

**Talking *ballocs*: nicknames and English medieval
sociolinguistics**

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Abbreviations

I Lay subsidies

- Bedfordshire* A. T. Gaydon, ed., *The Taxation of 1297* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society 39, 1959 for 1958)
- Buckinghamshire* A. C. Chibnall, ed., *Early Taxation Returns* (Buckinghamshire Record Society, 1966)
- Cumberland* J. P. Steel, ed., *Cumberland Lay Subsidy ... 6th Edward III* (Kendal, 1912)
- 'Derbyshire'* J. C. Cox, 'Derbyshire in 1327: being a lay subsidy roll', *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 30 (1908), pp. 23-96.
- Devon* E. M. Erskine, ed., *The Devonshire Lay Subsidy of 1332* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society new series 14, 1969)
- Dorset 1327* A. R. Rumble, ed., *The Dorset Lay Subsidy of 1327* (Dorset Record Society 6, 1980)
- Dorset 1332* A. D. Mills, ed., *The Dorset Lay Subsidy of 1332* (Dorset Record Society 4, 1971)
- Essex* J. C. Ward, ed., *The Medieval Essex Community. The Lay Subsidy of 1327* (Essex Record Office, Essex Historical Documents 1, 1983)
- Gloucestershire* P. Franklin, ed., *The Taxpayers of Medieval Gloucestershire. An Analysis of the 1327 Lay Subsidy with a New Edition of its Text* (Stroud, 1993)
- Huntingdonshire* J. A. Raftis & M. P. Hogan, eds, *Early Huntingdonshire Lay Subsidy Rolls* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Subsidia Mediaevalia 8, 1976)
- 'Kent'* H. A. Hanley & C. W. Chalklin, 'The Kent lay subsidy of 1334/5' in F. R. H. DuBoulay, ed., *Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society* (Kent Records 18, 1964)
- 'Lancashire'* J. P. Rylands, 'The Exchequer lay subsidy roll of Robert de Shireburn and John de Radcliffe, taxors and collectors in the county of Lancaster', *Miscellany Relating to Lancashire and Cheshire* volume ii (Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society 31, 1896)
- 'Leicestershire'* W. G. D. Fletcher, 'The earliest Leicestershire lay subsidy roll, 1327', *Associated Architectural Societies Reports* 19 (1888-9), pp. 130-78, 209-312
- Northumberland* C. M. Fraser, ed., *The Northumberland Lay Subsidy Roll of 1296* (Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne Record Series 1, 1968)
- 'Shropshire'* W. G. D. Fletcher, 'The Shropshire lay subsidy of 1 Edward III', *Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 1907
- Somerset* F. H. Dickinson, ed., *Kirkby's Quest for Somerset* (Somerset Record Society 3, 1889) [including the 1327 lay subsidy]
- 'Staffordshire'* G. Wrottesley, 'The Exchequer lay subsidy of A.D. 1327', *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* edited by the William Salt Archaeological Society 17, 1886)

<i>Suffolk</i>	E. Powell, ed., <i>Suffolk in 1327 being a Subsidy Return</i> (Suffolk Green Books IX vol. II, 1906)
<i>Surrey</i>	<i>Surrey Taxation Returns</i> (Surrey Record Society 33, 1932)
<i>Sussex</i>	W. Hudson, ed., <i>The Three Earliest Lay Subsidies for the County of Sussex in the Years 1296, 1327, 1332</i> (Sussex Record Society 10, 1910)
<i>Warwickshire</i>	W. F. Carter, ed., <i>The Lay Subsidy Roll for Warwickshire of 1332</i> (Dugdale Society 6, 1926)
<i>Wiltshire</i>	D. Crowley, ed., <i>The Wiltshire Tax List of 1332</i> (Wiltshire Record Society 45, 1989)
<i>Worcester</i>	P. J. Field, ed., <i>Lay Subsidy for the County of Worcester 1 Edward III</i> (Worcestershire Historical Society 9, 1985)
<i>Yorkshire1297</i>	W. Brown, ed., <i>Yorkshire Lay Subsidy ...25 Edward I (1297)</i> (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 16, 1894)
<i>Yorkshire1301</i>	W. Brown, ed., <i>Yorkshire Lay Subsidy ... 30 Edward I</i> (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 21, 1897)

II Other abbreviations

<i>Bateson, Records of the Borough of Leicester</i>	M. Bateson, ed., <i>Records of the Borough of Leicester</i> volume 1 1103-1327 (London, 1899)
<i>Blake, Cambridge History of the English Language</i>	N. F. Blake, ed., <i>The Cambridge History of the English Language</i> volume II 1066-1476 (Cambridge, 1992)
<i>Bodl.</i>	Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>B.L.</i>	British Library, London
<i>Cartularium ... Gyseburne</i>	[W. Brown, ed.] <i>Cartularium Prioratus de Gyseburne, Ebor. Dioeceseos, Ordinis S. Augustini, fundati A.D. MCXIX</i> (Surtees Society 86, 89, 1889-92)
<i>Chew & Weinbaum, London Eyre of 1244</i>	H. M. Chew & M. Weinbaum, eds, <i>The London Eyre of 1244</i> (London Record Society 6, 1970)
<i>Clanchy, Berkshire Eyre 1248</i>	M. T. Clanchy, ed., <i>The Roll and Writ File of the Berkshire Eyre of 1248</i> (Selden Society 90, 1973)
<i>Clay, Early Yorkshire Charters</i>	C. T. Clay, ed., <i>Early Yorkshire Charters</i> (9 volumes, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Extra Series 4-12, 1935-65)
<i>Cooper, Oxfordshire Eyre of 1241</i>	J. Cooper, ed., <i>The Oxfordshire Eyre 1241</i> (Oxfordshire Record Society 56, 1989)
<i>Douglas, Bury St Edmunds</i>	D. C. Douglas, ed., <i>Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds</i> (London, 1932)

- Early Yorkshire Charters*
- C. T. Clay, ed., *Early Yorkshire Charters* (9 volumes, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Extra Series 4-12, 1935-65)
- Farrer, *Cockersand Chartulary*
- W. Farrer, ed., *The Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey of the Premonstratensian Order* (3 volumes in 5, Chetham Society 38-40, 43, 56-7, 64, 1898-1909)
- Fenwick, *Poll Taxes*
- C. Fenwick, ed., *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381* (2 volumes, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History new series 27, 29, 1998, 2001)
- Fowler, 'Roll of the justices in eyre at Bedford, 1227'
- H. G. Fowler, 'Roll of the justices in eyre at Bedford, 1227', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society* 3 (1916)
- Hart & Lyons, *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*
- W. H. Hart & P. A. Lyons, eds, *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia* (3 volumes, Rolls Series 79, 1884-93)
- Hollings, *Red Book of Worcester*
- M. Hollings, ed., *The Red Book of Worcester* (Worcestershire Historical Society, 1934-50)
- Hopkinson, *Rolls of the 1281 Derbyshire Eyre*
- A. M. Hopkinson, ed., *The Rolls of the 1281 Derbyshire Eyre* (Derbyshire Record Society 27, 2000)
- Hull, *Caption of Seisin of the Duchy of Cornwall 1337*
- P. L. Hull, ed., *The Caption of Seisin of the Duchy of Cornwall 1337* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society new series 17, 1971)
- Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*
- R. F. Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society 41, 1961)
- Jenkins, *Calendar of the Roll of the Justices in Eyre 1227*
- J. G. Jenkins, ed., *Calendar of the Roll of the Justices in Eyre 1227* (Buckinghamshire Record Society 6, 1942)
- Jewell, *Wakefield Court Rolls*
- H. M. Jewell, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield from September 1348 to September 1350* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Wakefield Court Roll Series)
- Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames I. Compounds*
- J. Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames I. Compounds* (Lund, 1979)
- Lees, *Templars*
- B. A. Lees, ed., *Records of the Templars in the Twelfth Century* (British Academy Records of Economic and Social History, 1935)
- Littledale, *Pudsay Deeds*
- R. P. Littledale, ed., *The Pudsay Deeds : the Pudsays of Bolton and Barforth, and their Predecessors in those Manors* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 56, 1916)
- McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*
- J. McNulty, ed., *The Chartulary of the Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of Sallay in Craven* (2 volumes, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 87, 90, 1933-4)
- Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*
- F. W. Maitland, ed., *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts* (Selden Society 2, 1888)
- Martin, *Percy Chartulary*
- M. T. Martin, ed., *The Percy Chartulary* (Surtees Society 117, 1921)

- Mason, *Westminster Abbey Charters*
- Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*
- Meekings & Crook, *1235 Surrey Eyre*
- Middle English Dictionary*
- Northumberland Assize Rolls*
- Oliver, *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne*
- P.R.O
- E. Mason *et al.*, eds, *Westminster Abbey Charters 1066-c.1214* (London Record Society 25, 1988)
- C. A. F. Meekings, ed., *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* (Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Record Series 16, 1961 for 1960)
- C. A. F. Meekings & D. Crook, eds, *The 1235 Surrey Eyre* (Surrey Record Society 32, 1983)
- H. Kurath *et al.*, eds, *Middle English Dictionary* (12 volumes, Ann Arbor, 1956-)
- [W. Page, ed.,] *Three Early Assize Rolls for the County of Northumberland, Saec. XIII* (Surtees Society 88, 1891)
- M. Oliver, ed., *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne* (Surtees Society 137, 1924)
- Public Record Office, London

- Purvis, *Healaugh Park*
- Reaney, *DBS*
- Stenton, *Pleas before the King*
- Storey, *Register of John Kirkby*
- Storey, *Register of Gilbert Welton*
- Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*
- Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*
- Wakefield Court Rolls I*
- Wakefield Court Rolls II*
- Wakefield Court Rolls III*
- Wakefield Court Rolls IV*
- Wakefield Court Rolls V*
- Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*
- Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*
- Yorkshire Deeds*
- Yorkshire Deeds*
- J. S. Purvis, ed., *The Chartulary of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 92, 1936)
- P. H. Reaney, *Dictionary of British Surnames* (Oxford, 1997)
- D. M. Stenton, ed., *Pleas before the King or his Justices 1198-1212* (4 volumes, Selden Society 67-8, 83-4, 1952-67)
- R. L. Storey, ed., *The Register of John Kirkby, Bishop of Carlisle, 1332-1352, and the Register of John Ross, Bishop of Carlisle, 1325-1332* (2 volumes, Canterbury & York Society 81, 1995)
- R. L. Storey, ed., *The Register of Gilbert Welton, Bishop of Carlisle, 1353-1362* (Canterbury & York Society 88, 1999)
- H. Summerson, ed., *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society new series 28, 1985)
- G. Tengvik, *Old English Bynames* (Nomina Germanica 3, Uppsala, 1937)
- W. Pailey, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield I* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 29, 1900)
- W. Pailey, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield volume II* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 36, 1906)
- J. Lister, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield volume III* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 57, 1917)
- J. Lister, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield volume IV* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 78, 1930)
- J. W. Walker, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield volume V 1322-1331* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 109, 1945 for 1944)
- S. S. Walker, ed., *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield from October 1331 to September 1333* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Wakefield Court Rolls Series III, 1983 for 1982)
- M. Weinbaum, ed., *The London Eyre of 1276* (London Record Society 12, 1976)
- W. Brown, C. T. Clay, M. J. Hebditch & M. J. Stanley, eds, *Yorkshire Deeds* (10 volumes, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 50, 63, 65, 69, 76, 83, 102, 111, 120, 1914-1955)
- W. Brown, C. T. Clay, M. J. Hebditch & M. J. Stanley, eds, *Yorkshire Deeds* (10 volumes, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 50, 63, 65, 69, 76, 83, 102, 111, 120, 1914-1955)

Explanation of some terms

In this volume, preference has been accorded to *nomen* to indicate the 'name'. 'Forename' is ambiguous when, for example, only one name – for example, Geoffrey – is employed and there is no apparent *cognomen*. The decision to employ *nomen* is consistent with the terminology used in recent European anthroponymic studies. In referring to second, qualifying names, byname signifies an unstable, flexible and (presumed) non-hereditary second name. Concomitantly, either: this name may change from one generation to the next (and thus be distinctive to the individual, not necessarily the kinship); or the bearer might be designated by two or more different bynames depending on circumstances. *Cognomen* approximates to byname. Where the second name has definitely become hereditary and a family name, then the term adopted is surname. In this differentiation as *cognomen*, byname and surname, the practice here is less complex than in recent European anthroponymic studies, but it accords with previous English onomastic categories. Since both *nomen* and *cognomen* had significance to contemporaries, but are difficult to translate with the proper nuances, the most appropriate practice would probably be to attempt to define those terms in a discursive manner as an introductory explanation and then to employ the Latin terms in the subsequent text. Whilst this approach might seem pedantic, it is a solution which promotes accuracy. Nevertheless, since byname and surname have some clarity, those terms too are dispersed through the text.

Talking *ballocs*¹

Introduction

In 1227, the justices in eyre in Buckinghamshire heard a case in which Edward *le foc* and his wife, Matilda [Matilda I], and William de Burnham were accused of the homicide of Matilda [Matilda II], daughter of William *le Paumer* and another poor woman in Matilda's house. The jurors of presentment reported that Matilda [II] had taken John de Biry as her husband and as a token, John had bought Matilda [II] a cloak and tunic at Aylesbury fair. Matilda [I] came using threatening words that it was no use John buying Matilda [II] a tunic because before she could use it she would be burnt or die some other death and that it was no use his buying Matilda [II] a cloak because she would have no neck from which to hang it.²

Recovering the authentic voice of pre-modern non-elite 'speech communities' must confront inordinate impediments, but the effort is valuable for cultures were predominantly expressed through language and language use and language was itself an integral part of culture.³ As is implicit in the term 'speech communities', the use of language by groups defined who was included and who was excluded. In terms of inclusion, examination of language use divulges how that group perceived itself vis-à-vis other groups and the material world. Such an ethno-methodology is also phenomenological, starting from the 'self' as consciously realised in society. Understanding the historical use of language thus not only allows a hermeneutics of the mental worlds of the past (so-called *mentalités*), but how those worlds were constructed and achieved through speech. Sociolinguistic analysis allows further insights into other analytical categories such as social group, register of language, high and low culture, attitudes towards the body, age, and gender.

Language use (as speech) is, moreover, not passive or abstract, but acts upon, particularly upon others. In this sense, the interpretation here relies heavily on the speech act theories of John Austin and John Searle.⁴ Some particular uses of language have dual effects: the utterance is itself an act; but its effect is also performative in that it acts upon others.⁵ More especially, certain types of verbal phrases have special force in the right context and

¹ *Middle English Dictionary 1 A-B*, p. 629 *ballok* <OE *bealluc* (testicle).

² Jenkins, *Calendar of the Roll of the Justices on Eyre 1227*, pp. 53-4 (no. 597).

³ P. Burke and R. Porter, eds, *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, Cambridge, 1987), provided an agenda for historians to explore historical sociolinguistics. See also P. Burke, 'A civil tongue: language and politeness in early modern Europe' in P. Burke, B. Harrison and P. Slack, eds, *Civil Histories. Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 31-48. As general introductions to sociolinguistics, reference has been made here to R. Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Oxford, 1986); J. Holmes, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Harlow, 1992); and R. A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics* (Cambridge, 1980, 2nd edn, 1996). The argument below is also informed by the 'speech act' theory of John Austin and John Searle: J. Searle, *Mind, Language and Society. Philosophy in the Real World* (London, 1999), pp. 135-161 provides a useful, recent resume of this conception of language; how this might operate in one context is illustrated by M. Bloch, 'Symbols, song, dance and features of articulation: is religion an extreme form of traditional authority' in Bloch, *Ritual, History and Power. Selected Papers in Anthropology* (London, 1989), pp. 19-45, esp. p. 32.

⁴ J. Searle, *Mind, Language and Society. Philosophy in the Real World* (London, 1999), pp. 135-161 provides a useful, recent resume of this conception of language; for Austin, I have used J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers* ed. I. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Third edn, Oxford, 1979), especially ch. 10 'Performative utterances' (pp. 233-52). How this concept might operate in one context is illustrated by M. Bloch, 'Symbols, song, dance and features of articulation: is religion an extreme form of traditional authority' in Bloch, *Ritual, History and Power. Selected Papers in Anthropology* (London, 1989), pp. 19-45, esp. p. 32.

⁵ The speech has illocutionary force; how it affects others is its perlocutionary force.

circumstances.⁶ Here, we accept as those circumstances the agreement of the speech community to impose particular nickname bynames; the ‘performative utterances’ in attributing nickname bynames are not statements of truth or falsehood, in Austin’s terms, but they must conform to rules, in our sense here conform to ‘community norms’.⁷

Considerable success has been achieved, for example, importantly by early modernists, through the analysis of a variety of sources. By necessity, those sources are documentary and textual, so that language use is immediately mediated in numerous ways. Superficially, the records of local courts, most particularly depositions, promise a window onto the spoken word, but both Gowing for England (more specifically London) and Kaminsky for ‘New England’ have revealed the textual problems inherent in such a source.⁸ Not only is the transaction mediated through the proctor in ecclesiastical courts or the court clerk in ‘civil’ courts, but the litigants and witnesses too had their own narrative ‘strategies’. Depositions were framed and constructed to: achieve empathy by employing the motifs of convention – to place the event in a context familiar to the listeners and adjudicators; provide a narrative order consistent with the purpose of the deposition; and to interpolate rhetorically and persuasively the personal circumstances of the litigant or witness. Such material, nevertheless, brings the closest contact with language use in a social context. Unfortunately for the medievalist, the same material is either perfunctory or is further mediated in a language of a higher, official register, Latin, interspersed with very occasional vernacular reporting of the critical words emitted by actors, and those brief phrases too possibly contaminated by convention, the expected.⁹ So depositions betray some at least of the problems of textual analysis of those literary texts which might open a vista onto non-elite language use.

⁶ Austin refers to such conditions as ‘conventions’; for all of these points, Austin, ‘Performative utterances’, pp. 237, 242, 244-5, 247, and 251.

⁷ Austin, ‘Performative utterances’, p. 237; his term for non-compliance with the conventions is ‘infelicity’.

⁸ L. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers. Women, Words and Sex In Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996). J. Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue. the Politics of Speech in Early New England* (Oxford, 1997). For problems of narrativity in the early middle ages, but addressing narrativity in general, C. Cubitt, ‘Memory and narrative in the cult of early Anglo-Saxon saints’ in Y. Hen and M. Innes, eds, *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 29-66.

⁹ F. W. Maitland and W. P. Baildon, eds, *The Court Baron* (Selden Society 4, 1891 for 1890), Rohese Bindebere called Ralph Bolay a thief and he called her a whore, the jurors finding that the greater trespass was done to Ralph, so Ralph to recover 12d. for damages (1321); reflected here are the conventional terms of dishonour for male and female honour, already established by the early fourteenth century (and probably earlier). For the imputations behind these defamations in early-modern England: Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, pp. 2, 111-38. Why some scurrilous nickname bynames did not attract defamation cases/causes is explored below. For another example of the cursory nature of medieval court cases: two men fought because of *malveis paroles* uttered by a woman who is now dead; she would have been arraigned had she lived; the words, however, are not described: D. Sutherland, ed., *The Eyre of Northamptonshire 3-4 Edward III A.D. 1329-30* (2 volumes, Selden Society 97-8, 1983) I, p. 200. Hancock *le Nunne*, a frequent litigant in the court rolls, was found guilty of defaming Adam Gerbot, denouncing Adam as willing to perjure himself at any inquisition for a gallon of ale – i.e. not only dishonest, but a drunkard: *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, p. 46. William *de Wakefeud* pl. v. Thomas *Brounsmyth* and his wife Emma for defaming him in Wakefield market place (i.e. as publicly and openly as possible) as a false and faithless man and robber, 1307; Alice pl. v. Eva for calling her in Wakefield market a thief and a harlot, bringing them to blows: *Wakefield Court Rolls*, II, pp. 110-111; *Venit inquisitio ad inquirendum si Idonea que fuit uxor Willelmi Bateson’ diffamauit Willelmum de Edenestan’ vocando illum falsum et latronem et imponendo ei quod ipse conduxit Thomam de Eland ad occidendum filium suum*: Doncaster Archives DD/Yar/C/1/15 (1340) – an accusation by a woman of a man of the conventional masculine misdemeanours of lying, theft and violence. For further illustration: *Johannes de Kingislande queritur de Simone Torold eo quod eum uocauit Purskerner et alia enormia* (Nottingham University Library Department of Manuscripts M1M 114/1).

Even so, literary texts remain more complicated simply because they are more overtly representations of language use with a fundamental rhetorical purpose. Medieval texts are no less and perhaps more complicated by rhetoric, not least in defining, dividing and labelling base and noble, dishonourable and honourable. Authorial intent is not the only issue, of course, because audience, reception and appropriation of texts confound the meanings of those texts – as, indeed, do ‘intertextuality’, ‘interpretative communities’ or ‘textual communities’, as the position of the extant textual version against oral transmissions.

Recovering English non-elite medieval language and language use thus presents a dilemma, but one which can, to some extent, be moderated by an examination of nickname bynames. At the very least, this source allows the opportunity to consider the lexis (vocabulary) deployed by non-elites. Optimally, it enables reflection on the purposes of language use – irony, labelling, and, indeed, the reformation of language and civility. Tangentially (to this paper), processes of use of register, codes and code-mixing can be discerned, importantly from non-literary sources (in which the author might have been even more concerned with self-representation or self-fashioning).

Notwithstanding the potential authenticity of the social voices of nickname bynames, their analysis is not devoid of complication.¹⁰ Even though the bynames occurred in business-like records rather than literary texts, all written matter has some rhetorical function, since the inter-relationship between literacy and orality involves power and authority, representation and resistance. Even in such records, moreover, clerks maintained some interest in self-representation or self-fashioning, influencing their use of register (language) and code-mixing.¹¹

Most importantly, perhaps, we have to confront the questions of the purposes of the attribution of bynames and also the complex relationship between bynames and surnames, individual identification and family attribution – that is, the process of transition from bynames attributed specifically to the individual to inherited surnames.¹² Conventionally, some historians employing this sort of evidence have used a rule of thumb that bynames were not *generally* transformed into hereditary surnames in the lowest social groups before *c.*1350. Whilst such an approach has legitimacy, the transition was much more complicated, both by social group and within social group, so that the conventional approach to the transition is no more than an extremely broad generalisation. In analysing nickname bynames, however, the difficulty assumes importance and the whole of the following analysis is sensitive to complication.

