and shared names with their friends and neighbours. As a result, a small number of popular names came to dominate the name stock.

As with many of the changes that occurred in English society at this time, the most prominent explanation given for this transformation is the Norman Conquest, and the replacement of the Anglo-Saxon ruling elite with a new French-speaking one, drawn from those areas of northern

France which helped turn William from a Bastard into a Conqueror: predominantly Normandy, Brittany, Picardy and Flanders. Robert Bartlett has stated that:

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

Similarly, Ann Williams suggests that:

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

Perhaps the most significant contribution to the study of English naming during this period has been the work of the eminent onomast and anthroponymist, Cecily Clark. Clark's work on names was ground-breaking, and her efforts to use personal naming as a means to discover more about the social attitudes of medieval people and the social composition of the communities they lived in have been, to a large extent, the inspiration behind the research presented in this paper.[17] Much of Clark's work was done with the aim of assessing the impact of the Norman Conquest on the names of the people of England and, through their names, the impact on the lives of English people. In doing so, she developed a set of working principles that she could apply in a range of historical contexts to ensure her studies yielded consistent results. These are known as 'Clark's First Three Laws of Applied Anthroponymics', after a paper given under this name in 1979.[18] These laws state that:

> In any homogenous community, naming-behaviour will remain constant, except when disturbed by outside influence…In any community previously characterised by uniform

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

Clark described her first law as 'fundamental' – yet it is also problematic.[20] The main premise of this law is that naming behaviour will remain constant within any community unless there is outside influence. By extension, and as her second and third laws explain, Clark's hypothesis is that measuring the impact of naming changes on different locations can determine the strength of impact of outside influence on a naming system. However, we should remember that the naming system in all the areas of western Europe where Germanic naming had been predominant did change; and it changed along similar lines, from one of unique, dithematic names, to one where common, uncompounded names were shared by the majority of the population. England apart, these changes occurred without any obvious outside influence, and were instead brought about through internal societal changes. What made England so different that only conquest and settlement by a foreign neighbour could cause its naming system to change? The answer may lie in the fact that Clark's studies, and most other studies of English naming, focus largely on naming vocabulary. Clark herself stresses that the point of comparison should be naming behaviour, not vocabulary. But her studies predominantly look at the impact of new naming vocabulary on the naming stock, be it Scandinavian or Norman, not the naming system itself.[21]

Moreover, Clark's studies actually present a far more nuanced picture than her laws seem to allow. Indeed, she noted that 'the shift away from single idionyms…[and] reliance not merely on a finite stock of set forms but largely on a very few disproportionately favoured ones' seems to have arisen spontaneously across most of western Europe, even in late eleventh-century England.[22] Yet the impact of Clark's work is such that her laws have often been taken as

indisputable – repeated as statements of fact, despite her own suggestion that 'although, to me, these "Laws" seem wholly consonant with the findings from my studies so far, I shall scarcely be surprised if they are called into question or even comprehensively refuted'.[23] In the light of Clark's willingness for her laws to be questioned, and her own observations on pre-Conquest concentration of naming patterns, this paper will attempt to re-evaluate the validity of her laws in relation to the changes that took place to the pre-Conquest English naming system, specifically in regard to the concentration of the name stock.

## A A matter of taste?

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

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

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

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

The naming transformation that took place in England has never been looked at as part of the same process. Instead, it has almost exclusively been seen as due to the influence of the French speaking ruling elite. In *Naming the people of England*, David Postles attempts to 'move away from a unifying narrative, and to restore to the elucidation of change the complexity which is perceptible'. However, he defines the starting point of his study as 1100, this being the end of the first generation after the events of 1066.[32] In doing so he explicitly divorces the Old English past from everything that came later. Any changes and variations are measured against a post-Conquest benchmark, and any changes that had begun beforehand largely ignored.

This insistence on separating the history of Old English naming from what came after perpetuates the historiographical divide that presents 'Anglo-Saxons' as being distinct from their post-Conquest 'English' counterparts and, as a result, we have missed an opportunity to learn more about the nature of medieval English society. In order to understand fully the changes that took place to English personal naming, we need to examine the naming system over a much wider period than has been done until now, incorporating, where possible, data from pre-Conquest sources. To begin this process, the rest of this paper will examine three corpora of names from English sources created between the eighth and twelfth centuries in an attempt to determine whether any comparable changes in the naming system had taken place in England prior to the application of the Norman Yoke. In each case, I will first examine whether there has

been any discernible condensation of the name stock (whether the number of available names has shrunk), or any concentration (whether the names have become less easily shared). I will also attempt a similar analysis of the component name themes of the dithematic names in the corpus.

