

## Cecily Clark: Selected Writings.

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Cecily Clark died in March 1992, at the age of 65, having spent some 40 years working on early medieval English and its historical, social and textual context. Apart from her important edition of *The Peterborough Chronicle, 1070-1154* (Oxford, 1958, 1970), nearly all her contributions to knowledge took the form of articles in periodicals or chapters in books edited by others. Now, a new book has been published which will allow consultation of her most substantial papers in a convenient form. This has been edited by Peter Jackson under the title *Words, Names and History: Selected Writings of Cecily Clark* (Cambridge, 1995). Twenty-two items are included, together with a complete bibliography of Miss Clark's publications, a personal memoir by the late Prof. Peter Clemoes, and an introduction by Peter Jackson who has also compiled very full indexes of personal and place-names, of words and phrases, and of manuscripts. These indexes reflect the north-west European and medieval bias of Miss Clark's interests and contain references to many Old English, Middle English, Old French, Continental Germanic, Old Norse and medieval Latin names and words whose origin she illuminated.

The papers reveal a continuous interest in the period 1066-1200, the one and a half centuries after the Norman Conquest, and in the effect of the latter on the English language. The accent is on development and growth, rather than on submersion beneath a Francophone tide. The period is seen as one in which there were three competing languages in use – English, Latin, and French – each with its own field of influence on the coining and recording of words and names used in Anglo-Norman England. Paper on onomastics, a subject which Miss Clark embraced in mid-career, form major part of the present book and the importance of recorded name-forms as linguistic text is clearly demonstrated. Case studies of naming in self-defined communities were used by her to illustrate the social and linguistic effects of the Norman Conquest. In the studies of urban communities with Continental trading connections (Canterbury, Kings Lynn, and Battle) the changing balance between the native and foreign name-stock was studied not merely statistically but with real historical understanding. In the case of Kings Lynn in particular, effective comparative use was made of records from medieval Flanders – a salutary reminder to Anglicists of the European connections of the population of early medieval England.

In many of the studies reprinted here, personal names have been studied as part of a separate but related system within the lexis, having its own rules of composition and usage. Differences in naming conventions as applied to men and women are highlighted. While male children in the Anglo-Norman period, with more to gain from conforming to Continental fashions, are shown as more likely to have been given non-Insular names by their parents, females were evidently for a time allowed more traditional ones chosen from the Anglo-Scandinavian name-stock. In this and other ways, particularly in their role as nursemaids, women are depicted as very important linguistic agents of continuity and conservation both for English as a whole and for Anglo-Scandinavian names as this time.

Choice of name, both real life and in literary texts, is seen to have purpose and significance. Those occurring in the OE poem *The Battle of Maldon* are here placed in a precise historio-

social context which has importance for the dating of its composition. Elsewhere, nicknames are studied as a separate and socially important category with much to tell about group dynamics and attitudes to nonconformity. Cecily Clark herself, in signing less formal contributions to the periodical *Nomina*, used the sobriquet *Souris*' (=Fr. mouse'), a nickname which she acquired in her schooldays. For her more serious publications, and her academic persona, she always retained her maiden name, although in purely domestic circumstances she was very happy to be Mrs Gordon Anderson.

One different, non-onomastic and more literary, theme is also represented here which is of importance in its own right as another of Miss Clark's contributions to knowledge. This is the study of the deliberate variation within Old and Middle English texts, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and *Sir Gawain*. The article on the former – 'The narrative of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before the Conquest' – which first appeared in the festschrift for Prof. Dorothy Whitelock in 1971, is a classic which can be read and re-read with profit.

The book, while densely packed, should not be seen in isolation from Miss Clark's other publications, in particular her edition of the Peterborough Chronicle, and her recent chapters on Onomastics' for the *Cambridge History of the English Language*, vols I and II. The former has an excellent introduction and full notes, while the latter chapters are both an ideal starting-point and a convenient statement of current theories in names research. One should also mention Miss Clark's English adaptation of Georges Bourcier's *Histoire de la langue anglaise* (Paris, 1978) published as *An Introduction to the History of the English Language* (Cheltenham, 1981) and re-published in Japan, edited by Akio Oizumi, in 1991. Volumes 9-14 of the periodical *Nomina* testify to Miss Clark's editing skills, while other volumes of this and other periodicals (especially *Medium Ævum* and *English Studies*) contain reviews by her. Although as a reviewer she was always thorough, her style could be in places jocular. Because of the latter, on one occasion she was in real danger of receiving a writ for libel from a touchy author. However, her tone reflected her delight in the nuances of the English language, rather than any disrespect. She was a regular delegate both to the annual conference of the Council for Name-Studies and to that on Anglo-Norman Studies held at Battle, and was a lively and witty participant in discussion, both formal and informal, whose presence is greatly missed.

As the more recently-published items in *Words, Names and History* show. Miss Clark was still just before her death producing important and original theories about the effects of the Norman Conquest on the English language. She had just challenged, by the reference to native phonological developments, the long-standing doctrine of Anglo-Norman Influence' on the spelling of English place-names. She had also produced studies of the social and manuscript context of the personal names in the *Liber Vitae* of Thorney Abbey as a preliminary to an edition of it – a task inherited from Dr Olof von Feilitzen, another anthroponymist of great renown who is sadly no longer with us. Together, the two could have produced a definitive work on personal-naming in Old and Middle English, with Miss Clark writing the post-Domesday portion. Unhappily such a textbook with such authors will never exist, but the present collection of Miss Clark's articles contains many source-studies and theoretical statements which any future worker in English anthroponymy (of any period) will find essential to their work.

**NOTE**

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