In its assessment of this evidence for language use, the discussion will concentrate on some principal themes. In terms of lexis, emphasis will be placed on the categories of nicknames. It is, nevertheless, impossible to isolate categories from processes and purposes. In the sections on categories of lexis, therefore, allusion to processes and purposes will be inevitable. Even so, the meanings behind the attribution of nickname bynames are constituted in the processes, so that some processes will be illuminated further: irony and laughter; labelling, marginalizing and defining; ‘obscenity’ and the elimination of uncouthness, what might be cavalierly described as a reformation of language, including names, in the thirteenth century, whether through a process of civility or a religious homiletic reform.

To illustrate how language use can be elicited from nickname bynames, some purposive examples will suffice and their exploration will also indicate some of the

¹⁰ For a general approach to the category of nicknames, J. Morgan, C. O’Neill and R. Harré, *Nicknames: their Origins and Social Consequences* (London, 1979).

¹¹ For self-fashioning in general, S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning. From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980); T. C. Heller, M. Sosna, D. E. Wellberg *et al.*, *Reconstructing Individualism. Autonomy, Individuality and the Self in Western Thought* (Stanford, 1986); E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London, 1969); the representation of self through nickname bynames is considered below.

¹² For some thoughtful considerations of nicknames, P. McClure, ‘Nicknames and petnames: linguistic forms and social contexts’ and C. Clark, ‘Nickname creation: some sources of evidence, “naïve” memoirs especially’, both in *Nomina* 5 (1981), pp. 63-76 and 83-93.

complexities of this sort of material.¹³ In King's Lynn at the end of the second decade of the fourteenth century, some of the litigants in the borough court were identified by very expressive nickname bynames. Richard *Brekeheued* proceeded as plaintiff against Laurence *de Northwotton* in a plea of debt for 20s. for the sale of oats, for which Laurence only acknowledged 15s. They went to law for the remaining 5s., but Richard was placed in mercy for a false claim and fined 6d. Another plea of debt involved Geoffrey *Boresballok*. Whilst these two cases of debt revolved around moderate amounts of money, Richard *Thusantpund* was embroiled as defendant in cases about four marks, 4s. 8d. and 30s. In two other instances of debt, the defendant was Geoffrey *Cuttecope*, whose pledge (surety) was William *Cuttecope*. Pleas of trespass concerned Reginald *Halfheued*, William *Brisetimmer* (possibly 'break-hedge'), John *Ledelaedy* and Geoffrey *Blacheued*. In another case of trespass, Thomas *Qwytpuntel* ('white penis') came to an agreement, whilst a loveday was appointed in *John Man v. John Dauncelaedy* in trespass; Thomas *Qwytpuntel* came to an agreement to resolve another plea of trespass.¹⁴

In King's Lynn in the early fourteenth century, some of the townspeople were thus attributed bynames with implications of attitudes towards the body (*Brekeheued*, *Halfheued*, *Blacheued*), sexuality (*Ledelaedy*, *Dauncelaedy*, *Qwytpuntel*), those two categories combined (*Boresballok*), avarice or wealth (*Thusantpund*), and 'criminal' behaviour (*Brisetimmer* – hedgebreaking for wood).¹⁵ More problematic is *Cuttecope*, for here we have a Middle English verbal-phrase nickname (what Tengvik designated 'imperative' nicknames) which might reflect either personal clothing or the occupation of tailoring – that is, a metonym.¹⁶ Ambiguities of this kind persist in a proportion (usually small, but also usually with the most interesting lexis and syntax) of Middle English bynames.¹⁷ Metonymic forms, such as *Blancpain* ('white bread'), are equivocal as ambivalence inheres in whether the byname reflects eating preferences or metonymically the occupation of high-quality baker. Returning to *Cuttecope* visible too is the transition from bynames attached to an individual to family surnames, although embryonically.¹⁸

The context of this evidence can be explored a little further from some other sources. In the Crown Pleas ('criminal' jurisdiction of the justices in eyre) in Coventry in 1221 Henry *Golichtly*, described as a known robber, was harboured ('received') by Thomas *de la Hethe*; Henry's nickname byname or description perfectly represents the bodily characteristics of his activities.¹⁹ In the Cumberland Crown Pleas, this characteristic of labelling is repeated in the presentments of Robert *Brokenheuedknaue*, Maurice *Strangthef*, Stephen *Upwythstrenge*, and

¹³ Anecdotal material is used for illustrative purposes, acquired from a variety of record types; behind these examples lies a database of 15,521 persons with nickname bynames taxed in the lay subsidies of 1280-1332 and (Kent) 1334/5. An appendix explores the problems of this material.

¹⁴ Bodl. MS Norfolk Roll 8 (11-12 Edward II).

¹⁵ M. K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 84-8. For examples of frequent hedgebreaking and burning hedges, J. Amphlett & S. G. Hamilton, eds, *Court Rolls of the Manor of Hales, 1272 [sic]-1307* (Worcestershire Historical Society, 1910), pp. 69, 175, 196, 208 (1275-81). For further illustration: *Item presentant quod Agnes Wen est communis fractrix sepium et claustrorum parci Ideo in misericordia* (Nottingham University Library Department of Manuscripts MiM 131/10).

¹⁶ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 383. 'Imperative' is no longer considered to be satisfactory and is avoided throughout.

¹⁷ A synonym for *cuttecope* which occurred in Newcastle upon Tyne was *shapacape*: Oliver, *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne*, p. 338, n. 5: John *Shapacape* (fl. c. 1338-50) who had a licence to assign 100s. of land and rent to establish a chantry in 1338 and whose wool was purveyed in 1348.

¹⁸ Other nickname bynames simply defy any sort of accurate interpretation: 'Although, as is well known, the precise meaning of a nickname can hardly ever be ascertained ...': O. von Feilitzen, 'The personal names and bynames of the Winton Domesday' in M. Biddle, ed., *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages. An Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday* (Winchester Studies 1, Oxford, 1976), p. 220.

¹⁹ D. M. Stenton, ed., *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire, 1221-22* (Selden Society 59, 1940), p. 346.

William *Cuttepurs*.²⁰ Henry *Euilchild* was acquitted in 1227 when appealed by Avice *de la Mora* of burgling her house and beating both Avice and Warin *de Mora*, but his character, despite his discharge, might have been represented in his nickname.²¹ A decade or so later, the jurors of Bradninch presented John *le Fatte* on suspicion reflected in his nickname byname, for, although he ate well, drank well, and dressed well, the jurors had no knowledge of the provenance of his wealth. The jurors were on this occasion in 1238 placed in mercy as they had no real evidence of malfeasance, but at the eyre of 1244 John was reported to have fled and he was put in exigent as a suspected thief of pigs.²² At the same eyre, Henry *Huvestrong* was found guilty of burglary and homicide; he had no chattels.²³ Before that enquiry, Roger *Laweles* was accused of taking Gilbert from his bed and beating him.²⁴ Similarly, the character of the accused, found guilty of larceny, before the Wiltshire eyre of 1249, was amply reflected in his nickname byname: John *Strangweder* (= ‘strongwether’).²⁵ Many larcenies were committed by Henry *Godlese*, presented before the Wiltshire eyre of 1249.²⁶ Six years later Godwin *Haluedeuel* fled to St Clement’s church in Oxford and acknowledged that he was a thief.²⁷ In 1227, Henry *Hendibodi* – evidently a man of some physical stature – killed Hugh *Norensis* and fled, leaving no chattels.²⁸ Other ‘criminals’ acquired a new identification as a result of their conviction: thus Geoffrey *Wolvesheved* found guilty of theft in Alnwick in 1279 and Henry *Brendcheke* outlawed for theft in Newcastle.²⁹ One of the perpetrators of the murder of Robert *capellanus* in the hall of the parson of Colbeck in 1281 was William *Greydogge*, who was outlawed and had no chattels, whilst Walter *Litlegod* (i.e. ‘Littlegood’) killed another man in Bretby and fled.³⁰ In 1308, the tourn at Wakefield ordered John *le Strengfelagh* to be arrested for burglary.³¹ In the following year, Maud *Panyerbagge* was indicted in the same court for burglary, accused of stealing a robe and jewelry, her nickname byname presumably derived from the accoutrement of her ‘occupation’.³² There too, in 1313, William *Suerdsliper* was ordered to be arrested for nightwalking armed.³³ The responsibility for much theft perpetrated in Wakefield in 1316 lay with John *Maufesour* (‘wrong-doer’), who had burgled a grange, stealing one and a half bushels of oats, had stolen a horse, and committed several other thefts; he was hung for theft and also for murder. In 1317, a Thomas *Maufesour* was apprehended on suspicion of larceny in the same place because he nightwalked and was found in the possession of two mares and numerous small, suspicious items; he was convicted and hung in the same year.³⁴ Before the Berkshire eyre of 1248, Ralph *le Brethelese* was presented with two others for money changing, the juror reporting that he had no chattels.³⁵ In the case of felons, marginals are clearly at issue and clearly being labelled as such, although these ‘criminals’ were predominantly male.

²⁰ H. Summerson, ‘Crime and society in medieval Cumberland’, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society* 82 (1982), pp. 111-24 at p. 121.

²¹ Jenkins, *Calendar of the Roll of the Justices on Eyre 1227*, p. 39 (no. 443).

²² Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, p. 29 (no. 128).

²³ Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, p.65 (no. 381) (= ‘heavestrong’).

²⁴ Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, pp. 72-3 (no. 429).

²⁵ Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*, p. 202 (no. 275).

²⁶ Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*, p. 425 (no. 535).

²⁷ J. Cooper, ed., *The Oxfordshire Eyre 1241* (Oxfordshire Record Society 56, 1989), p. 145 (no. 975).

²⁸ Fowler, ‘Roll of the justices in eyre at Bedford, 1227’, p. 147 (no. 363).

²⁹ [W. Page, ed.], *Three Early Assize Rolls for the County of Northumberland, Saec. XIII* (Surtees Society 88, 1891), pp. 344 and 383 (*Wolvesheved* – given the wolf’s head as an outlaw who had abjured the realm) and p. 364 (*Brendcheke*).

³⁰ Hopkinson, *Derbyshire Eyre of 1281*, pp. 132 (no. 511) and 146 (no. 572).

³¹ *Wakefield Court Rolls II*, pp. 160, 165.

³² *Wakefield Court Rolls II*, p. 208.

³³ *Wakefield Court Rolls III*, pp. 6, 16.

³⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls, III*, pp. 154, 164, 191.

³⁵ Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 313 (no. 773).

Not in the same high bracket of ‘crime’, suspicion aroused by a certain Simon in London was transferred to his byname – *Neveratham* (‘never-at-home’) – for on complaint of his neighbours a tun of wine was discovered in his cellar so that he was presented before the eyre; that nickname byname and trade might have been inherited as Adam *Neverathom* was later presented for selling wine contrary to the assize.³⁶

Taking sanctuary in the church of St Mary le Bow in London, Agnes *Daythef* confessed that she had stolen a surcoat and had committed many other thefts. Her nickname byname distinguished her from burglary. It was reported that she was a vagrant from Oxfordshire.³⁷ Before that sitting too, a presentment was made from 1261-2 about a disturbance in a house, presumably a brothel, where six prostitutes plied their trade. Most of the prostitutes were identified by a toponymic byname indicating their place of origin and migration, but one was described as *Notekina Hoggenhore*, graphically defining her profession in insulting Middle English.³⁸ These two cases involved females attributed compounded nickname bynames in Middle English. A third instance might not be quite so unambiguous. In 1218-19, Elias *Alkestair* was appealed for rape by Gunoka *Cunteles*, unsuccessfully.³⁹ What is obvious is that nicknaming of this kind was to a large extent gender-specific (directed towards males) but marginal females did not completely evade such labelling.

Whilst felons constituted an unrepresentative sample, some nicknames were literally embodied ascriptions in the medieval borough, town and village, and so in late-thirteenth-century Gussage (Dorset) amongst the debtors to the executors of John *Brontop* – himself identified by an embodied byname (‘brown-headed’) – were enumerated Nicholas *le Couper*, Robert *Russel*, John *le Wyne*, John *le Cok*, Susan *Doge*, and, allegedly owing 5s., Robert *Shakeballeke*.⁴⁰ In the Lincolnshire assizes of 1202, a clerk, Robert *Grantamur* (‘great love’), was appealed for rape by Letice *de Gretford*. The nickname attributed to him might impute sexual avarice or predation, of a clerk in holy orders, and it may, in the difficult circumstances of rape cases, be of little consequence that Letice defaulted so that the plea was a non-suit.⁴¹

To replicate such anecdotal evidence would be both tedious and uninformative. Having established the nature of the evidence, it is perhaps appropriate first to approach the processes involved, returning finally to the categories of nicknames. In the interpretation, two kinds of source are deployed: first, sporadic, adventitious data in miscellaneous records (charters, manorial surveys, manorial court rolls *et alia*) which are not quantifiable in their occurrence, but are illustrative; and secondly, always providing a context, quantitative evidence from records of taxation, the lay subsidies.⁴²

³⁶ Chew & Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1244*, p. 13 (no. 41) (1227); Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 82 (no. 292). By 1285, Adam Naverattom had been instituted rector of St Nicholas Hacun: *Calendar of Ancient Deeds* volume 2 (London, 1894), p. 66 (no. A2341).

³⁷ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 12 (no. 38).

³⁸ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 34 (no. 119); *Middle English Dictionary* 4 G-H, pp. 826-7 *hogge* < castrated male swine or a young sheep before its first shearing (the latter would seem to be more apposite, therefore, indicating that her clients were mainly young males); p. 939 *hore* < whore, prostitute – this reference is provided as ‘hore’ most frequently implies grey(-headed) in nickname bynames.

³⁹ D. M. Stenton, ed., *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre being the Rolls of Pleas and Assizes for Yorkshire in 3 Henry III (1218-19)* (Selden Society 56, 1937), p. 256 (no. 689). Although, as noted above, *cunte* was unequivocally employed for the female vulva, *cunteles* here is not unambiguously derived from *cunte*, although that etymology looks most relevant.

⁴⁰ Bodl., MS d.d. Queen’s College Roll 93 (11 Edward I).

⁴¹ D. M. Stenton, ed., *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Roll A.D. 1202-1209* (Lincoln Record Society 22, Lincoln 1926), p. 119 (no. 670). As will be clarified later, such nicknames were constructed in both vernacular languages, French and Middle English, which in this case were equal in register.

⁴² To allow the argument to continue to flow without interruption, an appendix contains a description of the material in lay subsidies and the deficiencies of this source.

In considering the processes operating in the attribution of nicknames, there were two primary intentions: to identify; or to label and shame.⁴³ Whilst the vast proportion of nickname bynames were neutrally descriptive and performed only identification, the imposition of compound, insalubrious descriptors on others must have involved the dominant group intending humiliation of a perceived 'deviant' within their midst. Nickname bynames of this form were thus discursively produced to regulate and control, to shame and humiliate, to reinstate and reinforce the norms of morality of the dominant group. Nickname bynames of a certain type were thus composed to regulate and control transgressive actions; they were disciplinary and regulatory. The imposition of scatological nickname bynames was 'communitarian' only to the extent that it was the collusive action of a group against an individual, either to condemn transgressive acts or to confirm marginalization. Such censured actions included not only felonies and sexual misdemeanours, but also transgression of norms of hospitality and neighbourliness, as will be illustrated below. The attribution of these disciplinary nickname bynames thus had a normative force and intention.

Perhaps the most significant process concerned how marked language was constructed and employed, not least through sexual innuendo.⁴⁴ In the late eleventh century, one of the inhabitants of Winchester, Godwin, was designated by a spectacularly salacious nickname, *Clawcunte*.⁴⁵ In the same urban context occurred the nickname bynames *Balloc* and *Taddeballoc*.⁴⁶ In 1167 in King's Lynn a fine was imposed on Simon *Sittebid' cunte*.⁴⁷

What is interesting about the more salacious and poignant nickname bynames is that they did not incur litigation for defamation. One reason might have been that these were not speech acts between individuals, but a collective expression by a group against one person. Litigation for defamation tended to cohere around more general terms (whore, thief) rather than the specificity of nickname bynames. Since there was, however, change over time in the employment of some of these nickname bynames, that technical legal reason cannot be the only explanation, although the promulgation against slander by the Council of Oxford in 1222 (introducing the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215) was a potential influence (see further below).⁴⁸ That '[T]he English law of defamation had its effective origin in a provincial Constitution of the Council of Oxford (1222)' must have had some impact of these processes of nickname bynaming, without eliminating them immediately.⁴⁹ The limitation of this conciliar decree was that it related only to spoken words between individuals and there had to be an imputation of a crime.⁵⁰ In the context of group expression, moreover, prior *infamia* traduced the claim of slander.⁵¹

Bynames discursively formed to reveal strong and overt sexual and bodily connotations, although never prolific, declined in use. The really expressive ones are

⁴³ For the multifaceted and multivocal role of gossip – to which nickname bynames can be compared – including shaming and excluding, M. Tebbutt, *Women's Talk? A Social History of 'Gossip' in Working-class Neighbourhoods, 1880-1960* (Aldershot, 1995); Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*; S. Hindle, 'The shaming of Margaret Knowsley: gossip, gender and the experience of authority in early-modern England,' *Continuity and Change* 9 (1994), pp. 391-414.

⁴⁴ On the meanings of obscenity, J. Ziolkowski, ed., *Obscenity. Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages* (Medieval and Early Modern Series, Leiden, 1988).

⁴⁵ O. von Feilitzen, 'The personal names and bynames of the Winton Domesday', in M. Biddle, ed., *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages* 1 (Oxford, 1972), p. 210; prototheme (first element) OE *clawian*, to scratch, and deutertheme (second element) OE *cunte* (female vulva); see also *Middle English Dictionary II (C-D)*, p. 785 (*cunte*).

⁴⁶ von Feilitzen, 'The personal names and bynames of the Winton Domesday', pp. 207 and 216. *Taddeballoc*, however, might more accurately be *Caddeballoc*, a not unusual tautological nickname byname, effectively 'bollock bollock'.

⁴⁷ D. M. Owen, ed., *The Making of King's Lynn* (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History n.s. 9, Oxford, 1984), p. 71.

⁴⁸ R. H. Helmholz, *Select Cases on Defamation to 1600* (Selden Society 101, 1985), p. xi.

⁴⁹ Helmholz, *Select Cases on Defamation*, p. xiv.

⁵⁰ Helmholz, *Select Cases on Defamation*, pp. xiv, xxvi-xxxiv.

⁵¹ Helmholz, *Select Cases on Defamation*, p. xxxv.

encountered at an earlier time and had diminished in production by the middle of the thirteenth century; by the early and mid fourteenth century, sexually explicit or implicit bynames survived in the 'North' but had all but disappeared in the 'South'. What seems to have happened was a change in language use, probably from unmarked to marked language.⁵² An earlier emphatic preoccupation with the lower part of the body was gradually renounced.⁵³ By the middle of the thirteenth century, the lexis of bynames was being reformed and their language marked.

Influences on this transformation were probably multiple. The transition from unstable bynames associated predominantly with an individual, to hereditary surnames provided one point of truncation, impeding the coining of new nickname bynames and family surnames demanding no overt dishonour.

Perhaps other influences were being exerted, however, including the development of civility in an urban context. *Clawcunte* in eleventh-century Winchester is testimony to a directness of language without marking in the earlier urban context. Subsequently, urban centres provide no nickname bynames of this extremity. By comparison, the byname *Daubedame* which occurs in admissions to the freemen's gild in Leicester in 1225, is a rather subdued, covert sexually-informed designation, literally 'deceive woman', although almost certainly euphemistic.⁵⁴ In 1252 and 1268 two burgesses admitted to the freedom of Shrewsbury bore the byname *Buckeballoc* whilst a townsman of Portsmouth in c.1248 was identified by the moniker *Strokehose*.⁵⁵ One possibility then is that an introduction of civility amongst burgesses contributed to the elimination of what became coarse and marked language. One direction of this influence might have been the assimilation of French culture with Middle English culture in boroughs in late twelfth-century England, producing a culture of self-restraint.⁵⁶ One of the origins of that civility in an urban context might have been the influx of French burgesses to English towns in the twelfth century. Such burgesses might

⁵² The concept of marked language extends back, although in a structuralist context, to R. Jakobson, *On Language* ed. L. R. Waugh and M. Manville-Burston (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), pp. 134-40.

⁵³ Interestingly, such embodied language, constantly referring to the lower part of the body in the context of ridicule and laughter, persisted in the French *fabliaux*: J. Hines, *The Fabliau in English* (London, 1993), pp. 16-23 (*foutre, cons, coilles, cul and vit*); R. H. Bloch, *The Scandal of the Fabliaux* (Chicago, 1986), pp. 59-101 (ch. 2: 'The body and its parts') and pp. 101-28 (ch. 3: 'The fabliaux, fetishism and the joke'); see, comparatively, M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), and for commentary on Bakhtin, A. Swingewood, *Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity* (London, 1998), pp. 108-35, P. Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 77-8, 86-7, and 211-12; R. C. Young, *Torn Halves. Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 49-53; S. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 149-99, esp. pp. 155-69. 'Excess' (bodily and otherwise) as a cultural concept (as also as a way of living) was being developed by Georges Bataille, in part contemporaneously with Bakhtin: F. Botting and S. Wilson, *Bataille. A Critical Reader* (Oxford, 1998); P. Hegarty, *Georges Bataille. Core Cultural Theorist* (London, 2000).

⁵⁴ Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, I, p. 10; L. W. Stone, W. Rothell and T. B. Reid, eds, *Anglo-Norman Dictionary Fascicle 2: D-E*, p. 140, allows v.a. *dauber* 'to deceive, pretend' or adj. 'insincere, deceitful'; see also von Feilitzen, 'The personal names and bynames of the Winton Domesday', p. 140.

⁵⁵ C. H. Drinkwater, 'The merchant gild of Shrewsbury. Seven rolls of the thirteenth century', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society* 2nd series 12 (1900), pp. 251 and 259; A. Hanna, ed., *The Cartulary of Southwick Priory* (2 vols, Hampshire Record Series 9-10, Winchester, 1988), I, p. 151.