## A The Durham *Liber Vitae*

The first of these comes from the Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae*, a confraternity book originating from Northumbria in the ninth century.[33] The story of the life of the book is a long and complicated one in its own right. The first entries to the manuscript were made sometime in the first half of the ninth century – sometime in the 830s or 840s – at either the monastery of Lindisfarne or that of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. However, theses entries are likely to have been copied from earlier registers of names collected at some point in the preceding century at one or both of these foundations, and it is that likely the majority of names within the Original Core were borne by people who lived in Northumbria during the 150 year period between c.690 and c.840.[34] The book then went through a period of relative disuse, with just twenty-four names added between c.840 and c.1080 – primarily names of kings and prominent visitors to the monastery. As such, this study focuses solely on the Original Core. This contains 3,120 names, including over 2,600 names of priests, monks and other ranks of minor clerics. It is unlikely that all of these could have been members of the loftiest reaches of the ninth-century Northumbrian elite – the relative sparsity of the population must preclude this. So, while we are certainly not looking at a full cross-section of early Anglo-Saxon society, it is likely that the names of the Durham *Liber Vitae* provide us with a glimpse of people somewhat further down the social scale than most written sources of the period allow. This supports, at least to some extent, Patrick Geary's suggestion that by studying personal names we are able to look more closely at the lives of ordinary people, not just the kings and aristocrats.[35]

To carry out a meaningful and achievable statistical analysis for the purposes of this paper, it has been necessary to select appropriate names to study. The scarcity of female names means it is

only possible to focus male names. Furthermore, to ensure that the sample is as representative as possible of the people living in the area at the time, the lists of kings, abbots and bishops have been discounted – as have names likely to refer to people who lived prior to c.690 or in areas further afield. The lists that have been chosen, therefore, are those of the mid- to lower ranked clergy associated with the monastery: the *Nomina praesbytorum*, *Nomina diaconorum*, *Nomina clericorum* and *Nomina monachorum*.[36] This leaves a corpus for the purposes of this study which amounts to 2,613 individuals.

One thing that is immediately striking about the names of the Original Core is the sheer number of personal names used to denote them – a total of 712. Despite the large number of people in the corpus, the Northumbrian naming system was capable of producing enough names to ensure that name repetition remained very low, suggesting that the original function of the dithematic naming system – to produce names for their bearers that were as close to unique as possible – was being fulfilled. This is something that is also borne out when examining the concentration of the name stock. The most commonly borne name, *Eadwulf*, occurs only fifty-one times in the corpus – comprising less than two percent of the total. This means that not a single name from the Original Core qualifies as being, in the terminology of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, a 'dominant name': one that is borne by more than two percent of the individuals in the corpus.[37] This being the case, it is no surprise that the proportion of individuals denoted by the six most popular names is also very low, at just nine percent.

**[Table 1. Top six names in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840]**

An analysis of the themes used in the compound names of the Original Core confirms two things: firstly that the number of name themes in use was very high, and also that these themes were highly productive. In total there are one-hundred and seventy-four themes in use, with one-hundred and forty-two of these used as protothemes (the first part of the name) and fifty-

three as deuterothemes (the final part of the name). The flexibility allowed by the dithematic system sees them combined to create 537 distinct compound name forms which refer to some 2,293 people. It is also worth noting that twenty-one themes are used as both first and second themes, showing that using name elements interchangeably in either position was relatively common. This is often seen as an important feature of Germanic naming systems – as noted by both Henry Woolf and Régine Le Jan.[38] In the Original Core, some of the most common themes are employed as both first and second elements. For example, *Beorht-/-beorht* appears in the names of 123 people as a prototheme and in the names of 379 people as as a deuterotheme. Similarly, *Frið-/-frið*, which appears one-hundred and ninety times as a second element also appears thirty-two times as a first element, and *Wulf-/-wulf* is used as a prototheme fifty-eight times and as a deuterotheme three hundred and fifty-nine times. So, while these themes were more commonly used as second elements (in part due to the smaller number of available deuterothemes), their use as first elements was clearly not out of the ordinary.