⁵⁶ Pace N. Elias, *The Civilising Process. The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization* trans. E. Jephcott (2 vols, Oxford, 1994); R. Harré, *Social Constructions of Emotion* (Oxford, 1986); B. H. Rosenwein, *Anger's Past. The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1998); C. Clark, 'People and languages in post-Conquest Canterbury' in Clark, *Words, Names and History. Selected Writings of Cecily Clark* ed. P. Jackson (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 179-206; analogously, J. Gillingham, '1066 and the introduction of chivalry into England' in G. Garnett and J. Hudson, eds, *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy. Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 31-55.

have been receptive to the wider development of civility in secular concern with honour and hospitality.⁵⁷

Despite the unequivocal sexual language of the northern French *fabliaux*, sexual imputations are seemingly absent from nickname bynames in France.⁵⁸ The northern French *fabliaux*, however, do reflect an analogous interest in 'low' culture, in heteroglossia, in marked language, and in the subversive laughter exhibited by some Middle English nickname bynames.⁵⁹ Some nickname bynames in England, constructed in French, might have reflected some sexual connotations.⁶⁰ The reception of French lexis is compounded by issues of second language acquisition and the motives behind individual clerk's code-switching.⁶¹ Two French nickname bynames which potentially exhibit sexual connotations are *Peverel* ('peppery, spicy') and *Levelaunce* ('raise lance/stick/rod').⁶² *Peverel* is particularly interesting since it is usually associated with the Anglo-Norman nobility, but extended throughout medieval English society. In Ellington (Hunts.) a tenant of two acres at a rent of 2d. in 1166x1171 was identified by the byname *Peverel*.⁶³ A multitude of *Peverels* was assessed to the lay subsidy of 1332 in Devon and to that of 1327 in Essex, all at modest levels.⁶⁴ Obviously of peasant status, Robert *Peverel* was presented in the manorial court of Sevenhampton for trespass by his horse in the meadow in 1276.⁶⁵ Appearing before the Crown pleas in Gloucester in 1221, Walter *Peverel* had become embroiled in a fight over a trespassing sheep.⁶⁶ In 1208-9, John *Lanceleuee* essoined in a plea before the King's justices.⁶⁷ More restricted in its distribution, this byname recurred mainly in Worcestershire and Warwickshire, but also in Lincolnshire.⁶⁸ Additionally, occasionally other nickname

⁵⁷ For the wider context of honour and hospitality, J. Kerr, 'The open door: hospitality and honour in twelfth/early thirteenth-century England', *History* 30 (2002), pp. 322-35.

⁵⁸ For this purpose, a search has been made of M-Th Morlet, 'Les noms de personne à Eu du xiii^e au xv^e siècle', *Revue Internationale d'Onomastique* 12 (1960), pp. 62-70, 137-78 and 205-19; Morlet, *Dictionnaire Etymologique des Noms de Famille* (Paris, 1991); and Morlet, *Étude d'Anthroponymie Picarde. Les Noms de Personne en Haute Picardie aux XIII^e, XIV^e, XV^e Siècles* (Amiens, 1967). There remains the possibility, however, that the sexual consideration of some French nickname bynames has been overlooked: see the examples (in England) of *Peverel* and *Levelaunce* below.

⁵⁹ See n. 15 above.

⁶⁰ On bilingualism in medieval England: L. Voigt, 'What's the word? Bilingualism in late medieval England', *Speculum* 71 (1996), pp. 813-26; I. Short, 'On bilingualism in Anglo-Norman England', *Romance Philology* 33 (1980), pp. 467-79; R. Lodge, 'Language attitudes and linguistic norms in France and England in the thirteenth century' in P. R. Coss and S. Lloyd, eds, *Thirteenth Century England. Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1991* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 73-83.

⁶¹ V. Cook, *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition* (London, 1993); Voigt, 'What's the word?' For the general context of the incorporation of French loan-words, J. Coleman, 'The chronology of French and Latin loan words in English', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 93 (1995), pp. 95-124; for theoretical aspects, F. Katamba, *English Words* (London, 1994), pp. 193-4, where it is suggested that nouns are the most common loan-words, but that verbs are also included in the 'open lexical classes', which has an impact on the formation of compounded nickname bynames in medieval England, particularly the verbal phrase items (e.g. *Shakespeare* or *Waggstaffe* vis-à-vis *Levelaunce*).

⁶² For *Peverel*, C. Clark, 'Socioeconomic status and individual identity: essential factors in the analysis of Middle English personal naming', in *Words, Names and History*, pp. 110-12.

⁶³ Hart & Lyons, *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, III, p. 206.

⁶⁴ *Devon*, pp. 7-8, 31, 33, 54, 93, 96 and 123; *Essex*, pp. 1, 21, 24, 26, 43, 50, 52, 73, 84, and 94. See also the lowly levels of assessment of *Peverels* in other places: *Hertfordshire*, p. 132 (12d.); *Kent*, p. 150 (12d.); *Suffolk*, p. 105 (6d.); *Sussex*, pp. 201, 204 (24d. and 27d.); *Dorset 1332*, pp. 6, 33-4, 54 and 102 (24d., 8d., 24d., 12d., and 16d.).

⁶⁵ R. B. Pugh, ed., *Court Rolls of the Wiltshire Manors of Adam de Stratton* (Wiltshire Record Society 24, 1970 for 1968), pp. 29, 34.

⁶⁶ F. W. Maitland, ed., *Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester before the Abbot of Reading and his Fellow Justices Itinerant, in the Fifth year of the Reign of King Henry the Third ... 1221* (London, 1884), p. 99 (no. 416).

⁶⁷ Stenton, *Pleas before the King*, p. 118 (no. 3510).

⁶⁸ See also the *Lanceleue* kinship 1210x1220: F. M. Stenton, ed., *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections* (Northamptonshire Record Society 20, 1930), pp. 104, 116, 118.

bynames in French insinuate a sexual content, such as Robert *Grantamur*, the Lincolnshire clerk, mentioned above, or, unusually in admissions to the freedom of the borough of Leicester in the early thirteenth century, *Daubedame* also as above, both almost certainly euphemisms. Most extravagant perhaps was the nickname *Coyldeor* (a synonym for ME *Gildenebollocks* ('golden bollocks')) which occurred at Wilden in Bedfordshire in 1297, its bearer assessed at 1s. 5d. to the lay subsidy.⁶⁹ Whilst French compounded nicknames did represent misdemeanours or contained uncomplimentary connotations, normally sexual content was absent.

Interpretation of these French bynames is complicated by the problems of all nicknames: irony and intent (the nature of the speech act); metonyms; and status of the bearer.⁷⁰ Moreover, the lower Anglo-Norman nobility was characterised by nicknames as well as toponyms and even some of the higher nobility acquired this sort of identification.⁷¹ Of course, the existence of French nickname bynames elicits the question of whether these forms originated merely as code-switching by clerks or whether they were generated by local inhabitants. So profuse are they and so contingent their distribution that their genesis within the local population can be countenanced. Occasionally – but very rarely – corroborative evidence is available: when questioned in the ecclesiastical court of the province of Canterbury in 1270, John *Golde* professed that he agreed with the previous witness, Thomas *de Caham*, except that John did not understand the words spoken by the prior and the judge since he did not comprehend French, but he sufficiently realised the tenor of the proceedings through discussion with his companions and others present. Amongst lower social groups, consequently, some limited knowledge of French might have accrued, allowing some local inhabitants to coin a restricted corpus of French nickname bynames, the intention of which could be communicated more widely locally.⁷²

Nickname bynames complicated by irony might include, for example, *Parlebien* ('speak well' - loquacious as much as articulate), *Jevousdy* ('I say to you' -loquacious, self-important, dogmatic), *Saunfayl* ('without fail' - unreliable rather than consistent), *Bonefey* ('good faith' - faithless), *Purquei* ('why?' - irrational), *Certeyn* (dogmatic), *Boniour* ('good day' - irritatingly sociable), and a whole range of nicknames ostensibly intimating good Christian values, but perhaps excessive zeal or the reverse of the literal meaning: *Vixedieu*; *Homedieu* ('God's man'); *Plesedeue* ('please God'); *Veraycroyse* ('true cross'); *Purdieu* ('for God'); *Pardeu* ('by God'); *Chacedeu* ('seek God'); and *Wardedeu* ('God save').⁷³ Potentially, all these nickname bynames might have been complicated by ironic laughter.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Bedfordshire*, p. 11. Cf. *aurei testiculi* of Domesday Book: Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 285. For *Gildynballokes*, for example, Roger G. in Sowerby (Wakefield, Yorkshire) in 1316: *Wakefield Court Rolls III*, p. 138.

⁷⁰ For what might well represent euphemism or hypercorrection through register, William *Saunpere* at Stoke near Newark in Nottinghamshire, assessed at 4s. in the lay subsidy: P. R. O. E179/159/5, m. 11.

⁷¹ For some of these nickname bynames associated with baronial status: I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies. A Study in their Origin and Descent 1086-1327* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 3 (*Blund*), 19 (*Peveler*), 20 (*Capra*), 28 (*Mauduit*), 49 (*Basset*), 79, 83 (*Gernon*). For an analysis of the forms of *cognomina* of French tenants-in-chief in Domesday Book, J. C. Holt, *What's in a Name? Family Nomenclature and the Norman Conquest* (Stenton Lecture, Reading, 1981), p. 20.

⁷² N. Adams & C. Donahue, eds, *Select Cases from the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Province of Canterbury c.1200-1301* (Selden Society 95, 1981 for 1978-9), pp. 214, 216.

⁷³ *Vixedieu*: *Wiltshire*, p. 82 (24d.)

Saunfaylle: *Warwickshire*, pp. 16 (12d.), 18 (24d.); *Essex*, p. 24 (24d.); P. R. O. E179/135/16 m. 2 (24d.); P. R. O. E179/159/5, m. 9 (Aslockton, Notts., two taxpayers at 2s. 1d. and 5s. 9d.)

Purdieu: *Hertfordshire*, p. 20 (10d.); *Warwickshire*, p. 29 (18d.)

Pardeu: *Warwickshire*, p. 76 (18d.); *Worcestershire*, p. 84 (30d.)

Certeyn: 'Staffordshire', p. 197 (36d.)

Plesedeue: 'Derbyshire', p. 73 (12d.)

Homedieu: *Wiltshire*, p. 127 (12d.)

Jeovousdy: *Wiltshire*, p. 51 (9d.); *Yorkshire 1301*, p. 27 (30d.); *Sussex*, pp. 144 (19d.), 145 (60d.); see also Thomas *Jeovousdy*, arrested for theft: R. B. Pugh, ed., *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials 1275-1306* (Wiltshire Record Society 33, 1978 for 1977), p. 80 (no. 312).

A considerable amount of French lexis in compound nicknames, however, is straightforwardly demonstrative. Transgressive, aggressive or boisterous speech was denounced through the nickname byname *Baret*, which pervaded lower social groups, although *Maudu(i)t* ('ill-bred') was largely (but not exclusively) confined to the lesser nobility.⁷⁵ Unsocial behaviour was castigated in the bynames *Cachepayn* ('take bread'), *Cachevacche* ('take cow'), *Cachemort* ('take death'), *Sanscor* ('heartless'), *Mauucuaunt* ('bad agreement');⁷⁶ officialdom caricatured by *Cachepol* ('take tax') and *Leuedime* ('raise tax');⁷⁷ and local misdemeanour, such as hedge-breaking, censured by bynames such as *Percheye* ('break hedge') and *Brisetimbr* ('break wood').⁷⁸ Precipitate anger was implicit in the byname *Briselaunce* ('break lance/stick') and lack of neighbourliness or hospitality by *Mauuesyn* ('bad neighbour') and *Prentut* ('take all').⁷⁹ Nor were only bodily characteristics implied by *Vysdelu* ('wolf's gaze'), *Maupetyt* ('small and bad'), *Malemeyns* ('dirty hands'), *Tornekourt* ('turn away quickly'), and *Petipas* ('mincing step'), and such designations as *Payledecerf* ('deerskin') might not only disclose dishevelment but also dilatoriness.⁸⁰

Purquei: *Huntingdonshire*, p. 71 (24d.)

Chacedeu: *Huntingdonshire*, p. 82 (18d.)

Parleb(i)en: *Devon*, pp. 58 (8d.), 60 (15d.); *Essex*, pp. 55 (12d.), 67 (6d.); P. R. O. E179/135/15, mm. 7 (60d.), 8 (16d., 114d., 18d.), 20 (12d.), 28 (39d., 21d.), 30 (37d.), 57 (71d.); *Hertfordshire*, p. 103 (19d.); 'Kent', p. 137 (56d.); *Worcestershire*, p. 94; 'Shropshire', p. 140 (24d.); *Sussex*, p. 189 (18d.)

Wardedeu: *Sussex*, p. 217 (120d., 144d., 60d.)

Boniour: 'Kent', pp. 150 (12d.), 160 (12d.); *Suffolk*, p. 69 (12d.)

Bonfey: *Suffolk*, p. 108 (12d., 12d.), 135 (12d.), 222 (30d.); *Maufei*, *Sussex*, p. 185 (48d.)

Parmafey: *Suffolk*, p. 135 (6d.) ('by my faith')

Certeyn, 'Kent' p. 153 (12d.)

Veraycroysse: *Yorkshire1301*, pp. 14 (4d.), 17 (17d.)

⁷⁴ S. Haliwell, 'The uses of laughter in Greek culture', *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1991), pp. 279-96 for the differences of 'playful' laughter and 'consequential' laughter. Playful, which derives from the dominant ideology, is collective and consensus-building; consequential is ironic and subversive and represents the limited resistance of the powerless. It seems more pertinent in the context of Middle English bynames that the imposition of these bynames was ironic, but was a speech act of the 'community' against marginalized individuals. For nicknames thus as comparable to shaming, see below. See also, Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London, 1995).

⁷⁵ *Maudu(i)t*: *Devon*, p. 36 (15d.); *Wiltshire*, pp. 34 (81d.), 61 (72d.), 92 (24d.), 96 (48d.), 119 (49d.), 120 (57d.); *Worcestershire*, pp. 7 (24d.), 11 (80d., 24d.); *Gloucestershire*, p. 29 (48d.); *Sussex*, p. 118 (12d.); *Dorset1332*, p. 26 (32d.), p. 56 (96.). Traditionally, the explanation of this byname is 'poorly educated' (*maledoctus*), but the implication must surely be ill-bred; for a straight reading of *Saunfayl* as 'without fault', Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, pp. 154-5.

⁷⁶ *Wiltshire*, p. 108 (24d.); *Essex*, p. 68 (19d.); P. R. O. E179/135/16, m. 39 (24d.), 46 (24d.); *Yorkshire1301*, p. 41 (91d., 26d.); *Surrey*, p. 62 (12d.); *Worcestershire*, p. 25 (36d.); *Yorkshire1297*, p. 151 (12d.). See also Robert *Kachevache* who held half a virgate at Hecham (Suffolk) in 1222: B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fos 173v-176r. For *Cachemort*, two tenants each of five acres in Pulham (Norfolk) in 1222, Ailward and Robert: B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fos 184r-191v. A ME cognate of *Sanscor* might be *Coperhert* (Henry who held a virgate and two acres at Rattlesden in Norfolk): B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fos 177v-180r.

⁷⁷ *Essex*, p. 23 (10d.); *Yorkshire1301*, p. 49 (31d.)

⁷⁸ For *Percheye*, for example, Ralph *Percheye* who made a benefaction of four selions in Sandiacre to Dale Abbey: A. Saltman, *The Cartulary of Dale Abbey* (Derbyshire Archaeological Society Record Series 2, 1966), pp. 216-17 (no. 295).

⁷⁹ *Briselaunce* and its variants: *Wiltshire*, p.5 (18d.); P. R. O. E179/135/15 m.2 (12d) and E179/135/16 m. 54 (12d. and 42d.); *Gloucestershire*, pp. 53, 106 (6d. bis and 45d.).

Mauuesyn: 'Staffordshire', p. 228 (69d. and 18d.); *Suffolk*, pp. 1, 26, 136, 207-8 (16d., 18d., 24d., 36d., 38d.). See also Herbert *Malluesin* who was amerced half a mark for selling wine against the assize in Shrewsbury in 1203: Stenton, *Pleas Before the King*, p. 120 (no. 870).

Prentut: *Surrey*, p. 65 (9d. and 12d. and perhaps therefore ironic); 'Kent', p. 142 (24d.); *Worcestershire*, p. 55 (24d.).

⁸⁰ *Yorkshire1301*, p. 96 (9d.); *Buckinghamshire*, p. 85 (25d.); *Surrey*, pp. 35, 77 (36d., 117d.); *Hertfordshire*, p. 136 (18d., 26d.); 'Kent', pp. 76, 81, 102, 107, 113 (119d., 120d., 144d., 160d., 294d.);

Cowardice was implicit in *Perngarde* ('take care') (contrasted with *Cordeboef* ['beefheart']) and anxiety in *Mortdefreyt* ('die of fright').⁸¹ Did *Saumbouch* ('mouthless') indicate merely a physical characteristic or did it rather suggest tight-lipped and unsociable?⁸² Whatever the specific ambiguities, constructions of nickname bynames in French involved the same regulatory and disciplinary discourse as Middle English ones, but the difference inhered in the degree of sexual content as marked language. Stricture and irony were deployed in Anglo-Norman forms, but without exhibiting the same degree of 'low' culture.

The ironic content of Anglo-Norman nickname bynames is perhaps best illustrated by (*le*) *Boner*, *Boneyre* and variants, which was broadly adopted. The generally low level of assessment of taxpayers identified by this nickname questions whether the bearers achieved this state of politeness and serenity. Of thirty-nine such taxpayers, fifty-one per cent were assessed on less than 16d. and eighty-two per cent on less than 30d. The mean level of their taxation was 22d. (standard deviation 19.95) and the median 15d.⁸³ The byname was attributed to Hugh *Boneire* who held a messuage in Witney in 1279-80 and to Alexander *Debonere* admitted to the freedom of the borough of Leicester in 1242-3.⁸⁴ Of peasant status, a manorial juror at Kensworth, was Gilbert *Deboneire*, holding just over ten acres of land.⁸⁵ Perhaps the antonym, in the Latin register, existed in Adam *Iratus* of Witham (Essex) in 1185, a byname which might equivocally have imported irony or have been intended to stigmatise.⁸⁶ We know too that some of the most elevated players in the land were unsuccessful in attempts to portray themselves as 'debonair'.⁸⁷

The directly derogatory intentionality of other nickname bynames is illustrated by the attribution of *Poleyn* ('coltish'), a not unusual French nickname byname.⁸⁸ The effect of this naming was not merely coltish or playful, but could resonate with irresponsibility.⁸⁹ On the other hand, Elias *Pulain*, merchant of Bridlington, whatever his earlier temperament, exhibited none of the characteristics of unruliness in his later life as he made benefactions to Bridlington Priory: a rent of 6d. to be collected by the sacristan *ad opus eiusdem ecclesie* ('for the same church's use') and a toft for a light and a *cantaria*.⁹⁰

Suffolk, pp. 1, 8, 9, 31, 123, 214 (16d. *bis*, 24d. *bis*, 72d. *bis*, 96d.); *Dorset1332*, pp. 26, 97, 103 (8d. *bis*, 12d.). For *Payldecerf* in the mid fourteenth century, *Chancery Miscellanea Part IV* (List & Index Society 38, 1968) bundle 67, file 7, 245.

⁸¹ *Suffolk*, pp. 14, 38 (12d., 36d.); *Sussex*, p. 120 (12d.);

⁸² *Sussex*, p. 144 (22d.)

⁸³ *Essex*, pp. 79, 90 (6d. *bis*, 11d.); P. R. O. E179/135/15 mm. 9, 10 (20d., 46d., 48d., 68d.); *Yorkshire1301*, pp. 34, 54, 66, 72 (6d., 23d., 24d., 46d.); *Huntingdonshire*, pp. 80 (17d.), 158, 200 (12d., 18d.); *Buckinghamshire*, p. 89 (12d.); *Worcestershire*, p. 45 (108d.); *Hertfordshire*, pp. 50, 109, 111 (9d., 13d., 15., 25d., 27d.); *Kent*, pp. 85, 108 (8d., 24d.); *Yorkshire1297*, p. 121 (24d.); *Derbyshire*, p. 89 (36d.); *Gloucestershire*, p. 68 (23d., 36d.); *Warwickshire*, pp. 60, 73, 85-6 (8d. *tres*, 24d. *bis*); *Suffolk*, pp. 43, 200 (12d. *bis*); *Sussex*, pp. 128, 144 (6d., 8d.); *Dorset1332*: pp. 12, 40, 53 (8d., 9d., 12d.).

⁸⁴ *Oxfordshire Hundred Rolls of 1279 : 1. The Hundred of Bampton / edited by E. Stone; 2. The Borough of Witney ; edited by Patricia Hyde* (Oxfordshire Record Society 46, 1968), p. 93; Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, I, p. 14.

⁸⁵ W. H. Hale, ed., *The Domesday of St Paul's of the Year M.CC.XXII* (Camden Society 69, 1858), pp. 7, 10, 12.

⁸⁶ Lees, *Templars*, p. 3.

⁸⁷ P. Hyams, 'What did Henry III of England think of in bed and in French about kingship and anger?' in B. Rosenwein, ed., *Anger's Past. The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York, 1998), pp. 92-126.

⁸⁸ *Devon*, pp. 28, 32, 46, 101 (18d. *bis*, 20d., 24d.); *Wiltshire*, pp. 30, 74 (32d., 76d.); *Essex*, p. 86 (24d.); are examples.

⁸⁹ M. R. Morgan, 'The meanings of Old French Polain, Latin Pullanus', *Medium Aevum* 48 (1979), pp. 40-54.

⁹⁰ B. L. Add. MS 40,008, fos 16v, 17v, 28r: (toft) *ad inuencionem et sustentacionem sufficientis luminaris pro dicto altari in ecclesia parochiali de Bridel' ac pro uno capellano et successoribus suis pro anima mea et anima margar' uxoris mee ibidem successiue celebraturis in perpetuum* (for the finding and maintaining of an appropriate light for the said altar in the parochial church of Bridlington

The suggestion has been made that in fact some compound nickname bynames – the verbal phrase type – were introduced with Anglo-Norman rather than having a ME syntactical etymology.⁹¹ The existence of *Clawcunte* in Winchester in the late eleventh century perhaps argues for an independent Middle English origin. Furthermore, compound nickname bynames of this type – without sexual, but with bodily content – are evident amongst the late-eleventh-century peasantry in East Anglia.⁹² Significantly in both cases the bearers of these compound nicknames had Old English (insular Germanic) forenames, excluding any Anglo-Norman influence. One other pertinent observation might be made here: whilst there are ME synonyms for some (but a limited number) of these Anglo-Norman verbal phrase nicknames, several are uniquely expressed in French with no ME equivalent occurring as a byname. The assumption might consequently be made that lower social groups had some (limited) understanding of Anglo-Norman; in these cases it would seem that these were actually the forms of name attributed to individuals rather than a clerical construction of them for purposes of self-fashioning through code-switching, a premise consistent with the extensive employment of Anglo-Norman monothematic nickname bynames.

Other discourses can be discerned which acted towards the refinement of speech, including an intense homiletic exhortation after 1215 for restraint and prudence in speech.⁹³ Central to this programme was confession through which every priest could and should act as a religious teacher, controlling transgressive speech, emphasising the pollution of deviant (secular profane and defiled) speech from the same mouth that recited (sacred) salvific prayer. ‘Naming, teaching, and extirpating verbal sins had’, consequently, ‘become a fundamental pastoral activity’, eliding sins of the tongue into the seven deadly sins.⁹⁴ A pastoral literature and confessional intervention had the power to define normative speech, define deviance of language, with consequences for the lexis of nickname bynames. The reformation of language – of utterances and oaths – which this clerical campaign performed might well have inhibited the attribution of scatological names.

Nevertheless, such reform did not completely extirpate scatological nickname bynames, but their persistence seems to have been confined to the ‘North’ rather than the south, although some innuendo forms which had become stable in the language persisted in the south as well. The more ‘inventive’ unsavoury (to us) lexis appears to have continued more in the ‘North’. A ‘rich’ and robust vocabulary of sexually implicit or explicit language is encountered in some nickname bynames in the lay subsidies in the ‘Northern’ counties in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: *Brountayl*; *Clevecunt*; *Coltepyntel*; *Cruskunt*; *Fillecunte* (code-mixed, but with the salacious sexual item in Middle English); *Pytayl*; *Shaketaille*; *Twychecunt*; and *Wytepyntell*.⁹⁵ To these might be added, from

and for a chaplain and his successors celebrating continuously and forever for my soul and my wife, Margaret’s (or Margery’s) soul.’

⁹¹ For discussion of the linguistic milieu and origin of verb+noun compounds (formerly designated ‘imperative’ or ‘Shakespeare’), C. Clark, ‘Thoughts on the French connection of Middle English nicknames’, *Nomina* 2 (1978), pp. 38-44; B. Seltén, *Early East Anglian Nicknames: ‘Shakespeare’ Names* (Lund, 1969); G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘On the study of Middle English by-names’, *Namn och Bygd* 68 (1980), pp. 107-9; J. Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames. I. Compounds* (Lund, 1979), pp. 38-40 and 43. It was Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 383 who initiated the term ‘imperative names’.

⁹² D. C. Douglas, ed., *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (London, 1932), pp. 25 (*Hopeheue*), 26 (*Crepunder*), 32 (*Scaldehare*) for example (1065x1098). Cecily Clark and I came to this conclusion independently.

⁹³ For what follows, E. D. Craun, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity in Medieval English Pastoral Literature. Pastoral Rhetoric and the Deviant Speaker* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁹⁴ Craun, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, pp. 9 and 13 (quotation from p. 13).

⁹⁵ Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, pp. 66, 71-2, 74, 77, 89-90, 148, 156-8, 171, 180, 182 and 197. Their sexual imputations were elucidated by P. McClure, ‘The interpretation of Middle English nicknames’ *Nomina* 5 (1981), pp. 95-104 esp. pp. 98-9, and J. Insley, ‘Recent trends into English bynames and surnames: some critical remarks’, *Studia Neophilologica* 65 (1993), pp. 57-71; *Middle English Dictionary II (C-D)*, p. 322 (*cleven*: to stick, be sticky, adhesive). Reference to female pudenda as ‘tail’ was as prolific in sixteenth-century speech: Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 81; G.

Northumberland in the 1296 lay subsidy, John *Scharpyntil* and William *Silvirpintil*.⁹⁶ On the periphery of the 'North' *Ass(e)bollok* was applied to two taxpayers in Newark on Trent, although neither was impecunious (taxed at just over a mark and at 34s. 8d.).⁹⁷ It was on men that these resonant nickname bynames were imposed, and particularly men in the 'North', so that there is the prospect that such language was eradicated more slowly in the 'North' where a more rudimentary Middle English persisted.⁹⁸

The development of marked language might thus have been influenced from a number of coalescing directions: a new civic urban context and a reformation of language propagated by the Church; which together induced a form of self-restraint and control of bodily representation concentrating less on the Bakhtinian lower body. The body continued, of course, to be an important concern, the source of a large proportion of nickname bynames. Whilst in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the first development of bynames, it was not unconscionable for the (lesser) nobility to receive bodily nickname bynames, such as *Basset* ('low of stature' but with the implication of being 'short-legged'), the creation of new embodied bynames in the thirteenth and even early fourteenth centuries was associated predominantly with marginals, those from whom other (more dignified) forms of byname were reserved.⁹⁹ By the later time, bynames from the body equalled marginality, by and large.

Embodied bynames, somatic selves¹⁰⁰

Although medieval people inhabited a somatic society, the perception was not of the body as culturally constructed but as phenomenological and lived or, philosophically as metaphor. Perhaps inevitably, our contemporary understanding of the body not merely as a social metaphor but also as a contested site of inscription and boundaries, has been considered largely from certain types of source – that is, those which contribute to the establishment and perpetuation of (perhaps competing and contested) discourses. Understanding the lived experience of the body is more difficult to assess. Whilst literary texts such as the genre of the *fabliaux* reflected social practice and contributed to common knowledge, intertextuality in composition – in appropriating and re-using motifs from other texts – removes this source from the realms of direct experience. A phenomenological approach remains usually only possible through what might be considered extraordinary events, such as punishment, miracles, and self-denial.

Another potential source before the early fourteenth century is, nevertheless, presented by nickname bynames which not only described but also imputed characteristics of the body. To some extent, those bynames not only relate to the individual, but also reveal

Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare's Sexual Language* (London, 1997), pp. 300-1. Note, however, William *Grungetyl*, a tenant of half a virgate at Hardwick (Warws.) in 1279-80: T. John, ed., *The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80. Stoneleigh and Kineton Hundreds* (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History n.s. 19, 1991), p. 204.

⁹⁶ *Northumberland*, pp. 48, 106, 177; *Middle English Dictionary VII (O-P)*, p. 955 (pintel: penis).

⁹⁷ P. R. O. E179/159/5, m. 12.

⁹⁸ For similar terms in a southern county in the late thirteenth century, Hunnissett, *Bedfordshire Coroner's Rolls*, pp. 58 (no. 126) and p. 61 (no. 134): *Pinnecurte* (1272) and *Wytpintel* (1274).

⁹⁹ So, see, for example, the John *Basset* who stole a pig in 1317: B. H. Putnam, ed., *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317* (Kent Records 13, 1933), p. 42 (no. 196).

¹⁰⁰ A. Synnott, *The Body Social. Symbolism, Self and Society* (London, 1993), p. 3: 'The body is strange, therefore, capable of carrying a wide range of ever-changing meanings. It is the prime constituent of personal and social identity; yet also the deepest prejudices and discriminations, for and against, accrue to the body. Bodies are highly polarized in moral terms: male/female, old/young, beautiful/ugly, fat/thin, black/white, red/yellow, and so on, with valences depending upon personal and cultural values. Furthermore, the body is also internally polarized, between public parts like the face and private parts like the genitals – a polarization that coincides with other conventional dichotomies: higher and lower, and in the Western tradition, to a degree, good and bad'. It is precisely the changing pattern of these dichotomies that this chapter seeks to address for the middle ages.

attitudes towards the body in general, indicating marked features, concentration on upper and lower parts of the body, inscriptions on the body, the gendered body, the sexual body and, in more ambiguous manner, categories of the body (that is, age, infirmity, deformity *et al.*). The importance of nickname bynames in this particular context is that they are a direct reflection of bodily practice and not just a representation of either the idealised or the conventional body.

How the body was clothed may be considered as a critical aspect, for to a large extent whether self-fashioning existed depended on how the body was presented.¹⁰¹ For pre-modern fashion and fashioning, the appropriate question is how closely clothing was regulated by the conventions of social group, status and occupation.¹⁰² Distinctions of status, however, did not alone allow *self-fashioning* through clothing, since reference to tradition equally regulated clothing states.¹⁰³ Whilst not impugning the ability of the medieval social elite to engage in fashion for self-expression, it is clear that nickname bynaming through reference to clothing reflected marginality.¹⁰⁴ This presumption can be predicated on two conditions: (a) the level of assessment of taxpayers bearing bynames derived from clothing; and (b) the content of the bynames – that is, the clothing which was denoted.

Whilst it is possible to recover descriptions of clothing in cases of theft, such litigation does not reveal the value or symbolic meaning of the clothing. In 1297, Peter son of William *de Saltonstall* was accused of stealing a russet supertunic from the house of William *le Geldhirde*.¹⁰⁵ Arrested on the plaint of Evota, Magge *Codling* protested that she had bought a burnet hood honestly in Wakefield market in 1297.¹⁰⁶ A blue hood valued at 11d. stolen by his brother, Adam *Pacheloc*, William demanded justice in the Wakefield tourn in 1316;¹⁰⁷ at the same time, Marjory, daughter of Richard *Cosyn* was accused of stealing a surcoat worth 2s. and a hood of bluet worth 4d.¹⁰⁸ An attacker allegedly robbed John of a bluish-grey hood worth 6d., a red belt with bars of latten worth 3d., and a purse of white sheepskin worth 1d.¹⁰⁹ When Alice burgled a house in the manor of Wakefield, her proceeds included a woollen tunic and a blue surcoat, which, with two sheets, were valued at 3s. 4d. Although the articles are described and a cash value attributed to them, these cases provide no intimation of the symbolic significance to the owner. Perhaps nickname bynames provide a useful comparison here.

Taking into account as far as possible any ambiguities, 246 bynames of taxpayers derived from clothing. The mean level of assessment of these taxpayers was 26d., the

¹⁰¹ The complexity of the meanings of clothing is now best exemplified in A. R. Jones and P. Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), which, through its chronological specificity actually problematises medieval clothing and self-fashioning.

¹⁰² This is essentially one of the problems posed by G. Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion. Dressing Modern Democracy* trans. C. Porter (Princeton, 1994).

¹⁰³ Lipovetsky, *Empire of Fashion*, pp. 42-5.

¹⁰⁴ Choice of apparel might thus inflame or incite criticism, but the selection might still have been within conventional boundaries: ‘And yet sche wyst ful wel that men seyden hir ful mech velany, for sche weryd gold pyppys on hir hevyd, and hir hodys with tyyppetys were daggyd. Her clokys also wer daggyd and leyd with dyvers colowrs between the daggys, that it schuld be the mor staryng to mennys sygth and herself the mor ben worsheped’: B. Windeatt, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 57-8. Although such apparel might have seemed to her consonant with her father’s status as Mayor of Lynn and alderman of the Holy Trinity Guild, yet it invited the jealousy of her neighbours: ‘Sche had ful greet envye of hir neybowers, that thei schuld ben arayd so wel as sche’, according to the author of her biography, at least: *ibid.*, p. 58. When, however, she presumed, in response to God’s exhortation, to wear only white, she was reticent: ‘A, der Lord, yf I go arayd on other maner than other chast women don, I dred that the pepyl wyl slawndyr me. Thei wyl sey I am an ypocrit and wondry upon me.’ *Ibid.*, p. 102; and thus the rhetorical prophecy pronounced by her biographer indeed came to pass.

¹⁰⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, p. 285.

¹⁰⁶ *Wakfield Court Rolls* I, p. 272.

¹⁰⁷ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, p. 185.

¹⁰⁸ *Wakefield Court Rolls* III, pp. 146, 153.

¹⁰⁹ Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners’ Rolls*, p. 57.

trimmed mean at 22.5d., with a standard deviation of 24.22; the median level was 18d., with thirty-three per cent of taxpayers assessed at 12d. or less, fifty-one per cent at 18d. or below, and seventy-six per cent at less than 30d. Nickname bynames relating to clothing thus accounted for merely 1.6 per cent of the taxpayers with nickname bynames and the levels of assessment were preponderantly on the lower side. It thus remained unusual to identify medieval non-elites by their apparel, suggesting either conformity by and large to conventional clothing or a tendency to use other signifiers for identification.

Bynames signifying clothing are particularly confounded by metonymy. Of the 246 taxpayers with bynames denoting clothing, almost a half relate to hood, whether as monotheme or compounded with an adjective (e.g. *Blakhod*). Two assumptions are possible: metonymy – in which case the bearer is assumed to be a maker of such hoods;¹¹⁰ or the distinction of apparel (the so-called ‘bahuvrihi’ nicknames meaning ‘having a ...’).¹¹¹ Perhaps especially does this confusion surround the monotheme ‘ho(o)(u)d(e)’ which accounts for half the *-hod* nicknames (just under seventy). The compound (adjective + noun) is perhaps less ambiguous and most probably reflects nicknaming after habitual (but not necessarily socially distinctive) clothing. In this form are encountered *Bla(c)(k)hod* (x3), *Whithod* (x5), *Grenhoude*, *Grenhod* (x7), *Greyho(u)d* (x2), *Red(e)hod* (x8), *Pyhod* (presumably black and white), and *Blouncchehoud* (code-mixed ‘whitehood’, but only taxed at 8d.).¹¹² What emerges from analysis of these twenty-seven taxpayers described by coloured hoods is that they did not belong exclusively to the socio-economic elite of taxpayers, with a mean assessment of 24d. (trimmed mean at 23d.) with standard deviation of 18.36, median of 18d. with first quartile at 12d. Fifty per cent were assessed at under 17d., although nine were in the bracket from 2s. to 4s. (*Pyhod* being the most exclusive at 4s. which is consistent with the position of the influential *Pyhod* kinship in late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Coventry).¹¹³

Some other individual taxpayers identified by compounded *-hod* nicknames belonged in this higher category: *Wolnhode* (woollenhood) 24d.; *Stepelhode* (30d., presumably a tall, pointed hood); *Furhode* (36d.); *Straythode* (41d. and 42d.); *Rechoud* (20d.); *Capehoud* (16d., 24d., all in Dorset), although *Brodhod* only at 6d. In the Somerset lay subsidy, *-hod* names were assessed at about the same level: *Redhod* at 9d., 1s., 2s. and 3s., although at a more lowly level *Copehode* at 6d. and 1s.¹¹⁴ Moving into the late fourteenth century, in the Poll Tax for Lancashire, John *Pernelhod* was enumerated in Lonsdale wapentake, his nickname byname perhaps indicating the striped hood more regularly required to denote prostitutes and thus part of the regulatory regime of clothing.¹¹⁵ At least one wearer of a white hood (*Wilkin Witinhod*) was a marginal, indicted for theft of sheep in Chester in 1260.¹¹⁶

Identification by clothing was thus preponderantly associated with hoods and other headwear augmented those numbers: *Cornethat* (30d.); *Blachat* (in Newport Pagnell, Bucks.,

¹¹⁰ P. R. O. E179/135/16 m. 12 *Hakenhode* at Scothern is a verbal phrase nickname likely to indicate occupation.

¹¹¹ B. Seltén, *Early East Anglian Nicknames: ‘Bahuvrihi’ Names* (Lund, 1975).

¹¹² For *Redhod* in Darlington in the early fourteenth century: A. Hamilton Thompson, ‘The Clervaux cartulary’, *Archaeologia Aeliana* 3rd series 17 (1920), pp. 201 (no. 11), 205 (no. 24) and 216 (no. 62).

¹¹³ P. R. Coss, ed., *The Early Records of Medieval Coventry* (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History new series 11, 1986), pp. 106 (no. 142), 133 (no. 213), 148-9 (nos 254-5), 245 (no. 523), 258 (no. 549), 259 (no. 552), 262 (no. 560), 269-71 (nos 575-81), 278 (nos 596-9), 284 (no. 615), 285 (nos 617-18), 286 (no. 620), 287 (nos 624-5), 289-93 (nos 630-8), 296 (nos 644-5), 312 (no. 685), 317 (no. 697), 331-3 (nos 725-31), 336-7 (nos 738-40), 374, 378, 392.

¹¹⁴ ‘Somerset’, pp. 179, 186, 206, and 232: not in the database.

¹¹⁵ Fenwick, *Poll Taxes*, p. 451. Striped clothing: R. Karras, *Common Women. Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 19, 21-2; A. Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England. The Diocese of Salisbury 1250-1550* (Oxford, 1995), p. 15.

¹¹⁶ R. Stewart-Brown, ed., *Calendar of the County Court, City Court and Eyre Rolls of Chester, 1259-97* (Chetham Society new series 84, 1925), p. 28 (no. 201).

24d. and 40d.) and *Blakhat* (in Horncastle, Lincs., 24d. and 27d.),¹¹⁷ *Pyhatte* (38d.), and *Wympel* (perhaps metonymic, 12d. and 16d.). By contrast, the possibly disrespectful *Bareheued* occurred in Bootle, Lancs., taxed at 28d. When nickname bynames were associated with clothing, therefore, they were usually associated with headgear.

The only other category of clothing to contribute significantly to these nickname bynames was leg-wear: hose, pre-eminently *Courthose* ('short-hose', 'culottes') in the Anglo-Norman and French vernacular. Taking all compounds and simplex (*hose*) items, the twenty-eight taxpayers contributed a mean of 68d., but a trimmed mean of 38d., with standard deviation at 170.5; the median assessment, however, was 25d. and fifty per cent were assessed for less than 2s. *Courthose* was more distinctive, the ten taxpayers contributing a mean of 54d. (trimmed mean 48d.) with standard deviation of 40.0, median elevated to 36d. and first quartile at 29d. Two features explain this level: first, the superior vernacular (French); and secondly the influence on the statistics of the nexus of *Courthose* kin (seven taxpayers) at Aloesbridge in Kent.¹¹⁸ *Shorthouse*, in the other, but lower, vernacular, designated taxpayers assessed at 24d. and 30d., but *Letherhose* was particularly associated with lower payment.¹¹⁹ Confirmation of the relationship between *Shorthose* and lower social status derives from Alexander *Shorthose*, a tenant of nine acres of arable and one of meadow in Aldeburgh (manor of Allerton Maulever) in 1338.¹²⁰ To the peasantry also belonged Ailbern *Scinhose*, a free tenant of the episcopal manor of Ely in 1222 and at nearby Doddington at the same time Geoffrey *Scinhose*, another free tenant, belonged to that legal status of *hundredarius* owing suit to the hundred court.¹²¹ At Sevenhampton in Wiltshire in 1282 Thomas *Redhose* was placed in mercy for trespass by his sheep.¹²²

Other apparel contributed minimally to the corpus of nickname bynames associated with clothing: *Beaugant* (*bis*); *Bokele* and *Bokel*; *Surcote*; *Fukebagge* (*fuke* denoted red, but was not frequently used);¹²³ *Whitecurtel*; *Blacsleve*; and *Witbelt*. The byname *Grenecurtel* persisted in Coventry – or recurred – from the early to late thirteenth century: Richard *Grenecurtel* attested a charter relating to land in Hill Street in the 1220s and Margery *Grenecurtel* was tenant of a cottage in the borough in 1279-80.¹²⁴ Occasionally, further illumination of the social position of the bearer is provided. One of the witnesses to a Yorkshire charter was Robert *cum anulis*, perhaps ostentatious with his accessories, a freeman of mediocre status.¹²⁵ That sort of display might also have been criticised in the byname of Belin *Pe de Argent* ('silver cloth') and Walter *PeDargent*, who were presented in London for selling cloth contrary to the assize some time before 1276, perhaps the silver cloth for short

¹¹⁷ Blackness in clothing was eulogised in the anonymous 'Summe men sayen that y am blac': 'Blac ys my hat, blac ys my hod': T. G. Duncan, ed., *Late Medieval English Lyrics 1400-1530* (Harmondsworth, 2000), pp. 137-8 (no. 108).

¹¹⁸ *Kent*, p. 147; cf also John *Curthose* in Norwich in 1288: W. Hudson, *The Records of the City of Norwich. Vol.1, Containing Documents relating to the Government and Administration of the City, with an Introductory Sketch of its Municipal Development* (Norwich, 1906), p. 359.

¹¹⁹ *Letherhose: Gloucestershire*, p. 36.

¹²⁰ York Minster Archives Allerton Maulever court rolls 1.5/37A: it is intriguing that this rental is compiled in French (as is 1.5/35) but this particular byname constructed in ME vernacular – purposely, it would seem.

¹²¹ B. L. Cotton Tib B II, fos 86r and 97r-102r.

¹²² Pugh, *Court Rolls of the Wiltshire Manors of Adam de Stratton*, p. 73.

¹²³ *Middle English Dictionary III (E-F)*, sv. *fuke* (red dye); compare the later interpretation of 'fuckbag': E. Partridge, *Dictionary of Historical Slang* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 349. What can be made of Nicholas *Smalfuk*, found guilty of burglary in Hungerford, presents another ambiguity: Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, pp. 322-3 (no. 805). For *fukebagge*, see also Robert *Ruggebagge* who died in c.1285 and had held a tenement in the manor of Wakefield: *Wakefield Court Rolls I*, p. 199; Matilda *Ruggebagge* who held a tenement in the borough of Wakefield in 1323: *Wakefield Court Rolls V*, p. 16; and the Robert *Ruggebagge* mentioned in a Cockermouth charter before 1215: R. Hall, 'An early Cockermouth charter', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society*, 77 (1977), p. 80.

¹²⁴ Coss, *Early Records of Medieval Coventry*, pp. 253 (no. 533) and 387.

¹²⁵ B. L. Add MS 40,008, fo. 58r.

coats of their byname.¹²⁶ *Curtehuse* did not always connote higher status, as one of the many arsonists who burnt down a mill in North Shields in 1259 was Robert *Curtehuse*.¹²⁷ Similarly Adam *Sortkyrtell* killed Adam *Mauclerk* ('poor clerk') of Tynemouth in the Forest in the mid thirteenth century.¹²⁸ Alan *Wastehose* ('wear-out hose') was a tenant of a bovate in Duffield (Yorkshire) in 1200x1210, when a bovate constituted only a standard peasant holding.¹²⁹ Of peasant status, seemingly, was John *Blakmantel*, the subject of battery in the manor of Wakefield in 1324.¹³⁰

More complete is the evidence for the status of the *Grenehods* in the manor of Wakefield in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, although from the time when the rolls are extant the nickname was already developing into an hereditary surname. William *Grenehod* was the earl's villein living in the town of Wakefield in 1274.¹³¹ He appeared in the normal types of peasant involvement in the manor and tourn courts there such as trespass in the lord's wood.¹³² By 1297, he was deceased, his widow Eve leasing a bovate in Thornes for twelve years.¹³³ A subsequent William *Grenehod* and Robert *Grenehod* occurred in peasant business in the court from 1306: tourn juror; taking dry wood; debt and detinue; covenant; and leasing and taking of small pieces of land.¹³⁴ Nothing special therefore pertained to these *Grenehods*.