An examination of the distribution of name themes similarly demonstrates the tendency towards the creation of unique names. They show a relatively low degree of concentration, despite the large number of individuals in the corpus. The most popular first theme, *Ead-*, accounts for just nine percent of the all protothemes in the corpus, with *Ean-* in second place on six percent and *Beorht-* in third, accounting for five percent. In total, the top six protothemes combined account for thirty-four percent of the total. In contrast, the most common second element, *-beorht*, appears in seventeen percent of all dithematic names. This is closely followed by *-wulf* on sixteen percent and *-wine* on thirteen percent. In total, the six most popular deuterothemes appear in sixty-seven percent of dithematic names. This is a marked disparity, with the second elements being almost twice as concentrated than first elements, suggesting that a great deal of the variety in naming was achieved through variation of protothemes. Yet this proves that a relatively high concentration of deuterothemes did not restrict the number of names created.

**[Table 2. Concentration of name themes in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840]**

In fact, these figures suggest that the naming system in use in the names of the Original Core of the Durham *Liber Vitae* was very much what we would from the traditional Old English dithematic naming system, 'the engine which generated a constant supply of new names' which was 'geared towards the production of a large number of distinct names'.[39]

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

The second corpus of names comes from another *liber vitae*, that of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, produced some two hundred or so years later in 1031.[40] The book honours Cnut and his Queen Emma with a magnificent illustrated frontispiece and lists hundreds of notable persons, benefactors of the abbey, as well as monks and lay brothers of the communities at Winchester and a number of other related religious houses, including at Abingdon, Ely and Romsey.[41] The names that have been selected are those which refer to men who can be identified with reasonably certainty as being part of the community of Winchester and its surrounding area in the 80 years or so prior to the creation of the book in 1031. The resulting corpus of names consists of 458 individuals, all of whom lived in or around Winchester between c.950 and 1031 – predominantly monks of Winchester and benefactors from the surrounding community.

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

Minster corpus. There are just eighty-one of these, accounting for forty-nine percent of all name forms and just eighteen percent of the individuals in the corpus. This is considerably lower than in the Durham corpus, where the rare names accounted for some seventy-three percent of names and twenty-nine percent of people.[42] So, while there were, potentially, more names to go round in Winchester, the proportion of people with truly rare names is actually lower than in Northumbria two centuries earlier.

**[Table 3. Top six names in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031]**

The seemingly infinite capacity of the naming system to create unique names does not appear to be present to quite the same extent – or at least it is not being exploited to the same degree. Indeed, looking at concentration of the name stock, we start to see a number of the recognisably popular late Anglo-Saxon names standing out. Indeed, the top five names, *Ælfric*, *Leofwine*, *Ælfsige*, *Leofric* and *Ælfwine*, are all names that Ekwall noted as being common in post-Conquest London.[43] Significantly, these popular names represent a far greater proportion of the population than their counterparts in the Durham *Liber Vitae*. The top name, *Ælfric*, appears twenty-one times in the New Minster corpus and accounts for almost five percent of the population. In total, the top six names account for nineteen percent of individuals in the corpus. In addition, there are eight 'dominant' names. The New Minster corpus, therefore, sees the appearance of a number of popular, or dominant names – a phenomenon not seen in the Durham corpus. This is despite the very high number of possible names from which to choose.

Conversely, while there is a proportionally larger stock of names in the New Minster corpus, the stock of name themes seems to be dramatically smaller. The 414 individuals bearing dithematic names incorporate just fifty-nine name themes. The most dramatic difference is in the number of primary elements, of which there are only thirty, while the number of secondary elements is relatively unchanged, at 31. It is also notable how few themes appear as both first and second

elements – just four: *Beorht-/-beorht*, *Sige-/-sige*, *Wig-/-wig* and *Wulf-/-wulf*. Only one of these, *Wulf-/-wulf*, appears to be interchangeable to any degree, appearing forty-seven times as a prototheme and nine times and deuterotheme. *Beorht-/-beorht* is almost exclusively a prototheme, appearing thirty-nine times in first position and just three times in second. Conversely, *Sige-/-sige* and *Wig-/-wig* are almost exclusively deuterothemes, appearing fifty-three and eighteen times respectively in second position, and just once each as primary elements. The relatively small number of name themes, and their lack of interchangeability, seem to show a naming system that is somewhat less flexible than that of the Durham corpus.