From the same manor derives similar biographical material for *Schorthose*, which correlates again with peasant status and not fashion. From 1274, Henry *Schorthose* engaged in the usual peasant activities represented in the manor court: escape of beasts; leasing and taking small amounts of land; in 1316 a subsequent Henry was accused of burglary of two houses.¹³⁵ Indeed, *-hos* bynames could indicate some degree of poverty, like Robert *Foti(n)hose* who bought a villein *placea* in Wakefield in 1274, never to recur in the court rolls.¹³⁶ So too William *Wytbelt*, who appeared in the manor court of Wakefield in a plea of pledge, in 1277, belonged to the peasantry; a subsequent William *Wytebelt* was involved in a testamentary case in the same court in 1313.¹³⁷ Another peasant on this dispersed manor was Robert *Witkirtel* who gave 5s. for licence to take three and a half acres in Holne in 1316.¹³⁸ The peasant status of these bearers of nickname bynames associated with clothing intimates that these bynames were as likely to be attributed to individuals of lower social groups and did not manifest self-fashioning.

Whilst the intention behind some of these bynames can be perceived to have been disciplinary and regulatory, those nickname bynames which recognized people by their external bodily characteristics (head, limbs *et al.*) might appear superficially to be directly concerned with identification. That ostensible (and narrow) motive for ascription must still

¹²⁶ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 83 (no. 294).

¹²⁷ *Northumberland Assize Roll*, p. 162.

¹²⁸ *Northumberland Assize Roll*, p. 95.

¹²⁹ Bodl. Yorks ch. 137a. For this byname, see also C. T. Clay, ed., *Three Yorkshire Assize Rolls for the Reigns of King John and King Henry III* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 44, 1911 for 1910), pp. 49, 81: Emma *Wastehose* pl. in disseisin of common in Duffield.

¹³⁰ *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, p. 54. Further biographical details are elusive as he rarely appeared in the court rolls, for which problem: L. R. Poos, Z. Razi and R. M. Smith, 'The population history of medieval English villages: a debate on the use of manor court records' in Razi and Smith, eds, *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 298-368.

¹³¹ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, p. 54.

¹³² *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, p. 12, where it is revealed that his brother was Lovecok *Grenehod*.

¹³³ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, p. 265.

¹³⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, pp. 56, 60, 65, 68, 95, 108, 128, 175, 197-8, 200; III, 53-4, 92, 113, 147, IV, 33, 64, 95 (accused of burglary), 97, 12, 174, 184, 193. The surname persisted into the middle of the fourteenth century: Jewell, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, pp. 1, 47, 75, 84, 92, 94, 167, 179, 189, 229.

¹³⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, pp. 26, 53, 215; III, pp. 116-17.

¹³⁶ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, p. 54.

¹³⁷ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, 159; III, p. 1. For another *Witbelte*, *Yorkshire Deeds* VII, pp. 69, 73-4 (nos 91, 204-5)

¹³⁸ *Wakefield Court Rolls* III, p. 140. He was plaintiff in a debt case in 1315: *Wakefield Court Rolls* IV, p. 19; fined 6d. for vert 1317: *ibid.*, p. 169.

be placed in the context of irony and identity. The language of embodied nicknames, moreover, reveals some meanings of the body and body parts.

In some cases, nickname bynames were dismissive of the whole body, as in the case of John *Levedybodi* of Potlock, characterised as having an effeminate stature; the presentment of his death by misadventure in 1281 – falling from his horse and drowning – made no concession in its attribution of his byname.¹³⁹ How the body was more widely perceived can be assessed from analysis of the data in the lay subsidies.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of data about the body in lay subsidies

Category	Number	Mean (d)	Trimmed Mean (d)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
All embodied names	5012	26	22	27.643	18	12	30
Complexion or hair colour	2169	26	22	28.130	18	12	30
Limbs	371	30	26	32.84	20	12	36
Face	205	26	24	21.01	21	12	33
Head	164	29	24	34.89	18	12	32
Clothes	246	26	22	24.22	18	12	30

[Here and below, Q1 = first quartile and Q3 = third quartile]

By the early fourteenth century, something like a third of all taxpayers with nickname bynames were identified by a byname referring to the body. By this time, however, the focus for identification (the gaze of recognition) was on overall description (size, for example) and the upper part of the body, particularly the complexion or hair colour.¹⁴⁰ The preponderance of these embodied nicknames was general rather than specific. Two assumptions can perhaps therefore be made: since the means of identification was so generalised – in some cases merely dark or pale of complexion or hair – the attribution to one individual was fairly anodyne by this time, in the sense that there must have been other local inhabitants with similar features; secondly, the assessments levied on these individuals placed them amongst the ‘middling’ peasantry. Conversely, where the bynames relate specifically to particular features, what is at issue is again the socially marginalized, fewer in number. To that point further emphasis will be attached below.

¹³⁹ Hopkinson, *Rolls of the 1281 Derbyshire Eyre*, p. 129 (no. 496).

¹⁴⁰ There is a particular problem of colour of complexion or hair, for some of these descriptions, such as White (*Whita*) or Brown (*Brun*, *Brunning*) had already become Old English *nomina*, so that they need to be treated with great care. Here, for example, *Brun* and its derivatives have only been accepted in the syndetic form: *le Brun*. With later *Brun(n)(e)* there is also, in some regions, the complication of metathesis in that [*de*] *Brun(n)(e)* would represent a toponymic byname from Bourne (Lincs.). For examples of *Brun* as a *nomen*: Geoffrey *filius Brunii* appealed John *Bruni* and Adam *Bruni* of robbery in 1199: G. Wrottesley, ‘Staffordshire suits extracted from the plea rolls temp. Richard I and King John’, *Collections for a History of Staffordshire edited by the William Salt Society* iii (1882), pp. 38, 62 (note that the bynames of John and Adam are in the genitive case); *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, p. 163 (no. ccccxv); Hart & Lyons, *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, p. 269 (*Brune filius Willelmi*, tenant of six acres). Additional circumspection is required for *Russell*, the etymon of which in some cases was the *nomen Rocelinus* – see the *Rocelinus* who held a croft in Brixton Deverill from the Abbey of Bec, for example: M. Chibnall, ed., *Select Documents of the English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (Camden 3rd series 73, 1951), p. 72. There is only occasionally ambiguity with other nicknames used as *nomina*: thus *Pollardus Forestarius* in 1221: Maitland, *Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester...1221*, p. 70 (no. 289).

Consideration of language – which register of the vernacular – is also important for these embodied nicknames. About a fifth of the embodied nicknames had an Anglo-Norman or French derivation. Just over half of those French forms were phrasal or dithematic – that is, compound forms (for example, *Foleiaumbe* – ‘crazy leg’). By and large, the French phrasal forms reflected the lower nobility – the gentry – and the levels of assessment were accordingly slightly higher.

Table 2 Embodied French bynames in the lay subsidies

Category	Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
All	1120	30	26	33.84	30	12	36
Compound	662	35	29	40.01	24	12	41

Compounded nickname bynames like *Beaupel* (‘fine skin’) in Devon, *Malemeyns* more widely, *Foleiaumbe* in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire were associated with higher status; others such as *Vysdelu* represented even higher status. Exceptionally, Robert *Malemeyns*, who held a messuage and four acres in South Newton (Wiltshire) in 1315 belonged to the customary (unfree) peasantry.¹⁴¹ Of the compounded embodied bynames, perhaps only *Petipas* (several), *Pedeleuere* (‘hareskin’), *Duredent* (‘strong teeth’) and *Beleiaumbe* (‘fine leg’) represented extremely low levels of taxation in the lay subsidies. The remainder of the compounded corpus – *Peaudeleu* (‘wolfskin’), *Belhomme* (‘fine man’), *Cordeboeuf*, *Querdelyon* (‘lionheart’) – belonged to the ‘middling’ levels of taxpayers, as did the wide variety of simplex forms such as *Grante* (‘big’), *Basse* (‘low of stature’), *Blanchard* (blond’), *Blount* (‘blond’), *Gernon* (‘moustache’), and *Cras* (‘fat’).¹⁴²

Returning to specific body parts, what is represented by nicknames of this derivation is the deformed or the distinctive body. Invariably compounded, often of the ‘bahuvrihi’ formation, these bynames connote difference. Especially is that so for the head, usually with uncomplimentary intention.¹⁴³ In an urban context is encountered John *Rommeshved* (‘ram’s head’), tenant of a burgage in Burton on Trent in 1319.¹⁴⁴ A charter before 1215 relating to Cockermouth was attested by all of Walter, Alice and Robert *Hardheued*.¹⁴⁵ Despite the illustrious *Grosseteste* (‘large head’), no compliment was intended by the moniker of John *Grethead* who held a messuage in Marton in Yorkshire in 1333/4, elsewhere John *Gretheved*.¹⁴⁶ That William *Burreheved* (‘red-head’) was fined for collecting dry wood at Rastrick on the manor of Wakefield in 1308 was not the only damage to his reputation.¹⁴⁷ His marginality is reflected in his single appearance in the court rolls and so too John *Helleheved* for contempt of court in 1315.¹⁴⁸ The socially marginal position of Hugh *Bulheved* of Ossett was reflected in the same obscurity in the court rolls except when in 1323 he committed the

¹⁴¹ Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office 1422/8.

¹⁴² Blanchard is also problematic since it was used as a *nomen*. For the same reason, *Russel* was omitted from the analysis since in many cases it derived from the *nomen* *Roselinus*.

¹⁴³ Caution must be exercised since some *-heued* names are of topographical derivation as the *Lupseheued* on the manor of Wakefield; these refer to heads of valleys: Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 96.

¹⁴⁴ D. G. Stuart, ‘A rental of the borough of Burton, 1319’, *Collections for a History of Staffordshire. Edited by the William Salt Archaeological Society* 4th series 16 (1994), p. 18. See, later in 1305, William *Netesheved* in Bedfordshire: Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners’ Rolls*, p. 111; John *Rammesheued* who was subjected to battery in 1306: G. Wrottesley, ‘Extracts from the plea rolls A.D. 1294 to A.D. 1307’, *Collections for a History of Staffordshire edited by the William Salt Archaeological Society* 7, part 1 (1886), p. 156.

¹⁴⁵ Hall, ‘An early Cockermouth charter’, pp. 79-80.

¹⁴⁶ *Cartularium ... Gysburne*, I, p. 87 (ccxiA), II, p. 45 (dclxxviib). For *Gretheued*, see also *Yorkshire Deeds* VII, pp. 15 (no. 41) and 60 (no. 159).

¹⁴⁷ *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, p. 159.

¹⁴⁸ *Wakefield Court Rolls* IV, p. 39.

breaking of palings, a misdemeanour associated with the marginalized, was a defendant in a debt case in 1327 and was fined for trespass in the same year.¹⁴⁹ The unfortunately named John *Buleheued* committed homicide in Fletchampstead in Warwickshire in 1221, perhaps infamously as the victim was Geoffrey *Benedicite*.¹⁵⁰ Even less charitable was the *cognomen* of *Doggeheved* imposed on Nicholas who made a benefaction in free alms to the Vicars Choral of York in the early thirteenth century.¹⁵¹ Moving from the uncharitable to the cruel, amongst the long list of those who had burnt down mills in retribution in 1259 in Northumberland was enumerated Adam *Thurbotheued*.¹⁵² In the same vein, it is obvious that a cruel attribute was associated with Adam *Henneheved* of Malasis in Yorkshire in the late thirteenth century for his father had a different byname: Adam *Henneheved filius Hugonis carpentarii de Malasis*.¹⁵³

The lexicon of taxpayers' compound nickname bynames associated with the head includes such unappealing attributes as: *Herdhead*; *Langhed*; *Brodheved*; *Greteheued*; *Burheued*; *Buksheued*; *Buskheued*; *Cokheued*; *Henheued*; *Hugtete* (a likely code-mixing for 'huge head') *Durheued* (code-mixed 'hard head'); *Brokynheued*; *Herteheued*; *Clouenheued*; *Cobhevede*; *Brassehevede*; *Bukenheved*; *Haldebythehevede*; *Popesheved*; *Strakedhewed*; *Bolehevid*; *Lambesheved*; *Smalheved*; *Romesheued*; *Appelheved*; and *Bal(e)heued*.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, unflattering bynames comprised also *Doggenek* and *Blaknekke*.¹⁵⁵ The neck features as a distinguishing feature of others like Geoffrey *Wythals* ('white neck') at Dunnington in Yorkshire who held the standard peasant holding of a bovate there, and Nicholas *Scorthalse* who had held a toft in Guisborough, also in that county.¹⁵⁶ Derogatory representations of the head in Middle English bynames were produced, indeed, at a much earlier time: *myranheafod* (mare's head), for example.¹⁵⁷ Differentiation of these taxpayers' head-related nicknames reveals seventy-five derogatory, eighty-three 'neutral' and six complimentary (for example, *Godheved*). Virtually all 'neutral' nicknames consisted of a simple, uncompounded form (predominantly *heved* or a French synonym) whilst the derogatory nicknames comprehensively consisted of compounded forms. Whether the 'neutral' items were actually impartial descriptions remains, of course, open to question, for they drew rhetorical attention to the body part.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of taxpayers with nickname bynames related to the head

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
164	29	24	34.89	18	12	32

Association with lower levels of taxpayers is illustrated by Table 3, but further confirmation comes from fifty per cent of these taxpayers contributing less than 18d. Identification by reference to the head thus concentrated on abnormal features and thus on marking and defining individuals.

Sometimes identification by the face in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries depicted admirable features, although that had not always obtained. Nor were such

¹⁴⁹ *Wakefield Court Rolls V*, pp. 13, 116, 137.

¹⁵⁰ D. M. Stenton, ed., *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre: being the Rolls of Pleas and Assizes for Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire 1221* (Selden Society 59, 1940), p. 409 (no. 961).

¹⁵¹ N. Tringham, ed., *Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster. City of York and its Suburbs to 1546* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 148, 1988-9), p. 44 (no. 73).

¹⁵² Page, *Northumberland Assize Roll*, p. 162.

¹⁵³ McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*, I, p. 108 (no. 170).

¹⁵⁴ For *Cokheued*, see also Martin, *Percy Chartulary*, p. 77 (no. clxxxv) a tenant in Little Shap.

¹⁵⁵ For swan's neck in the eleventh century, *suanneshale*: Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 338.

¹⁵⁶ T. A. M. Bishop, 'Extents of the prebends of York [c.1295]', *Miscellanea IV* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 94, 1937), p. 7; *Cartularium ... Gysburne*, I, p. 71 (no. clxx).

¹⁵⁷ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 323-4.

nickname bynames universally associated with lower status and the ME vernacular. Illustrative of this association with higher social groups and benign significance is the *Swetmouth* kinship of York. Whilst Adam *Swetmouth* attested charters of 1307 and 1318, Robert *Swetmouth*, inheritor of the surname, became a *capellanus*, parson of the altar of St Laurence in the Cathedral church and Warden of the Vicars Choral.¹⁵⁸

With a wide variety of forms within a narrow corpus, taxpayers included those identified by the *cognomina* *Fairmouth*, *Belebarbe* ('fine beard'), *Fresshmouth*, *Godeberd*, *Beaufront* ('fine brow or face'), *Swetemouthe*, *Mildemouth*, *Briddesmouth* ('bird's mouth') and *Muryemouth*. An association with lowly status was conjoined in Henry *Bridmouth* who was amerced 6d. in 1316 for taking a lease of three acres of land in Holne without licence, indicating his unfree peasant status and his small landholding.¹⁵⁹ At the end of the thirteenth century, Isabel *Buterlipe* was a tenant in Newcastle upon Tyne.¹⁶⁰

Although there are few references to the mouth, there were therefore favourable ones, such as Walter *Belebuche* ('fine mouth'), tenant of a virgate at Swincombe in the middle of the thirteenth century.¹⁶¹ Exceptions included *Shakerlipp*, *Sanbouch*, *Smalemouth* and *Melemouth*. Perhaps most infamous for description by the mouth was John *Bocuinte* ('oily-mouthed'), a London burgess of the late twelfth century.¹⁶² Allusion must have been made to the size of mouth of the father of Henry *filius Ricardi cum Bucca* of Stainall (1235x1260).¹⁶³

It might be surmised that *Duredent* was pejorative – certainly if actually experienced – and this byname was assigned to taxpayers in Lincolnshire, Bedfordshire, Staffordshire, and Dorset.¹⁶⁴ Nicholas *Duredent* was presented for obstructing the road between Lichfield and Tamworth in the early thirteenth century.¹⁶⁵ *Duredent*, indeed, extended quite widely in rural and urban contexts. In the middle of the thirteenth century, Roger *Duredent* of Longford in Derbyshire was involved in a charter, whilst William *Duredent* of Thurvaston in the same county was a grantor of land.¹⁶⁶ In the early thirteenth century, Roger *Duredent* conveyed to his wife, Isolda, a burgage in Derby near the market place which he had acquired with Isolda's wealth.¹⁶⁷ Further south, but still in a rural location, Walter *Duredent* attested one of Missenden Abbey's charters in c.1240.¹⁶⁸ In a considerable urban centre, Coventry, the byname proliferated or may have become hereditary in the burgess 'community'. In 1232, Osbert *Duredent* acted as a juror for the borough, whilst a multitude of charters relating to urban property was attested by Osbert, in his capacity as *clericus* and borough reeve, in the

¹⁵⁸ Tringham, *Charters of the Vicars Choral*, pp. 51-2, 62 and 165 (nos 84, 86, 106-7, and 293).

¹⁵⁹ *Wakefield Court Rolls III*, p. 151: this seems to be his sole appearance in the court rolls; the metathesis of the i and r is usual in ME for bird.

¹⁶⁰ Oliver, *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne*, p. 42 (no. 56).

¹⁶¹ Chibnall, *Select Documents of the English Lands of the Abbey of Bec*, p. 89.

¹⁶² Mason, *Westminster Abbey Charters*, pp. 225-6 (nos 383-4); R. McKinley, 'Medieval Latin translations of English personal bynames: their value for surname history', *Nomina* 14 (1990-1), p. 4. For this designation developing into an hereditary surname in London, not noted by McKinley, *Calendar of Ancient Deeds* volume 1 (London, 1890), pp. 167, 171, 173, 180, 196, 212, 215 (nos A1474, A1496, A1498-9, A1513, A1679, A1788, A1809); volume 2 (London, 1894), pp. 38-40, 44, 53, 55, 61, 63, 74, 96, 98, 101 (nos A2097, A2113, A2122, A2156, A2231, A2245, A2298, A2314, A2316, A2396, A2570, A2573, A2591, and A2635).

¹⁶³ Farrer, *Cockersand Chartulary*, I, i, p. 118.

¹⁶⁴ For example, Walter *Duredent*, who was assessed for 3s. 4d. at Halton (Lincolnshire): P. R. O. E179/135/16.

¹⁶⁵ G. Wrottesley, 'Plea Rolls temp. Henry III', *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* edited by the William Salt Archaeological Society 4 (1993), p. 70.

¹⁶⁶ F. Taylor, *Hand-list of the Crutchley Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1951), pp. 20, 62 (nos 186, 741).

¹⁶⁷ R. R. Darlington, *The Cartulary of Darley Abbey* (2 volumes, Kendal, 1945), I, p. 97 (A49).

¹⁶⁸ J. G. Jenkins, ed., *The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey Part III* (Historical Manuscripts Commission JP 1, 1962), p. 25 (no. 572).

third and fourth decades of the century and in c.1270 Thomas *Duredent* granted a rent in Cheylsmore Lane in the borough.¹⁶⁹

Certainly *Dendylion*, if assumed from its original etymology, must have reflected some dental disfigurement; it was held by taxpayers in Hertfordshire and Warwickshire.

Reference to the nose in taxpayers' bynames imputed the same pejorative nature, although there were only eight taxpayers with this feature pronounced: *Hoknose* in Wiltshire and *Langnase* in Kent.¹⁷⁰ The etymology of the byname of Ralph *Hackenose*, tenant of a house in Malmesbury borough, was probably hook-nose.¹⁷¹ Before 1230, however, the most pugnacious of these bynames of the nose pertained to Geoffrey *Grund de porc* ('pig's snout'), a free tenant in Yorkshire.¹⁷² Much earlier, in the late eleventh century, *cattese* ('cat's nose') constituted a precedent.¹⁷³

Facial hair, however, was the most frequently mentioned facial feature in nickname bynames of taxpayers, forty-five percent of which related to the beard (but including one *Berdeles*) and twenty per cent to the moustache. All references to the moustache (*Gernon*) – as indeed to teeth (*Duredent*, *Dendylion*) – were in the Anglo-Norman or French vernacular.

By contrast reference to the beard was almost invariably in the ME vernacular, with a few exceptions (*Belebarbe*, *Barbedur*, *Folebarbe* – 'fine beard', 'stipple beard', 'wild beard' – and, in the highest register, *cum barba*).¹⁷⁴ *Folebarbe* presumably implied an unkempt, wild beard, out of control, and became an hereditary surname in a burgess kinship in Leicester in the thirteenth century.¹⁷⁵ Apparently at an even lower social level, Mauger *Folebarbe* held a toft in Tadcaster in 1225x1235.¹⁷⁶ Despite one *Berdeles* and a few *cum Barba*, description of the beard in nickname bynames of taxpayers is conventional: short beard; red beard (*Rodberd* and *Feckeberd*); white beard; grey beard; brown beard; black beard; good beard; and gold beard.¹⁷⁷

It is surprising, however, that the generic *cum barba* persisted in a small number of cases in the lay subsidies of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. That form suggests a much earlier appearance, as Walter *cum barba*, an unfree tenant of a virgate, and Roger *cum barba*, a free tenant of thirty and a half acres, both holding of the Abbey of Ramsey in 1166x1171.¹⁷⁸ One of the jurors of the Bishop of Lincoln's manor of Lyddington in Rutland in the middle of the thirteenth century was Peter *cum barba*.¹⁷⁹ About the same time, the *cognomen cum barba* appears to have become hereditary in that higher register (at least in written records) around Milton in Buckinghamshire: Richard *cum barba* attested a charter there c.1200, succeeded in 1230x1250 by William son of Hugh *cum barba* whose

¹⁶⁹ Coss, *Early Records of Medieval Coventry*, pp. 47, 50-1, 77-8 (nos 65-6), 103-4 (nos 134-5), 121 (no. 181), 155-6 (nos 272, 275), 182 (350-1), 213 (428), 261-2 (nos 557, 559), 336.

¹⁷⁰ *Wiltshire*, p. 84 (*Hoknose* x4); *Kent*, pp. 72 and 156. See also John *Langnase* admitted to the freedom of Canterbury in 1350: S. L. Thrupp & H. B. Johnson, 'The earliest Canterbury freemen's rolls, 1298-1363' in F. R. H. DuBoulay, ed., *Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society* (Kent Records 18, 1964), p. 203.

¹⁷¹ J. S. Brewer & C. T. Martin, eds, *Registrum Malmesburiense. The Register of Malmesbury Abbey* (2 volumes, London, 1879), I, p. 125.

¹⁷² B. L. Add. MS. 40,008, fo. 241r: for *grund* sc. *groin*.

¹⁷³ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 298.

¹⁷⁴ One difficulty with ME vernacular *berd* is the potential confusion with bird, but the latter is more usually distinguished by the metathesis of the i and r, as *brid*. All simple bynames *berd* have thus been counted as beard.

¹⁷⁵ Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, I, pp. 10, 18 (Simon and his son, John, 1225 and 1257).

¹⁷⁶ McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*, II, p. 119 (no. 602).

¹⁷⁷ For another *Berdles*, Thomas, admitted to the freedom of Leicester in 1225: Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, I, p. 10.

¹⁷⁸ Hart & Lyons, *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, p. 285.

¹⁷⁹ The Queen's College, Oxford, MS 366, fo. 16r.

description was elided to William *cum barba*.¹⁸⁰ In the early thirteenth century, Robert *cum barba* had held land in Gosford Street in Coventry.¹⁸¹

Whilst William *cum barba* held a messuage in the City of London when he was convicted of a felony in 1244, John *Coperberd* was already attributed a more specific description when he and others were accused in the same year and in the same place of battery causing a death.¹⁸² Before 1215, Alexander *Bruneberd* was defined in more detail in Cumberland.¹⁸³ Increasingly in the thirteenth century, description of beards acquired more specificity, to the extent of Adam *Butterberd* who held a bovate in Rimington in Yorkshire in 1280x1290.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the ME synonym (*berd*) of *cum barba* was widespread amongst taxpayers to the lay subsidy.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, very specific descriptions of beard in nickname bynames already existed in the late eleventh century, as in *Curesbert* ('tufted beard') or *Hareberd* ('grey beard').¹⁸⁶

The 'northern' inventiveness of nickname bynames from facial features is represented by John *Spotothebrowe*, a burgess of Scarborough in the mid thirteenth century.¹⁸⁷ Like this byname, nicknames from some facial features remained sporadic and idiosyncratic. Difficulty is involved in the eyes in both vernacular languages: such bynames as *Bradeye* might represent eyes, but equally the deutertheme might consist of *-hey*; although Tengvik reveals no uncertainty in the derivation of *Oldboef* and *Oyldeboef* from eye ('steer's eye'), in Bedfordshire *Oyldebef* had its etymology in a placename.¹⁸⁸ In Domesday Book, *Bollochessege* ('bullock's eye') was already a ME formation, as were the less disparaging *feireage* ('fair eye'), and more pejorative *holege* ('hollow eyed').¹⁸⁹ Most malevolent with regard to the eye and the gaze was *malruardus* (Latin; eleventh century), later *malreward* (French, thirteenth century) – the evil gaze or evil eye.¹⁹⁰ William *Maureward* was killed at Ormsby in Norfolk in the early fourteenth century.¹⁹¹ In 1246 in the manorial court of Ruislip, Robert and William *Maureward* acted as pledge and juror.¹⁹² In its French register, this byname developed into an hereditary gentry surname in Twerton near Bath during the early and mid thirteenth century.¹⁹³ In 1249, Nicholas *monoculus* ('one-eyed') was accused, but acquitted, of larceny, perhaps indicating either that people with disabilities or deformities were likely to come under suspicion or that compassion and mercy were ultimately taken on him.¹⁹⁴

In contrast, the whole face seems only to have been considered in complimentary forms, such as *Beaufrund*. In 1238x1262, John son of William *Beufrund* made several grants in Stalmin in the north-west of England; he was succeeded as a free tenant there by Henry *Beufrund* and John son of Adam *Beufrund*.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁰ G. Herbert Fowler & J.G. Jenkins, eds, *Early Buckinghamshire Charters* (Buckinghamshire Record Society 3, 1939), pp. 12, 14-15 (nos 10, 12-13).

¹⁸¹ Coss, *The Early Records of Medieval Coventry*, p. 157 (no. 278).

¹⁸² Chew & Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1244*, pp. 70 and 88 (nos 175 and 216).

¹⁸³ Hall, 'An early Cockermouth charter', p. 79.

¹⁸⁴ Littledale, *Pudsay Deeds*, p. 161 (no. 105).

¹⁸⁵ For *berd* in the late eleventh century, Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 290.

¹⁸⁶ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 301 and 318.

¹⁸⁷ C. T. Clay, ed., *Three Yorkshire Assize Rolls for the Reigns of King John and King Henry III* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 44, 1911 for 1910), p. 117.

¹⁸⁸ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 295; Fowler, 'Calendar of inquisitions post mortem', p. 246. Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 386 (no. 1008) has an example of *Brodeye*.

¹⁸⁹ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 295, 313 and 318.

¹⁹⁰ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 322.

¹⁹¹ *Chancery Miscellanea Part VIII* (List and Index Society 105, 1974), p. 139 (Bundle 86/28/746).

¹⁹² Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁹³ *Medieval Deeds of Bath and District. Deeds of St. John's Hospital, Bath*; edited by B. R. Kemp. *Walker-Heneage Deeds*; edited by D. M. M. Shorrocks (Somerset Record Society 73, 1974), pp. 71, 75, 123-4, 163, 167, 192 (William, John and Geoffrey, 1200-1275).

¹⁹⁴ Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*, p. 168 (no. 86).

¹⁹⁵ Farrer, *Cockersand Cartulary*, I, i, pp. 95-100, 107.

In 1337, Walter *Hobbeshort* was tenant of a messuage and nineteen acres at Chelsworthy in Calystock, Cornwall, his status being that of *nativus conventionarius*, paying an annual rent of 3s. 4d.¹⁹⁶ *Hobbeshort* was almost certainly fortition of *Hoppeshort*, a byname reflecting an association between the peasantry and this form of embodied nickname byname. The character of the byname is constituted in a verbal phrase ('hop short') relating to the lower limbs and movement. Referring to taxpayers in the lay subsidies of c.1280-1332, about 350 were identified by nickname bynames derived from their limbs, over forty per cent of which were associated with feet, over twenty-five per cent legs, over ten percent bones (as stature), nine per cent hands, seven per cent with movement, and a very small number with arms.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics of nickname bynames from limbs held by taxpayers in lay subsidies.

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
371	30	26	32.84	20	12	36

Bynames of this derivation pertained, with some exceptions from the gentry, to taxpayers of lower assessment, fifty per cent contributing 18d. or less.

From the late eleventh century ditheatic nickname bynames illustrative of the limbs had developed in Old/Middle English: *haranfot* ('hare's foot', implying swiftfooted, whether complimentary or ironically in the sense of cowardice); *longhand* ('long-handed'); *anhande* ('one-handed'); *petifer* ('iron-foot'); *quikeuot* ('quick-footed'); *tortes mains* ('twisted hands'); *wachefet* ('weak feet'); *godhand* ('fine-handed'); and *males mains*.¹⁹⁷ Whilst not comprising a copious assemblage of bynames, nicknames from limbs comprehended some of the most interesting bodily descriptions.

Whilst politely denoting small stature, *Basset* implied a more pronounced feature of short legs. Although dominated by a minor Norman family which attained baronial status under Henry I, the byname was disseminated widely in terms of geography and, to a lesser extent, by social status in the lay subsidies. It was a byname not completely reserved to the lower nobility but extended in a number of instances down to the peasantry, Walter Basset, for example, being a free tenant of the cathedral chapter of St Paul's, holding two acres in 1222; at the same date, Godwin *Basset* and Robert *Basset* were both small tenants holding each a toft in Willingham (Cambs.) from the Bishop of Ely.¹⁹⁸

Table 5 Descriptive statistics of the assessment of Bassets in the lay subsidies

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
58	32	30	22.80	25	12	41

Similarly, *Beleiaumbe* ('fine leg') occurred in peasant circumstances, particularly on the manor of Halesowen in the West Midlands. There Philip *Beleiaumbe* or *Belegambe* frequently appeared in the court rolls for brewing, for registering essoins, as a pledge, as a juror, in cases of trespass, for raising the hue without warrant, for illicit fishing, and for leaving his land open, from 1270 onwards over a period of at least twenty-five years.¹⁹⁹ In

¹⁹⁶ Hull, *Caption of Seisin of the Duchy of Cornwall 1337*, p. 101.

¹⁹⁷ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 285-7, 317, 320, 326, 330, 339, 346, 350.

¹⁹⁸ Hale, *Domesday of St Paul's*, p. 4; B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fos 118v-121r.

¹⁹⁹ Amphlett & Hamilton, *Court Rolls of the Manor of Hales*, I, pp. 4, 7-8, 14, 24, 47, 54, 62, 74, 77, 80, 83, 89, 96, 116, 127, 132, 139, 145-6, 150, 158, 173, 193, 204, 337.

1270 Thomas son of John *Beleiaumbe* surrendered a plot of land (*placea*) at Halesowen, whilst in 1278 Ralph *Beleiambe* held another *placea*.²⁰⁰ A year later Alice daughter of John *Beleiaumbe* was placed in mercy for leyrwite, suggesting her unfree status.²⁰¹ A message in Bristol was held in 1185 by William *Belegambe*.²⁰² Contributors to the lay subsidies included taxpayers called *Belejaumbe* in Wiltshire (24d.), Surrey (36d.), Worcestershire (40d.), and Dorset (8d.), illustrating its middling and lower levels of assessment, whilst *Jaumbe* was associated with 9d. of tax in Hertfordshire, *Passegaumbe* with 120d. in Gloucestershire, and *Treghaumbe* with 58d. in Suffolk.²⁰³ *Foleiaumbe* was confined to the gentry family in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. Reference to the legs might also have been disguised by metaphor, as in the case of Uchtred *Langstirhap*, whose daughter Christine in 1225/6 quitclaimed her right in land in Stainford.²⁰⁴

Whilst in the 'South' the French vernacular was apparently dominant in descriptions of legs in bynames, in the 'North' ME vernacular remained significant, in particular the lexical term *shank*. In Northumberland in 1296, a *Gretschanke* was assessed at the relatively high level of 51d. At the indubitable level of the peasantry, Richard *Longschankes* reappeared in the court rolls of the manor of Wakefield for minor offences like escaped beasts and collecting dry wood between 1306 and 1315, whilst Thomas *Brounschank* defended a case of debt there in 1316 and Henry *Cokeshank* was fined 2d. for an offence against the vert in 1323.²⁰⁵ In 1326, Elizabeth *Langshank* brewed on the manor and a year later Alice *Longshanck* was amerced 4d. for brewing weak ale.²⁰⁶ Further north, Robert *Langshank* acquired a small amount of land as a free tenant in Newcastle in 1278-9.²⁰⁷ This dialectal difference is confirmed by bynames in the Poll Tax of 1379 for the West Riding of Yorkshire: *Brouneshank* at Sprotborough; *Shortshank* at Tinsley; *Schepshank* at Pontefract and Wombwell; and *Pyshanke* at Reedness.²⁰⁸ Register and dialect thus distinguished 'North' from 'South' in the formation of nickname bynames concerned with the legs. In the 'South', the French vernacular persisted, perhaps through some association with the gentry and perhaps because of the general complimentary or neutral nature of the nicknames. By contrast, in the 'North' ME vernacular was employed with a particular lexical item, *shank*, and sometimes perhaps less favourable connotations (as in 'sheep-shank').²⁰⁹

More prolific, however, for representation of the lower limbs were compounds of foot. Like many other embodied nicknames, these foot bynames existed in the late eleventh century, at least in the form of Ulfwyn *Huitfot*, a tenant of three acres in Suffolk.²¹⁰

²⁰⁰ Amphlett & Hamilton, *Court Rolls of the Manor of Hales*, I, pp. 8, 108.

²⁰¹ Amphlett & Hamilton, *Court Rolls of the Manor of Hales*, I, pp. 120-1, 124.

²⁰² Lees, *Templars*, p. 58.

²⁰³ See also Peter *Belejaumbe*, juror for Crown pleas in Wiltshire: Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 79 (no. 299).

²⁰⁴ McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*, I, p. 184 (no. 302).

²⁰⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, I, pp. 108, 162, 182; III, pp. 58, 71, 94, 183; IV, pp. 60, 139; V, p. 13. For a 'southern' comparison, Robert *le Longegaumbe* in a case of battery: Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 102 (no. 499).

²⁰⁶ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, V, pp. 90, 102.

²⁰⁷ Oliver, *Deeds relating to Newcastle*, p. 82 (no. 120).

²⁰⁸ 'Rolls of the collectors in the West Riding of the Lay Subsidy (Poll Tax) 2 Richard II', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 5 (1879), pp. 242-3. For Richard *Shepeshank*, a tenant at Wombwell, Purvis, *Healagh Park*, p. 205.

²⁰⁹ This lexical element is also occasionally found in other areas, however: Emelota *Barescanke*, a cottager at Pulham (Norfolk) in 1222: B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II fos 184r-191v.; Adam *Barechanke* in Norwich in c.1311: Hudson, *Records of the City of Norwich*, p. 379.

²¹⁰ Douglas, *Bury St Edmunds*, p. 30.

Table 6 Descriptive statistics of assessments of taxpayers with bynames representing the foot.

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
152	27	22	30.53	18	12	30

From the statistics in Table 6 can be elicited a number of conclusions. First, nickname bynames referring to the feet comprised about forty-one per cent of nickname bynames derived from the limbs. Secondly, nickname bynames illustrative of the feet pertained to the poorest taxpayers. Fifty per cent of these taxpayers contributed 17d. or less and a fifth 10d. or less. Quite oddly, taking into account its meaning, the byname *Sikilfot* in Sussex elevated the figures, for there four taxpayers with this byname contributed 121d., 273d., 154d. and 47d.²¹¹

Description of the feet was thus perceived as less dignified than commentary on the legs; the legs were more honorific than the foot and conferred more dignity. Content and language confirm that supposition. Almost all nickname bynames of the foot were constructed in ME vernacular, not French. The exceptions were few: *Pedeleuere* ('rabbit's foot') in Essex; *Pedefer* ('iron-foot' for which there was an ME synonym) in Hertfordshire; and *Blaunkfot* (code-mixing, for which the ME synonym was 'white-foot') also in that county.²¹² Finally, a considerable proportion of the compound nickname bynames have pejorative connotations, amongst which the following are illustrative: *Hennefot*; *Hundefote*; *Har(e)fot*; *Fatfot*; *Dovefot*; *Noufot*; *Bradefot*; *Suatfot*; *Kayfot* ('jackdaw-foot'); *Sikilfot*; *Langfot*; *Roghfot* or *Roufot*; *Lomesfot*; *Bokefot*; and *Kundefot*.²¹³

None of these nickname bynames reflected dignity, although Richard *Onefote*'s at Sevenhampton in 1283 depicted only disability.²¹⁴ Illustrative of this lowly status are Richard *Barefoth*, a *lundinari* at Honiland in 1265-7, and Matilda *Barefot*, a small tenant at Hynehamme.²¹⁵ More substantial, but still of conventional peasant status were Walter, William and Simon *Hundefote* who held respectively half a bovate, half a bovate and one bovate in Lincolnshire in 1185.²¹⁶ Similar in all respects were the *Cofots* of the manor of Conisborough in Yorkshire. John *Cofot* negotiated an entry fine of 3s. 4d. to take a messuage and a bovate in customary tenure in Conisborough from Adam son of Adam *Cofot* for a term of twelve years which Adam had just received on the death of his father, having redeemed it with a heriot of 3s. 4d. Shortly afterwards John was fined for making an illicit lease of half an acre. When Adam married Isabella daughter of Nicholas *Cody* shortly afterwards, he was described as *natiuus domini*. Isabel too was of that status for Nicholas contributed her merchet. On the marriage Adam took from the lord a messuage and bovate of customary land in Conisborough.²¹⁷ Comparison with birds' feet and an association with marginal status

²¹¹ *Sussex*, pp. 168, 174, 179 and 195. For Gilbert *Sikilfot*, see also L. F. Salzman, ed., *The Chartulary of the Priory of St Pancras at Lewes* (Sussex Record Society 38, 1932), I, pp. 93, 95 (Gilbert *S clericus*), 99, 103, 106, 181 (1288-93).

²¹² *Essex*, p. 42; *Hertfordshire*, pp. 83 and 110.

²¹³ For *Lomesfot*, *Bokefot*, and *Roufot*, taxed respectively at 26d., 7d., and 9d.: 'Somerset', pp. 119, 151, 195.

²¹⁴ Pugh, *Court Rolls of the Wiltshire Manors of Adam de Stratton*, p. 78.

²¹⁵ W. H. Hart, ed., *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae* (3 volumes, Rolls Series, 1863-7), III, pp. 117, 139.

²¹⁶ Lees, *Templars*, p. 110.

²¹⁷ Doncaster Archives DD/Yar/C/1/14-15 (1334): *Nicolaus Cody dat domino xij [sic] pro licencia maritandi Isabellam filiam suam Ade Cofot natiuo domini ...*

combine in Nicholas *Cayfot*, acquitted of robbery in Wiltshire in 1302.²¹⁸ Of free status, Thorold *Hundesfote* brought an assize of mort d'ancestor in Lincolnshire in 1218.²¹⁹

In the analysis of these bynames of foot, some complications are presented, as with other bynames. *Pauncefot* has been omitted as it perhaps had a different etymology, referring to a general corpulence ('flabby-faced').²²⁰ How to interpret *Barfot* produces another problem, for the imputation of this nickname might be less poverty or impecuniousness than contrition, since penitents performed their penance with bare feet.²²¹ Nevertheless, John *Barfot* burgled the bakehouse of Geoffrey *ate Boclone* and stole a range of food in 1317.²²² Ambivalence also attached to *Lightfot* and its variants, since there might be a connotation of 'criminality' in fleet-footedness. For example, Roger *Lythfot*, a thief, perpetrated his escape from the authorities in London in 1276.²²³ In 1237/8, a servant named John *Lichefot* wounded a Jew and Jewess with arrows; he fled to a church, abjured the realm and it was reported that he had no chattels nor was he in frankpledge.²²⁴ Four years earlier, either the same or another John *Lichefot* was accused of beating Alan *Sutor*, although found not guilty.²²⁵ Caught in the company of a confessed thief, William *Lichfot* appeared at Crown Pleas in Gloucestershire in 1221.²²⁶ The same association was attached to *Lyghtleg* or *Leytleg*, for William with that moniker was found guilty with others of homicide, fled to Bedford and abjured the realm.²²⁷

Much fewer and fairly sporadic, some compound nickname bynames – both 'bahuvrihi' (adjective + noun) and verb phrasal (verb + noun) – illuminate censure, ridicule and comment on stature, gait and movement. For example, more memorable about Ranulph *Golightly* is his description rather than his reporting the finding of a body in 1248.²²⁸ Stealth inheres in Adam *Pasdelu* ('wolf's steps') involved in a case of disseisin in Lincolnshire in 1218, preceded by Anketil *Piaudelu*'s recovery of seisin in 1206 in Hardwick in that county.²²⁹ Like most other nickname bynames, the ME descriptions of bodily action developed by the late eleventh century, fully and imaginatively illustrated by Godlef *Crepunder Huitel* ('creep-under-cloak'), a tenant of three roods who also presumably suffered from timidity.²³⁰ Osbert *Triphup*, accused of larceny in 1249, was acquitted.²³¹ Rarely inscribed in the Wakefield court rolls, John *Typup* was presented for default of suit in 1315.²³² Presumably cumbersome, Adam *Standonhisfot* acted as a pledge in the Chester County Court in 1259/60.²³³

Mentioned above, Walter *Hobbeshorte*'s byname probably ensued from his gait and perhaps disability. In his case, his byname was associated closely with the peasantry and, indeed, belonging to the lower peasantry in 1185 was Henry *Hoppesorte*, tenant of merely

²¹⁸ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 98 (no. 450).

²¹⁹ D. M. Stenton, ed., *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre: being the Rolls of Pleas and Assizes for Lincolnshire 1218-9 and Worcestershire 1221* (Selden Society 53, 1934), p. 116 (no. 263).

²²⁰ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 324-5.

²²¹ Perhaps it is excessively imaginative to detect a correlation with Lincoln here as nine of the twenty-two taxpayers called *Barfot* were located in Lincolnshire.

²²² Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, p. 45 (no. 213).

²²³ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 87.

²²⁴ That he was not in frankpledge might be explained by his being in service for less than a year: L. R. Poos, 'The rural population of Essex in the later middle ages', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 38 (1985), p. 518.

²²⁵ For both cases, Chew & Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1244*, pp. 37 (86) and 48 (117). For *Lightfoot*, *Middle English Dictionary V I-L*, p. 968.

²²⁶ Maitland, *Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester ... 1221*, p. 109 (no. 466).

²²⁷ Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, p. 83 (no. 189) (1275).

²²⁸ Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 367 (no. 945).

²²⁹ Stenton, *Lincolnshire 1218*, p. 27 (no. 72); Stenton, *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls*, p. 246 (no. 136).

²³⁰ Douglas, *Bury St Edmunds*, p. 26; Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 389.

²³¹ Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*, p. 236 (no. 463).

²³² *Wakefield Court Rolls IV*, p. 20.