**[Table 4. Concentration of name themes in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031]**

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

Overall, therefore, the names of the New Minster *Liber Vitae* seem to show a naming system where there is a far greater degree of homogeneity. Whether by conscious choice, or linguistic accident, both the names and the themes which are used to create them have become increasingly concentrated. Such differences at this point in time cannot convincingly be ascribed to any outside influence. Whether they reflect changes between time periods, or differences

between regions, however, is difficult to say on the basis of this material. An analysis of a later eleventh-century source may help determine whether this is an anomaly or a trend.

## A The Burgesses of Colchester, Little Domesday

One of the best sources we have to examine naming practices around the time of the Conquest comes from Domesday Book. Compiled in 1086, the Great Survey was largely a record of land and landholders, rather than the people living on it. It details what was on the land, who held it at the time of King Edward, and who held it two decades later in the time of the Conqueror. As such, while it holds a huge number of names, it does not, in general, give us the opportunity to look at the naming system in any one town, village or region. However, there is one community where this is possible – at least to some extent. While the majority of Domesday data is contained in condensed form within Great Domesday, the data from the economically advanced and socially complex areas of East Anglia and Essex is provided in less condensed form in a smaller volume, Little Domesday.[44] Amongst this data appears an uncharacteristically detailed list of the burgesses of Colchester.[45] This provides us with the names of some 274 eleventh-century Colchesterians.[46]

The list is significant, in part, because of the date it was made. Names in Anglo-Norman England can only be very loosely equated with the ethnic origin of the bearer. So swiftly did some English people adopt continental names that, even two generations following 1066, a person bearing a French name is almost as likely to be a native Englishman as a Norman settler. However, for an individual to be a home-owning burgess of Colchester in 1086, the likelihood is that they would have been born, and therefore named, either before 1066, or very shortly after. As such, we can safely assume that the influence of Norman incomers would have be minimal, and individuals bearing continental names would most likely be of continental origin. This being the case, in studying the names in the list, we can also safely assume that we are examining pre-Conquest name choices. Unlike the previous two sources, the selection of names to include in

the sample is much more simple. The only names not included are those of the twenty-three women who appear in the list, leaving two-hundred and fifty-one male burgesses in the corpus to be studied.

The Colchester list is a notably smaller sample than those of the *libri vitae* of Durham and New Minster, although still more than adequate to give a useful picture of the naming system. One inevitable result, however, is that there is a smaller number of names. There are one-hundred and twelve different names held by the two-hundred and fifty-one people listed – that is 2.1 individuals per name. This means the stock of names is proportionally larger than in the previous two corpora, although the smaller sample size in this case probably has a part to play in this. It is also misleading, to some extent, due to the relatively high number of individuals recorded solely by original bynames – nicknames coined for individuals during their lifetime, rather than given at birth. These include, for example, *Pecoc* (meaning 'peacock'), *Sprot* (meaning 'sprout' or 'twig') and *Stotinc* (meaning 'little gnat'). There are eighteen of these, accounting for twenty-one people – eight per cent of the total. Discounting these from the sample increases the condensation of the stock to 2.4 individuals per name, which, although higher, is still proportionally less condensed than the previous two samples.

While there is no shrinkage in the number of names available, there seems to be a significant shift in the way the available names are distributed amongst the population. The top name accounts for just over five percent of the individuals in the corpus, only slightly higher than its equivalent in the New Minster corpus.[47] However, there are three names which jointly sit in first place of the hit parade, with *Leofwine*, *Wulfric* and *Wulfwine* all appearing thirteen times, and a further two names which appear twelve times apiece, *Ælfric* and *Godwine*. In total, the top six names account for seventy-two individuals – twenty-nine percent of the total, some ten percent higher than in the New Minster corpus. It seems that there are an increasing number of people bearing common names, something which is supported by the fact that there are nine dominant

names in the sample. Furthermore, if we discount the original bynames from the sample, along with those names which can be reasonably assumed to be those of new arrivals from the Continent, the proportion of the population denominated by the top six names rises to thirty-two percent.