²³³ R. Stewart-Brown, ed., *Calendar of the County Court, City Court and Eyre Rolls of Chester, 1259-1297, with an Inquest of Military Service, 1288* (Chetham Society n.s. 84, 1925), p. 7 (no. 42).

two and a half acres.²³⁴ Several taxpayers in the lay subsidies were identified by this byname: two in Lincolnshire; one in Yorkshire; and one in Sussex.²³⁵ Other contributors to the subsidies were described as *Smalhopp* in Northumberland, *Hoppegame* in Surrey (code-mixed) ('hop-leg'), *Bodyhop* in Hertfordshire, and *Courtehope* in Kent (code-mixed) ('short-hop').²³⁶ Equally disparaging, but in the French vernacular, was *Petipas*, referring to taxpayers in Yorkshire (9d.), Hertfordshire (18d. and 26d.), Suffolk (18d.), and Dorset (8d., 8d., and 12d.), but also the antonymic bynames occurring in Hertfordshire (*Beaupas* - 'fine step', 18d.) and Gloucestershire (*Noblepas* - 'noble gait', 6d.) within the same socio-economic category.²³⁷ Although in a different code, these last bynames belonged to the same social levels as ME bynames relating to bodily actions, which can be substantiated perhaps by Roger *Petipas* who was indicted for stealing grain and cloth from the mill of the abbot of St Augustine's in Kent in 1317.²³⁸ *Renaway*, like *Lightefot*, has imputations of criminality rather than lack of courage. On the manor of Wakefield, John *Renneaway*, mentioned in the court rolls only once, found a pledge that he would submit to the legal process in 1285.²³⁹ The John of this byname who contributed to the lay subsidy at Marnham in Nottinghamshire was assessed for merely 6d. and the *Rennaway* who was assessed in Somerset in 1327 contributed only 7d.²⁴⁰

Bynames of posture continued occasionally to be constructed in the 'North' in the middle of the fourteenth century, illustrated by William *Standhupryght*, a lesser tenant of three acres in Durham in 1358. It was indeed probably only at this social level - the lowest peasant level - that such bynames persisted.²⁴¹

By contrast with the feet, the hands supplied the elements for only a much smaller number of contributors to the lay subsidies, about thirty taxpayers. A third of this total consisted of taxpayers denominated *Malesmeyns*, a byname closely associated with gentle status, to which category should be added also *Tortemeyns*.²⁴² To a large extent, other names derived from the hands were conventional: *Whithond*, *Godhand*, and *Swethand*. Rather prosaic was the byname of Eda *Withehand* and her son, William *Withand*, who made a benefaction to Fountains Abbey.²⁴³ Nevertheless, a small number of features present interesting characteristics: *Handbran* and *Handbrand*; *Maynstrong* (because code-mixed), *Cromphand*, *Tornehand* and *Onhond*.²⁴⁴ The last referred to three taxpayers in Suffolk who were taxed at 24d. (*bis*) and 12d., undoubtedly denotes one-handedness, and had appeared as a byname by the late eleventh century, as had *Langhand* in the person of the Godric who with his peers held just three acres.²⁴⁵ In the same county, *Tornehand* might symbolize a gambler.²⁴⁶ It is possible that *Crompehand* in the Canterbury freemen's admissions indicates

²³⁴ Lees, *Templars*, p. 64.

²³⁵ P. R. O. E179/135/16 mm. 27, 36; *Yorkshire1301*, p. 42; *Sussex*, p. 160.

²³⁶ *Northumberland*, p. 162; *Surrey*, p. 54; *Hertfordshire*, p. 88; *Kent*, p. 152.

²³⁷ *Yorkshire1301*, p. 96; *Hertfordshire*, pp. 77, 136; *Gloucestershire*, p. 70; *Suffolk*, p. 208; *Dorset1332*, pp. 26, 97, 103.

²³⁸ Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, p. 47 (no. 231).

²³⁹ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, I, p. 197.

²⁴⁰ P. R. O. E179/159/5, m. 7; 'Somerset', p. 180. For *Rennewel*, *Devon*, p. 3 (36d. tax).

²⁴¹ J. Booth, ed., *Halmota Prioratus Dunelmensis, Containing Extracts from the Halmote Court or Manor Rolls of the Prior and Convent of Durham, A.D. 1296-A.D. 1384* (Surtees Society 82, 1889), p. 22.

²⁴² For *Tortemains* and *Malesmains* in the late eleventh century, Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 339, 350.

²⁴³ Bodl. Rawl. MS. 449, fos 109r-v ('white hand').

²⁴⁴ See also *Cromphand* in Canterbury and *Onhende* in Kent: Thrupp & Johnson, 'The earliest Canterbury freemen's rolls, 1298-1363', p. 182 (1298) and Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, p. 95.

²⁴⁵ *Suffolk*, pp. 116, 119, 123. Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 285 (*anhande* - regional dialect a/o substitution); Douglas, *Bury St Edmunds*, p. 43.

²⁴⁶ *Suffolk*, p. 50.

the bearer of a cramp ring.²⁴⁷ In complete contrast, *Handbran(d)* in Lincolnshire might connote branding for a felony rather than simply a burnt hand.²⁴⁸ Medieval prejudice probably informed the byname of Bartholomew *Leftandere* accused of homicide at Downham Heath in the mid fourteenth century.²⁴⁹ The relationship of these names with lower social groups is epitomised by an unfree tenant of Warter Priory who held a bovate in Newton: *quam Kybbelhand tenuit de nobis* ('which Kybbelhand held from us') excluding his forename and relying only on a description.²⁵⁰

Brennehand, indeed, developed into a localised and particularly Yorkshire byname. Mauger *Brennehand* attested a charter, an action which confirms his free status, as did Jordan *Brennehand*; in the same vicinity, Osbert *Brennehand* also witnessed a charter.²⁵¹ In c.1300, Alice *Brenhand*, a minor tenant, held a toft and croft and a few roods of land in Normanby from Guisborough Priory.²⁵² In the neighbourhood, the byname *Sluphand* was conferred on some free tenants of the Priory. Stephen *Sluphand* quitclaimed his right in land to his lords, Guisborough Priory, whilst Nicholas *Sluphand* attested a charter. After Nicholas's death, his widow, Emma, made a benefaction of a selion to the Priory.²⁵³

Amongst limbs, the bodily attribute least contained in nickname bynames was the arms, comprising basically two forms: *Armestrang* and *Beaubraz* ('fine arm'). Taxpayers named *Armestrang* were few and were confined to the 'North' of England, two in Cumberland (assessed at 12d. and 48d.) and one in Northumberland (assessed at 40d.).²⁵⁴ Confirmation of this distribution is provided by William *Armstrang*, a juror in Wearmouth in 1279 and John *Armstrang*, a tenant from whom a foal was exacted as tithe before 1354.²⁵⁵ In comparison, *Beaubraz*, equally sparse, was located in the 'South': Gloucestershire (12d.) and Hertfordshire (16d., 30d. and 32d.).²⁵⁶ In the south also appeared John *Brasdefer* ('iron arm') – a cognate of *Armestrang* – a peasant placed in mercy in Ruislip in 1248 for a trespass in the lord's wood.²⁵⁷ The 'northern' *Armestrang* extended down into Lincolnshire and so John *Armestraunge* and an associate killed John de Bokeland at Grantham in the middle of the fourteenth century.²⁵⁸

Additionally, a few *-bon/-bayn* names might also refer to the limbs, arms or legs: *Langbon* and *Langebayn*, *Crakebon*, *Barebayn* ('bare-legged'), *Bridbayn* ('bird-leg'), *Coltebayn* ('colt-leg' - 'frisky?'), *Hardbayne*, *Crocbayne* ('crooked-leg'), *Smalbayne*, *Bendbayne*, and *Birkebayn* ('birch-leg').²⁵⁹ Perceptibly, these *-bone* names were

²⁴⁷ See n. 239.

²⁴⁸ P. R. O. E179/135/16 m. 28.

²⁴⁹ *Chancery Miscellanea Part IV* (List and Index Society 38, 1968), bundle 70, file 4, no. 152. See also the distinctively named William *Leftant*, Roger *Leftant*, William son of Roger *Lefthand* and Ralph *Lefthand* all admitted to the freedom of the borough of Leicester in 1239-40, 1242 and 1268: Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, I, p. 14.

²⁵⁰ Bodl. Fairfax MS 9, fo. 84r.

²⁵¹ B. L. Add. MS. 40,008 (Bridlington cartulary), fos. 171v-172r; *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, I, pp. 44 (no. xci), 62 (no. cxlii).

²⁵² *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, I, p. 415.

²⁵³ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, I, pp. 73-4 (nos. clxxv, clxxx), 160 (no. cccv). Whilst allowing that *Brendcheke* relates to punishment, Jönsjö associates *Brennehand* with 'executioner': Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 64.

²⁵⁴ *Cumberland*, pp. 38, 66; *Northumberland*; p. 147.

²⁵⁵ Page, *Northumberland Assize Rolls*, p. 396; Storey, *Register of Gilbert Welton*, p. 5.

²⁵⁶ *Gloucestershire*, p. 106; *Hertfordshire*, pp. 67-8, 71.

²⁵⁷ Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, p. 14.

²⁵⁸ B. W. McLane, ed., *The 1341 Royal Inquest in Lincolnshire* (Lincoln Record Society 78, 1988), p. 11.

²⁵⁹ *Devon*, p. 25; *Essex*, p. 51; *Yorkshire1301*, pp. 3, 10, 18, 24, 45, 79, 81, 90; *Northumberland*, pp. 40-1; *Yorkshire1297*, p. 145. Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 56 suggests birch ties around the legs for *Birkebayn*; for this byname, see also Elwin *Birkebeyn*, a tenant of ten acres in customary tenure at Terrington (Norfolk) in 1222: B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II fo. 161r. For *Crokebayn*, see also *Yorkshire Deeds VI*, p. 61 (no. 201) (1331); Nottinghamshire Archives Office DDSR 1/6/5: *Johannes Crokebayn pro bosco domini abscisso et asportato* (1328), but, true to the status of such

predominantly located in the 'North' and accordingly extended down into Lincolnshire, which to some extent was a continuation of northern features. Although no firm conclusions can be drawn because of the paucity of the evidence, there would seem to be a difference here of both geography and language.

Other bodily features were even less pronounced in their incidence. Although Thomas, a taxpayer in Somerset assessed at 30d., was recognised by the byname *Wombestrang*, that nickname was scarce.²⁶⁰ In fact, that nickname byname existed in the late eleventh century, although Tengvik considered its etymology uncertain. Dodgson has recently suggested that it represented 'strong-belly' and so perhaps it was similar in intention to *Pauncefot*.²⁶¹ In Somerset too is encountered the taxpayer described by the epithet *Brodribbe*, a lowly contributor assessed at only 1s.²⁶²

Bodily action received its most frequent representation by the byname *Sherwynd* – the French cognate of which seldom occurred.²⁶³ It is perhaps therefore significant that a rental unusually compiled entirely in French yet constructed this byname in ME:

Thomas Sherewynd naif teint ij mees ij bouees de terre et rend xs. a mesmes les termes²⁶⁴

Depicted here is an association between a nickname byname of bodily action and unfreedom. In the early fourteenth century, this byname existed in a number of places around Allerton Maulever in Yorkshire, where Thomas, the *nativus*, held his two messuages and two bovates. Nicholas *Sherewynd* also held in bond tenure a messuage and two bovates in Hoperton.²⁶⁵ Richard *Skerwynd* held land in nearby Flasby.²⁶⁶ Nineteen taxpayers in twelve counties bore this byname contributing a mean assessment of 47d. (but the trimmed mean, removing one very high payment, is 33d.) and a median of 16d.²⁶⁷

Despite all these disparate features contained within bynames, the predominant number of bodily nicknames derived from general descriptive features (often monothematic, like *Long* or *Lang* depending on dialect region) or hair (usually colour). Again, despite all the rhetorical innuendo of the forms enumerated above, the generic bynames tended to be neutral. In some cases (such as hair colour), how they actually distinguished one person in the local social group from another defies explanation apart from the sense that with nicknames *someone* was assigned the nickname.²⁶⁸ In terms of hair colour, what is most interesting is the variety of deuterothermes for hair (or head *viz.* hair): *lok*; *not*; *heved* (with a colour obviously intending hair). In Somerset in 1327, consequently, the enumerated taxpayers included *Horlok* ('grey hair', 1s. tax), *Wyghtnot* (6d. assessment), and *Whiteheuede* (1s. contribution).²⁶⁹ Consistent with their meaning, such bynames belonged to tenants of all social and legal groups. Thus at the lowest level, Martin *Horlok*, an unfree tenant in

bynames, he appeared infrequently in the court rolls; Storey, *Register of John Kirkby*, p. 21 (Richard *Crokebain*, a tenant of land in Aspatria, Cumberland). For *Bridbayn*, *Yorkshire Deeds* VII, pp. 10 (26), 16 (45).

²⁶⁰ 'Somerset', p. 95.

²⁶¹ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, pp. 357 (*wambestrang* – for which Tengvik's etymon is 'womb-string'), 324-5 *paunceuolt* (paunch-faced, corpulent). Taxpayers called *Pauncefot* in the early fourteenth century: 'Somerset', p. 208 (120d.).

²⁶² 'Somerset', p. 204.

²⁶³ For the French synonym, *Trenchevent*, Mason, *Westminster Abbey Charters*, p. 268 (431), late 12th-early 13th century.

²⁶⁴ York Minster Archives 1.5/36 rental of Allerton Maulever, 1338. In YMA 1.5/35, also completely compiled in French, *Skerwynd* is produced in ME.

²⁶⁵ York Minster Archives 1.5/36 (1338).

²⁶⁶ York Minster Archives 1.5/35.

²⁶⁷ Standard deviation for the mean is 77.7 and the first and third quartiles are 12d. and 36d.

²⁶⁸ McClure, 'Nicknames and petnames: linguistic forms and social contexts' and Clark, 'Nickname creation: some sources of evidence, "naïve" memoires especially', as n. 7 above.

²⁶⁹ 'Somerset', pp. 118, 210, 240.

Rostormel in Cornwall, was tenant of a messuage and twelve and a half Cornish acres in 1337 for a rent of 6s. John *Horlok*, a *nativus de sanguine*, held the same amount plus another rood and a half in Penlyn, for a rent of 6s. 3d., whilst Thomas *Horlok* held in Penlyn four and a half English acres for a rent of 2s. 2d. as a *nativus conventionarius* and a messuage and ten English acres for a rent of 4s. 4d. as a *nativus de sanguine*.²⁷⁰ At the very lowest level, William *Brunloc* jointly held with another tenant two acres in Wetheringsett (Suffolk) in 1222.²⁷¹

Without doubt, however, the most frequent derivation for embodied nickname bynames was complexion or hair colour – it is often difficult to distinguish which was intended. To a large degree such descriptions were monothematic and conventional and it is difficult to understand what differentiated one particular person to attract a particular byname: *White*; *Black*; *Blond*; and so on. Occasionally, a more specific attribution was extended, as in the case of William *Doggeskin*, fined for a trespass by his pigs in one of the Deverills in Wiltshire in 1246.²⁷² For the most part, however, the denotations are nondescript rather than fully differentiating, revealing little of the cultural and political associations of hairstyles.²⁷³

Hospitality and charity

Appearing less frequently in the Wakefield court rolls, Adam *Halfmark* was involved in a *meleé* in Wakefield in 1296 and Roger *Manipeny* acted as pledge in Sowerby in 1297.²⁷⁴ In 1328, Adam, presumably in his later years, revealed his defining characteristic when he was presented at the tourn for forestalling fish and meat.²⁷⁵ Parsimony was perhaps there the characteristic of Adam *Costnotgh*, the subject of battery in 1323.²⁷⁶ In the mid thirteenth century, an assize of *mort d'ancestor* was brought unsuccessfully by Thomas *Twapenes* for two-thirds of a bovate in Boynton, perhaps representing the full extent of his expected free tenement.²⁷⁷ The construction of some of these bynames from money most probably reflects transgressions against the group's norms of charity and hospitality (in the widest medieval sense of *caritas* and *hospitalitas*).²⁷⁸

A variety of compound forms was employed with the purpose of irony and denunciation of lack of charity, such as Peter *Penistrong*, whose daughter Amabel was

²⁷⁰ Hull, *Caption of Seisin of the Duchy of Cornwall (1337)*, pp. 43, 46-7.

²⁷¹ B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II fos 225-229.

²⁷² Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, p. 13.

²⁷³ R. Bartlett, 'Symbolic meanings of hair in the Middle Ages', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series 4 (1994), pp. 43-60. Synott, *Body Social*, p. 103: 'Hair is one of our most powerful symbols of individual and group identity – powerful first because it is physical and therefore extremely personal, and second because although personal it is also public, rather than private. Furthermore, hair symbolism is usually voluntary rather than imposed or "given". Finally, hair is malleable, in various ways, and therefore singularly apt to symbolize both differentiation between, and changes in, individual and group identities.' This exposition concurs with Bartlett. For hair as an ideological symbol of opposition, also discussed by Bartlett, Synott, *Body Social*, pp. 115-21.

²⁷⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, I, pp. 248, 300. Adam was fined for taking dry wood in 1315-16: *ibid.* III, pp. 71, 138.

²⁷⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, V, pp. 139, 147.

²⁷⁶ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, V, p. 12. The name was continued in Wakefield in the person of Nicholas Costnought in a plea of debt in 1349-50: Jewell, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, pp. 196, 199, 222, 234.

²⁷⁷ Clay, *Three Yorkshire Assize Rolls*, p. 93.

²⁷⁸ For hospitality at an upper social level, J. Kerr, 'The open door: hospitality and honour in twelfth-/early-thirteenth-century England', *History* volume 87 no. 287 (2002), pp. 322-35; for the lower social levels, J. M. Bennett, 'Conviviality and charity in medieval and early-modern England', *Past and Present* 134 (1992), pp. 19-41. One of the complications in this category is the byname *Richeman* which was evidently deployed as a forename as well, e.g. Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, p. 25 (no. 104), but there are many examples, including *Richeman Calle* who attested charters relating to Foston and Wheldrake in Yorkshire: Martin, *Percy Chartulary*, pp. 50 and 58 (nos xci. ci). For the French cognate, *Richehom*, Farrer, *Cockersand Chartulary*, II, ii, p. 563 (1200x1240). Robert *Richeman* who held a toft in Liverpool.

discovered drowned in a pit in Sheffield.²⁷⁹ Other *Penystr(a)(o)ngs* were assessed at Weston Peverel in Devon, and Gaddesden in Hertfordshire.²⁸⁰ Perhaps most extensive was *Penifader*, indicating a miserly attitude, extending back to the late eleventh century in Godwin *Penifader*.²⁸¹ Interestingly, one of the peasant families most familiar to us was the *Penifaders* of Brigstock in Northamptonshire in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.²⁸² *Penifaders* were also enumerated for taxation at Theydon Gernet, Roding Beauchamp and Willingale in Essex, at Clifton in Northumberland, at Hertford and the borough of Stortford.²⁸³ Land in Hill Street in Coventry was acquired in 1221x1240s by Geoffrey *Penivader*.²⁸⁴ Other epithets existed which implied criticism of officers (tax collectors) or avarice: William *Gederpeny*, taxed at Hutton in Lancashire in 1332; the *Hardepeny* taxpayers in Lincolnshire (at Wiverton, Frampton, Ewerby), and possibly also *Peniman*; and the John *Takepeny* who held a house in the City of London in 1258-9.²⁸⁵

Other forms assumed included *Panyhard*, *Mokepany*, *Peniman* (perhaps a tax collector), the *Manipeny* kinship (seven taxed members) in Godmanchester, and *Penymawe* (an interesting contrast with the more usual *Penyfader*).²⁸⁶ Indeed, the *Manipeny* dynasty comprised one of the most affluent kinship groups in Godmanchester.²⁸⁷ John *Manipeny*, who held a virgate by knight service in Chalgrove in the early fourteenth century, might have been perceived from that status to be a money bag, an attitude which might also have applied to Robert *Manipeny* who held two virgates in free tenure in Kelshall (Hertfordshire) in 1222.²⁸⁸

Strictures through nickname bynames seem also to have been directed towards those suspected of 'criminal' behaviour, in particular coinclipping, such as *Hakepenne*.²⁸⁹ The *Turnepeny* taxed at Sedgeley in Staffordshire falls into the category of excessive behaviour, probably a gambler.²⁹⁰ It is known, for example, that William *Turnpeny* was an escaped felon captured at Hungerford on suspicion of larceny and that he was found to have no chattels.²⁹¹ Whilst he was not involved in larceny, Ralph *Turnepeny* was appealed by Alice for the

²⁷⁹ Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 385 (no. 1005).

²⁸⁰ *Devon*, p. 17; *Hertfordshire*, p. 108.

²⁸¹ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 353. See also Aluric *Penipurs*, *ibid.*, p. 353.

²⁸² J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside. Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague* (Oxford, 1987) and Bennett, *A Medieval Life. Cecilia Penifader of Brigstock, c. 1295-1344* (Boston, Mass., 1999).

²⁸³ *Essex*, pp. 42, 46 and 72; *Northumberland*, 1296: p. 58; *Hertfordshire*, pp. 14, 35.

²⁸⁴ Coss, *Early Records of Medieval Coventry*, pp. 253 (nos 534-6).

²⁸⁵ 'Lancashire', p. 45; *Middle English Dictionary IV G-H*, p. 5 (*gaderen*: to seek wealth, be covetous, but possibly a tax-collector, a synonym for *cachepol*); P.R.O. E179/135/14, mm. 1, 19 and P. R. O. E179/135/15 m. 22; Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 27. Reaney, *DBS*, p. 345, suggests an alternative etymology for *Peniman*/*Penyman*.

²⁸⁶ *Essex*, p. 85; P. R. O. E179/135/15: m. 22 (North Rauceby); *Huntingdonshire*, pp. 145-6; 'Shropshire', p. 292. See also William *Monipeny* in 1305: Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, p. 106.

²⁸⁷ J. A. Raftis, *A Small Town in Late Medieval England: Godmanchester 1278-1400* (Toronto, 1982), pp. 147, 208, 217-21, 340-2.

²⁸⁸ M. K. Dale, ed., *Court Rolls of Chalgrove Manor 1278-1313* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society 28, 1950), p. 63; B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II fo. 138r.

²⁸⁹ *Bedfordshire*, p. 20; but cf. John *Hackepenne* the juror for an inquisition post mortem in 1255: Fowler, 'Calendar of inquisitions post mortem, no. 1', p. 216. Shortage of coin may, however, have induced cutting up.

²⁹⁰ 'Staffordshire', p. 297; *Bedfordshire*, p. 56 for another *Turnepeny*; I. Hjertstedt, *Middle English Nicknames in the Lay Subsidy Rolls for Warwickshire* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensis, Uppsala, 1987), p. 193 (*Tornepeny*); 'Somerset', pp. 207 (*bis*), 232; *Middle English Dictionary XI (T)*, p. 1163 (*turner*: to spin).