**[Table 5. Top six names in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086]**

The concentration of names is mirrored in the name themes which form them. 193 of the 251 people listed bear names which are dithematic in their original formation. This equates to seventy-seven percent of the total – somewhat lower than the *libri vitae* of New Minster (ninety percent) and Durham (eighty-eight percent). Although, again, this may partly be influenced by the number of bynames.[48] The total number of themes, forty-five, is even lower than in the New Minster corpus. Twenty-seven of these are used as protothemes and just twenty-four are used as deuterothemes. Again, just five themes are used as both proto- and deuterothemes: *Wulf-*, *Mann-*, *Sige-*, *Beorht-* and *Wine-*. However, in practice, there appears to be very little degree of interchangeability, with *Sige-* and *Wine-* appearing just once each as protothemes, and *Wulf-* and *Beorht-* appearing just once each as deuterothemes. *Beorht-* and *Sige-* are, in fact, both used infrequently in either position, appearing just four and five times respectively. *Mann-* is the only theme which appears to have any real level of interchangeability, appearing twelve times as a prototheme and four times as a deuterotheme – although even this is relatively rare. This suggests that there is a greater degree of conventionality in the way names and name themes are used – and potentially shows the ability, or will, to create names by combining themes in imaginative ways was being lost, and replaced with a more rigid system where the position of themes within a name was inflexible, or where names were no longer being 'created' at all.

This conventionality can also be seen in the way name themes are concentrated around a small number of very popular choices. The most common prototheme, *Wulf-* appears thirty-nine

times, accounting for twenty percent of all first elements, while the top six protothemes combined account for seventy-three percent of the total. The concentration within the deuterothemes is even more marked, with *Wine-* alone accounting for thirty-five percent of all second elements, and the top six deuterothemes appearing in eighty-one percent of all names. In fact, the deuterothemes are almost exclusively concentrated around three incredibly popular themes: *Wine-*, *Ric-* and *Stan*, which between them account for sixty-nine percent of the total. Even *Weard-*, which is the fourth most popular second element, appears just nine times, less than five percent of the total. Furthermore, *-ing*, which appears seven times as secondary element (joint fifth overall), is technically a diminutive suffix, used in shortened forms, rather than a name theme in its own right. Whether at this date names in *-ing* can be accurately be assumed to be short forms or patronyms is a matter for debate, and it could be argued that they are individual names in their own right.[49] In either case, it suggests an even greater concentration around a few increasingly common name forms.

**[Table 6. Concentration of name themes in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086]**

## A An unchanged dithematic system?

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

suggest that the influx of French names following the Conquest – at least in the short term – actually reduced naming concentration, and not increased it as has been traditionally assumed, due to the addition to the name stock of names of continental origin.

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

The Colchester list has previously been studied by John Insley and, while his study is predominantly a study of the naming vocabulary, he nevertheless notes that the Old English dithematic system was still 'largely intact albeit in a process of strong concentration'.[50] Insley, therefore, acknowledges the increased level of concentration, but suggests that this still occurs within the traditional dithematic system. It is a view echoed by both Postles and Clark when they speak of the late-eleventh century naming system in general. Clark stated that, 'among the mass of the population, the name system of c.1100 was still virtually the classic Late Old English one'.[51] And Postles agrees with 'Clark's correct identification' that late Old English names 'were predominantly dithematic', even though many 'displayed marked conventionality'.[52] Indeed, Insley notes of the Colchester list that 'in keeping with the general tendency of the late OE period, the number of different first elements is restricted'.[53] However, as has been shown here, the number of first elements in the Colchester list is little different to that of the names in the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, from several generations earlier. Indeed, it is actually the secondary themes which show the most noticeable shrinkage. Most importantly, despite the reduced number of themes in use, the number of names within the corpus is not reduced. In fact, there are still enough names and name themes to preserve name uniqueness comfortably, should it be desired – yet the choices people made seem to suggest no such desire. In this aspect, the pattern is very similar to that of naming patterns on the Continent, as explained in the studies of *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*.[54] While there has been no appreciable erosion of the stock of names, there has been significant concentration around a small number of popular names.

The personal naming system of Colchester at the time of the Conquest was, therefore very different to that of ninth-century Northumbria, and even tenth-century Winchester. People were not selecting and combining themes in the aim of preserving name uniqueness. Instead, names had begun to display a far greater degree of homogeneity. It is certainly possible that name repetition occurred coincidentally, purely as a result of increasing theme popularity. But it is more likely that what we see in Colchester is evidence that the naming system of England was undergoing the same process of transformation as that of continental Europe, and at more or less the same time. Rather than choosing individual naming themes in order to create unique names, people were making naming choices that were beginning to coalesce around a few popular names – most likely repeated in their entirety as indivisible names, rather than dithematic constructions. In reality, it is unlikely that the people of England, or anywhere in Europe, changed from one system to another overnight. Instead, it is probable that the transition happened over a period of time, with people gradually discarding the old method in favour of the new. Furthermore, the process behind how this concentration occurred could be seen, to a certain degree, as irrelevant. The end result would clearly have been a society, and communities, where a greater number of people shared a smaller number of names, with name repetition being more common. This is difficult to reconcile with the often stated view that the Norman Conquest was the primary cause of the disappearance of the Old English dithematic naming system.

## A Repositioning English naming in a European context

Without digressing too far into counterfactuals, the evidence discussed in this article means it is unlikely that, were it not for the events of 1066, the people of England would have carried on creating dithematic names for their children. Rather, as elsewhere in Europe, these originally dithematic names would have mutated into essentially indivisible uncompounded forms passed on and copied in their entirety – a process I hope to have shown was already well underway by

the time of the Conquest. The changes that took place in England were therefore simply part of a Europe-wide transformation. And it stands to reason that a Europe-wide transformation should have Europe-wide causes. As such, should we be able to find these common causes, we would surely be able to shed new light on the nature of the wider social, cultural and economic changes that were taking place in England at the time, and how they related to the European transformation. Clearly, more studies of this kind are needed to determine the precise nature and pace of change that took place. Such studies would need to incorporate more varied types of communities over a more extended time period, as well as include bynames and surnames.[55] Most importantly, they would need to facilitate comparison with similar studies from across continental Europe, rather than looking at English naming in isolation. As Chris Wickham has suggested, without comparison across these boundaries, we create 'a Europe – a world – of islands, with no relationship to each other, in each of which not only are the patterns of social change wholly distinct, but so even are the questions historians ask'.[56]

The results of wide-ranging study into English personal naming would add to the growing body of work re-evaluating the long-term impact of the Norman Conquest on English society. The efforts of scholars such as Ann Williams, Christopher Loveluck, John Blair and Christopher Dyer have shown that the traditional picture of a violent break in all aspects of English life is far from accurate.[57] Instead their work has revealed that change was much more gradual than had previously been suggested and, in many cases, had begun well before William's fleet landed at Pevensey. They present a view of English social, economic and religious history as one where change, while considerable and profound, was not necessarily swift nor violent, and one in which Anglo-Saxon England was not as different from the rest of western Europe as it is often presented. A new study of English names could potentially place the naming system in this category, as well as help illuminate the processes behind these broader societal changes.

**NOTES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Common West Germanic is the linguistic ancestor of the modern Germanic languages of English, Dutch, German, Frisian and Low German. It is distinct from the northern branch of Germanic languages which includes Danish, Swedish and Norwegian. See C. Clark, 'Onomastics' in R. Hogg (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume I: The Beginnings to 1066* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 452-87, here pp. 456-9; also R. Coates, 'Names' in R. Hogg and D. Denison (eds), *A History of the English Language* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 312-351 (see p. 319). For more on the grammar of Old English names in general, see Fran Colman's excellent new work *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England: The Linguistics and Culture of the Old English Onomasticon* (Oxford, 2014).

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

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

11. This is a change documented by many historians, philologists and onomasts, including: C. Clark, 'Onomastics' in N. Blake (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume II 1066-1476* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 542-606 (see pp. 551-4), D. Postles, *Naming the People of England, c. 1100-1350* (Newcastle, 2006), p. 49 and R. Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 538-540. Names of Scandinavian origin also had a significant impact on much of England before the Conquest, so much so that in some parts of England it would be more accurate to talk about an Anglo-Scandinavian name stock, rather than an Old English one. The majority of Anglo-Scandinavian names disappear after the Conquest, along with Old English names.

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

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

14. I use the terms 'monothematic' and 'uncompounded' here to refer to names which are not consciously created by the combination of two recognisable name themes, although many of these will have been dithematic in their original morphology.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23. Clark, 'Clark's First Three Laws', p. 77.

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

25. Postles, Naming the People of England, p. 49.

26. Postles, Naming the People of England, p. 66.

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

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

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

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

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

32. Postles, Naming the People of England, p. 7.

33. London, British Library, Cotton MS Domitian A VII. This is now available in a comprehensive edition including codicological, linguistic and prosopographical commentaries as well as a digital facsimile: D. and L. Rollason (eds), *Durham Liber Vitae: London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.VII: edition and digital facsimile with introduction, codicological, prosopographical and linguistic commentary, and indexes* (London, 2007). The 'Original Core' comprises fols 15r to 47v.

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

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

36. It is probable that a significant number were based in the monastic houses of Lindisfarne and Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, although Andrew Wareham suggests, because of the exceptionally high number of entries, they are likely to include names of monks and priests from associated churches and monasteries within Northumbria, and potentially even further afield. Nevertheless, it seems fair to assume that the majority will have hailed from Northumbrian communities. As such, these four lists of clergymen provide us with the best opportunity of analysing the naming system of Northumbria in the eight and ninth centuries. See A. Wareham, 'The *Ordines* of the Original Core' in Rollason and Rollason (eds.), *Durham Liber Vitae*, vol. III, pp. 7-12.

37. For example, see Barthélemy, 'Vendômois: Le système anthroponymique', p. 51.

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

39. Coates, 'Names', p. 319.

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

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

42. In the New Minster corpus only hapax-legomena are considered to be rare names, whereas in the Durham corpus all names borne by three individuals or fewer are considered to be rare. One individual in this corpus accounts for 0.22 percent of the population, compared to 0.04 in the Durham corpus.

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

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

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

46. The full list of 281 names contains 20 female names which, for the purposes of the statistical analysis which follows, will be removed from the corpus. Unfortunately, a similar study of these female names does not produce useful results due to the small size of the sample.

47. The exact figures are 5.18 percent for the top name in the Colchester list, compared to 4.57 percent in the New Minster corpus.

48. The names with the hypocoristic suffix *-ing* are included in this sample, of which there are seven. These are not strictly dithematic names, but have been included for the purposes of this analysis.

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

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

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

52. Postles, Naming the People of England, p. 13.

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

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

55. A study of kind will be completed by this author in 2016. It will map the pace and nature of the transformation of English personal naming over the period 850 to 1350, as well as attempt to explain the causes behind this process.

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

57. See Williams. The World Before Domesday; Blair, The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society, Early Medieval Surrey, Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire; Dyer, Making a Living in the Middle Age; Loveluck, Northwest Europe.

**Table 1. Top six names in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840**

| | Theme | Frequency | Proportion of total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | *Eadwulf* | 51 | 1.95% |
| **2** | *Eadbeorht* | 45 | 1.72% |
| **3** | *Ealdwulf* | 39 | 1.49% |
| **4** | *Hygbeorht* | 39 | 1.49% |
| **5** | *Eanwulf* | 36 | 1.38% |
| **6** | *Ælbeorht* | 29 | 1.11% |
| | **Total** | **239** | **9.15%** |

**Table 2. Concentration of name themes in the *Durham Liber Vitae* c.690 – c.840**

| | Protothemes | | Deuterothemes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Theme** | **Frequency %** | **Theme** | **Frequency %** |
| **1** | *Ead-* | 9.29 | **1** *-beorht* | 16.52 |
| **2** | *Ean-* | 6.02 | **2** *-wulf* | 15.65 |
| **3** | *Beorht-* | 5.36 | **3** *-wine* | 13.16 |
| **4** | *Cuð-* | 4.49 | **4** *-frið* | 8.28 |
| **5** | *Cyne-* | 4.36 | **5** *-ræd* | 7.32 |
| **6** | *Eald-* | 4.36 | **6** *-weald* | 6.36 |
| | **Total** | **33.87** | **Total** | **67.31** |

**Table 3. Top six names in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031**

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

**Table 4. Concentration of name themes in the *New Minster Liber Vitae* c.930 – 1031**

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

**Table 5. Top six names in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086**

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

**Table 6. Concentration of name themes in the list of Burgesses of Colchester (LD) 1086**

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

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