²⁹¹ Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 323 (806). Barbara Hanawalt suggested that inquests might have understated the chattels of felons, but this seems unlikely as they had harmed the 'community'; the position is not analogous with the protection of the chattels of suicides: Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), pp. 129-30; M. McDonald and T. R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls. Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 78-86.

homicide of her husband; he fled and was outlawed, his chattels recorded as nothing.²⁹² Three taxpayers in Somerset designated *Tournepeny* contributed sums of 4s. 6d., 9d. and 18d.²⁹³ The extent of gambling is reflected in the activities of John *Takeboef* ('take beef') who competed with John Hobedi, an habitual gambler, *cum talis*; *Takeboef* having won half a mark, *Hobedi* blew out the candle, grasped *Takeboef* by the throat, and recovered his lost money.²⁹⁴

The byname *Yvelpeni* inherently suggests clipping.²⁹⁵ The other marginal origins of some of these bynames may be illuminated by the activities of William *Takepeny* in Kent in 1316-17. First he was accused of horse theft before the sessions of the peace; he then reappeared before the sessions indicted for feloniously reaping a virgate of wheat at night in 1317.²⁹⁶

Although a proportion of these nickname bynames was thus designed to humiliate anti-social behaviour, the intention behind others is more difficult to deduce. Many burgesses and peasants were identified by a byname specifying a particular amount of money or coin. It has been suggested that this represented the tax that they (habitually?) contributed to lay subsidies (or in rent). Whilst that may obtain for the larger amounts in nickname bynames, it cannot possibly be relevant to the minute sums which constituted some nickname bynames, and, indeed, this form of byname antedates the introduction of the lay subsidies. Both these criteria are associated with Walter *Pinneferthing* who held two bovates in Ugthorpe c.1188 – a minuscule amount and pre-dating the subsidies.²⁹⁷ Whilst it might have applied to Adam *Nynepeny* who formerly held a tenement in Pilgrim Street in Newcastle in the early fourteenth century, this case seems irregular.²⁹⁸ Directly contradictory, for example, is William *Fourpenys* who was assessed for 3s. in the lay subsidy for Nottinghamshire at Edingly *cum* *Halam*.²⁹⁹ In the Somerset lay subsidy of 1327, three taxpayers were ascribed the nickname *Halpeny*.³⁰⁰ In all the lay subsidies, nicknames derived from small denominations proliferated: *Peny*, *Ferthyng*, *Shillyng*, *Halpeny*, *Twapeni*, and *Terdepeny*. Although the two taxpayers designated *Sexpennes* at Tarrant Hinton in Dorset qualified for the lay subsidy, they were assessed at 8d. and 12d., but these amounts are not too remote from 6d. that an earlier assessment might have been at that level.³⁰¹ The taxpayer called *Halfmark* at Ightfield received a demand for 6d., so that it is conceivable that at one time his chattels were appraised at 6s. 8d.³⁰² In most other cases, however, there is no association between nickname byname and assessment to the lay subsidy. For twenty-seven taxpayers described as *Peny* or *Pany*, the mean assessment was 32d., the trimmed mean 27d., with a standard deviation of 34.23, whilst the median attained 24d. with first and third quartiles at 12d. and 36d. Perhaps confirmation of the impecunious nature of the byname *Peny* is revealed by Alota *Peni* and her servant Emma pledging *vadimonia sua* for having broken the park pale. The offence itself imputes poverty and only the poorest were allowed to pledge by their faith rather than by a personal pledge (i.e. a surety by another villager).³⁰³ Similarly, the eleven *Halpenis* were assessed at a mean level of 21d., trimmed mean 19d., with a standard deviation of 14.41, median of 12d. and first and third quartiles of 12d. and 24d. In the same manner, thirty taxpayers called *Ferthyng* contributed at a mean level of 36d., trimmed mean of 31d., standard deviation at 32.42, median of 27d., with first and third quartiles at 8.75d. and 49.5d.

²⁹² Jenkins, *Calendar of the Rolls of the Justices on Eyre 1227*, p. 59 (no. 661).

²⁹³ 'Somerset', pp. 207, 232.

²⁹⁴ Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, p. 58 (no. 4).

²⁹⁵ Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 199.

²⁹⁶ Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, pp. 15 (no. 71) and 75 (48); he was acquitted of horse-theft: p. 87 (no. 30).

²⁹⁷ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, I, p. 218 (dcccclxxva).

²⁹⁸ Oliver, *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne*, p. 183 (no. 61).

²⁹⁹ P.R.O. E179/159/5, m. 8.

³⁰⁰ 'Somerset', pp. 101, 127 and 266.

³⁰¹ *Dorset 1332*, p. 84.

³⁰² 'Shropshire', p. 141.

³⁰³ *Wakefield Court Rolls I*, p. 275. Her retaining of a servant does not seem to contradict her poverty.

Since it might be objected that these nicknames might have become inherited already and so bear no relation to the original assessment, confirmation of the lack of correlation might be elicited from the less usual bynames which were probably not heritable, some of which are mentioned above. Indeed, Robert *Ferthyng*, who was appealed for battery against Richard *filius Ricardi*, was discovered when he fled to have no chattels, consistent with his position within the household of the Prior of Steventon.³⁰⁴ Thus also the *Twapenis* who contributed at Boynton received a demand for 18d.³⁰⁵

Costnoght pertained to a (probably unfree) kinship on the composite manor of Conisborough in Yorkshire in 1334-40. Nicholas *Costnoght* was presented for default of suit of the tourn court, at which Magota *Costnoght* paid 18d. for brewing. About the same time, Robert *Costnoygte* acquired permission to compromise a case of trespass with William *Balloc*. Some six years later, John *Costnohte* offered the lord 6d. for licence to take half an acre in Braithwell for a term of four crops which he had previously taken by an illicit lease, but at the same time Roger *Costenoght* and Alice *filia Costenght* (sic) were both fined for offences against the vert.³⁰⁶ The social critique intended in this byname might have obtained equally with their contemporary on the manor, John *Scatergod*, who appeared infrequently in the court and then for battery, the implication being an ironic description of lack of liberality.³⁰⁷

Considering all the taxpayers with a nickname byname derived from money, the total of 153 rendered tax at a mean level of 27d. (trimmed mean 24d.; standard deviation 24.86), median 20d. (first quartile 12d.). Fifty per cent of these taxpayers were assessed at less than 21d. The large proportion of these taxpayers therefore did not possess considerable chattels. It seems probable that the etymology of their bynames was polysemic, derived from a range of circumstances. Indeed, ambivalence abounds in their nicknames when, for example, consideration is taken of John *Hockbeggere* who transferred a bovate in 1297 and who was presumably renowned as a supplicant (perhaps as a collector for charitable purposes) on Hock days.³⁰⁸ Some nicknames derived from irony, some as shaming for excessive acquisitiveness, others as stricture for suspected illicit activity, and yet others as a reflection of relatively low status.³⁰⁹

Religion and devotion

Caritas continued as an important aspect of religious observance through the late middle ages, in its widest interpretation. Nicknames and bynames associated with devotion exhibit the same ambiguity as other nickname bynames, for they might not only import devoutness, but ironically (suspicion of) excessive devoutness. Exceeding the bounds of conventional devotion might have incurred derision or at least criticism. Moreover, scepticism existed in the late middle ages and thus those revealing any degree of circumspection might have been placed at the social margin by the attribution of nicknames.³¹⁰ In like manner, heterodoxy might have induced proscription through nickname bynames.

Although never extensive, these bynames provide a window on attitudes to religion amongst the peasantry, as well as revealing wide syntactic flexibility in their formation.

³⁰⁴ Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 335 (no. 840).

³⁰⁵ *Yorkshire 1297*, p. 18.

³⁰⁶ Doncaster Archives DD/Yar/C/1/14-15.

³⁰⁷ Doncaster Archives Office DD/Yar/C/1/14.

³⁰⁸ *Wakefield Court Rolls II*, p. 14.

³⁰⁹ There is the possibility that the argument that *pauper* denoted only a lack of liquid cash might also inform some of these nicknames from denominations of money – especially real money (coin) as opposed to money of account, and in particular penny coins cut into pieces. On the other hand, that shortage would not have been distinctive.

³¹⁰ S. Reynolds, 'Social mentalities and the case of medieval scepticism', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series 1 (1991), pp. 21-42; K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth, repr. 1991), pp. 198-206.

Accordingly, they also exhibit great diversity and miscellany. In Somerset in 1327, Richard *Holifader* was assessed to the subsidy at only 1s., to which also Walter *Goduspart* contributed only 6d.³¹¹ In Kent in 1334/5, two taxpayers who were both assessed at 30d. answered the description of *Holybon*, one a widow.³¹² Another *Halibanes* was Robert, an unfree tenant in the Lindsey marshlands in the early fourteenth century.³¹³ Amongst taxpayers are enumerated, for example, *Sohelpmegode* at Corsham in Wiltshire, *Godissonde* at Hallingbury in Essex, *Godbemydenis* at Kingston in Surrey and *Godesblessye* at Shapwick and Leigh in Dorset.³¹⁴ Thomas *Godissonde*, however, was presented at the Kent sessions for theft of a cow in 1317.³¹⁵ Struck down in London in 1268 was Peter *Messeday* ('mass-day').³¹⁶ The female devotion associated with some women's lives in the twelfth century received recognition through Alice *Maidencrist* who, in accordance with her *cognomen*, made a benefaction in York as a joint donor to Sallay Abbey.³¹⁷ About sixty per cent of these nickname bynames were compounds in formation.

One of the most frequent religiously-inspired nickname bynames was *Paternoster*. Several inhabitants of the city of London in 1268 bore this byname, comprising John *Paternoster* who killed Nicholas *le Paternoster* in the latter's house, Guillot *le Paternoster*, Richard *le Paternoster*, and William *Paternoster*.³¹⁸ Taxpayers with this byname were assessed in Seagry in Wiltshire, Canewdon and Great Wigborough in Essex, Heydour, Blyton, Minting, Grayingham and Wetheral in Lincolnshire, Dunton in Bedfordshire, Walkern in Hertfordshire, Sherrifhales in Staffordshire, Tetbury and Boddington in Gloucestershire, Palgrave in Suffolk and Eckington in Worcestershire.³¹⁹ It also described a kinship group in East Rainton, a manor of the bishop of Durham, in 1296.³²⁰

With similar frequency was *Barefot* which must in some cases at least correspond to penitential activity. Particularly concentrated in Lincolnshire, this byname was distributed at Market Deeping (three taxpayers), Wiverton, Pinchbeck (three taxpayers), Stragglethorpe, Great Carlton and Belchford.³²¹ It had become evident in its ME form as early as 1202 when William *Barefot* was presented as *custos mensurarum uini* in the county.³²² In other locations it accounted for taxpayers in Surrey, Kent, Yorkshire, Derbyshire (two), Gloucestershire (three), Suffolk (three), and Dorset. Although less extensively distributed, the byname *Cockel* performed as a metaphor for pilgrimage or the characteristics of a pilgrim, at Godalming (Surrey), Newington (Worcs.), Petham and Sheppey (Kent), Ampney (Glos.), Lackford (Suffolk) and Fifehide and Pimperne (Dorset).³²³

Some of these nicknames, however, might have been extrapolated from habitual vocal exclamations of their bearers: *Godwait*; *Purdieu*, *Purdeu*, *Pardeu*; *Godspede*; *Godhayt*; *Plesedeue*; *Wardedeu*; *Godeshelp*; *Godwod*; *Goddessblessye*; and perhaps even *Paternoster*, in

³¹¹ 'Somerset', pp. 103, 202.

³¹² 'Kent', p. 151. It is possible that other *-bon* names impute some religious nature: *Swetebon* in Bedfordshire (*Bedfordshire*, p. 38).

³¹³ A. E. B. Owen, ed., *The Medieval Lindsey Marsh. Select Documents* (Lincoln Record Society 85, 1996), p. 101.

³¹⁴ *Wiltshire*, p. 100; *Essex*, p. 37; *Surrey*, p. 4; *Dorset 1332*, pp. 98, 101.

³¹⁵ Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, p. 13 (no. 58).

³¹⁶ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 53 (no. 197).

³¹⁷ McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*, II, p. 94 (no. 561). It might have been a byname which became hereditary at an early date in York: see p. 95 (no. 562) for Alan *Maidencrist* before 1223.

³¹⁸ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, pp. 52 (no. 194), 58-9 (nos 212 and 215), and 98 (no. 468).

³¹⁹ *Wiltshire*, p. 60; *Essex*, pp. 5, 26; P. R. O. E179/135/16 mm 17, 34, 56, 57; *Bedfordshire*, p. 31; *Hertfordshire*, p. 90; *Staffordshire*, p. 246; *Gloucestershire*, pp. 53, 94; *Suffolk*, p. 29; *Worcestershire*, p. 108.

³²⁰ Booth, *Halimota Prioratus Dunelmensis*, pp. 3, 11.

³²¹ P. R. O. E179/135/14 mm. 1, 9; E179/135/15 m. 3-4; E179/135/16 mm. 27, 30, 38.

³²² Stenton, *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls*, p. 116 (no. 654).

³²³ *Surrey*, p. 16; *Worcestershire*, p. 28; 'Kent', pp. 84, 163; *Gloucestershire*, p. 41; *Dorset 1332*, pp. 80, 85.

which case oath-making and characteristics of speech are exemplified rather than devotion.³²⁴ *Kyrklof*, the byname of a taxpayer at Blankney in Lincolnshire, suggests a local arrangement for the provision of the holy loaf – the *Eulogia* – for the parish church, so indicating perhaps an obligation rather than personal devotion.³²⁵ In Kent, the same etymology explains John *Halibred* whose horse was stolen in 1317.³²⁶

Following from blasphemy, some nickname bynames imputed scepticism – *le Hethene*, localised at Compton and Langley in Wiltshire; *Blaksoule* at Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire; *Antecriste* at Wreay in Cumberland; *Dyvel* and *Deuill* occasionally – whilst others were undisguised criticism of the clergy, particularly *Hog(ge)prest* at Blackheath in Kent and at Parham in Sussex.³²⁷ Scurrilous disregard for the norms of the group is illustrated by William *Hatecrist* who was involved in a plea before the royal courts in Bedfordshire in 1205.³²⁸ The attribution of such bynames is unlikely to have been ironic, so there is a certain paradox in the earlier position of Laurence de Stanstede in twelfth-century London. In a transfer of all his lands to his nephew, he was styled Laurence *de Stanstede cognomina Diabolus filius Willelmi cognomento Diaboli*. In return for confraternity, however, before 1187 he quitclaimed to Westminster Abbey any right that he might claim in the patronage of the church of St Martin Ludgate. Subsequently (1191x1200), he re-assigned his fee to the abbey.³²⁹ Bynames indicative of scepticism or uncharitable behaviour remain, however, rather sparse. On the other hand they were probably only applied to the most extreme impiety, not unremarkable scepticism.³³⁰

Considering taxpayers identified by nickname bynames of a religious complexion, those assessed belonged to the same wealth cohort as taxpayers with other nickname bynames, in the lower to middle levels of disposable personal estate, fifty per cent contributing at 17d. or less.

Table 7 Assessment of taxpayers with bynames with religious imputations

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
252	24	22	20.51	18	12	30

Friendship

Medieval friendship has been explored from materials restricted to higher social groups and rhetorical sources. The meaning of friendship at the levels of peasants and burgesses is more elusive, although considered from the perspective of social networks in some studies. Like many aspects of friendship, it is difficult to disentangle in social network analysis instrumental from affective aspects of amity.³³¹ Some of the vocabulary of

³²⁴ *Huntingdonshire*, p. 169; *Hertfordshire*, pp. 20, 119, 122; ‘Kent’, p. 163; ‘Derbyshire’, p. 73; *Warwickshire*, pp. 29, 76; *Worcestershire*, p. 84; *Sussex*, p. 217; *Dorset 1332*, pp. 17, 98, 99, 101.

³²⁵ P. R. O. E179/135/15 m. 25.

³²⁶ Putnam, *Kent Keepers of the Peace 1316-1317*, p. 81 (no. 4).

³²⁷ *Wiltshire*, pp. 41, 49, 9; P. R. O. E179/135/15 m. 14; *Yorkshire 1301*, pp. 5, 6, 8; Buckinghamshire, p. 96; ‘Kent’, p. 139; *Sussex*, pp. 148, 193.

³²⁸ Stenton, *Pleas before the King*, p. 222 (no. 1491); *Middle English Dictionary IV (G-H)*, p. 518 (*haten*); for its recurrence in Lincolnshire, Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 110 (*hatcryst* = ‘godless’). See also Hugh *Hatecrist* who attested a charter in 1154x1169: Stenton, *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*, p. 94 (no. xxxiv).

³²⁹ Mason, *Westminster Abbey Charters*, pp. 203-5 (nos. 358-60).

³³⁰ Reynolds, ‘Social mentalities and the case of medieval scepticism’.

³³¹ P. Maddern, ‘“Best trusted friends”: concepts and practices of friendship among fifteenth-century Norfolk gentry’ in N. Rogers, ed., *England in the Fifteenth Century* (Harlaxton Medieval Studies volume IV, Stamford, 1994), pp. 100-17; J. Haseldine, *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Stroud, 1999); S. Bell & S. Coleman, *The Anthropology of Friendship* (Oxford, 1999).

friendship, moreover, had wider applications. Of particular importance here is OE *freond* and its Latin cognate *amicus*. In the early twelfth century and earlier, these terms comprehended kinship.³³² It is assumed here that by the thirteenth century, the meaning had become more restricted, denoting friendship in a non-kin context. Another problem of the fluidity of vocabulary is the meaning of OE *-wyn*, ME *-wine*. In its earlier existence, this deutertheme intended friend. By the thirteenth century, however, the compounds which included this element certainly suggest that it often denoted nothing more than ‘man’. To allow for any ambiguities, compounds with *-wine* have been included within the analysis in Table 8, but are otherwise omitted from the discussion.³³³

What bynames allow is an investigation of whether friendship existed at lower social levels as a distinctive concept and of the language in which it was depicted. First, friendship certainly operated as a social relationship at lower social levels, for over 250 taxpayers with middling assessments were described by a *cognomen* indicative of amity, fifty per cent contributing 17d. or less.

Table 8 Assessment of taxpayers with bynames connoting friendship

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
256	23	21	17.92	18	12	28

In terms of language use, sixty-eight taxpayers’ bynames of friendship consisted of French lexis and sixty-one of Middle English – virtually an equal division. Amongst the French terms, *Copyn(er)* (‘mate’) and its variants was principal (twenty-eight taxpayers), followed by *Belamy* (‘fine friend’) (nineteen), *Compaign(on)* (sixteen), *Bonamy* (good friend’) (4) and a solitary *Amisz* (‘friend’). Additionally, however, bynames such as *Veysin* (‘neighbour’) (five taxpayers) and *Cunsail* (‘advice’) (three) have connotations of the instrumental aspect of ‘friendship’ in a wide sense, the former promoting local social harmony. An antonym, proscriptively directed against antisocial behaviour, *Mauveysyn* comprehended seven taxpayers. Considering now ME constructions, and excluding the ninety-three taxpayers with *-wine* compound bynames, the wholly predominant byname was *Fre(o)nde*, representing fifty-three taxpayers, whilst *Neighbor* comprised half a dozen. Five other taxpayers were identified by compounded bynames containing the element *-frend*: *Shortfrend* (antonym); *Leuefrend*; *Frerfrend*; and *Frendheild*. The attribution of language did not conform to any division by taxpaying capacity as illustrated in Table 9, but also by the small holding of five acres held in 1222 by Walter *Belami* at Pulham in Norfolk or Agnes *Bonamy*, an unfree peasant, who was fined 6d. for leyrwite at Coken in 1296.³³⁴

Table 9 Analysis of taxpayers’ bynames of friendship by language

Language	Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
French	68	23	21	17.51	17	12	24
ME	61	25	22	20.45	18	12	28

What differentiation there is, pertains to the distribution of *Copyn(er)* which, although the sample size is not large, tends to correspond closely with southern coastal areas, in Devon, Essex, Kent and Dorset.

³³² L. J. Downer, ed., *Leges Henrici Primi* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 437-9; J. Barrow. ‘Friends and friendship in Anglo-Saxon charters’ in Haseldine, *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, pp. 106-123. The exclusively male conception of friendship is represented by *Ami et Amile*.

³³³ Explaining the apparent discrepancy in numbers below.

³³⁴ B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II fos 184r-191v.; Booth, *Halimota Prioratus Dunelmensis*, p. 11.

Critique of insincere friendship was communicated through the byname *Shortfrend* which occurred in Yorkshire.³³⁵ Simon *Scordfrend* alienated land as a free tenant, whilst Elias *Scortfrent* had been the tenant of a toft in Wombwell.³³⁶

Crime and inhospitality

Anger, ire, violence and the worst of emotions received stricture through nickname bynames. The taxpayer called *Brusebat* ('break stick') in Somerset in 1327, paying only 6d. in tax, was disciplined through his byname for ill-temper.³³⁷ At the margins, 'criminals' were more likely to be assigned disparaging nickname bynames, so that the byname *Rynaway* was likely to indicate a fugitive.³³⁸ Whether associated specifically with their crime or not, 'criminals' received more creative nickname bynames. At the 1235 Surrey eyre, for example, William *Langhaste* was found guilty of homicide, John *Scoldehund* was acquitted of larceny, Ralph *Foxsesteyl* was found guilty of larceny and it was reported that he had no chattels, and the ironically-named John *Godfolk* was accused of harbouring two female thieves; although he was acquitted, it was reported that his son had been hanged for theft.³³⁹ More seriously, William *Clenchehamer*, accused of the death of Sybil, fled to Bisham church where he acknowledged the deed and abjured the realm, leaving chattels estimated to be worth only 1s.³⁴⁰ In the judicial forum too, Henry *Sherwind* was condemned to be hanged for burglary.³⁴¹ The swiftness of foot connoted in this byname might well have been an important faculty of any thief or burglar, although it occurs in other circumstances too.

Before the Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre in 1249, the accused with inventive nickname bynames comprised John *Hardepate* ('hard head') (outlawed for homicide), John *Langharvest* (homicide), John *Strangweder* ('strong wether') (larceny), Alexander *Pullegandre* (non-suit in battery), Nicholas *Cumbretancel* (coin-clipping), Alan *Struphatte* and William *Belkebaton* (sheep-stealing), Robert *Cachepayn* (guilty of cattle theft), and Elias *Wonderful* (acquitted of larceny).³⁴² Eight years earlier, before the justices in Oxfordshire, appeared Miles *Kachepappe* (acquitted of homicide), and Gilbert *Makeblithe* (appealed for robbery), the byname of the latter suggesting that he was not unduly remorseful.³⁴³ Perhaps in accordance with his byname, Simon *Forthmorewe* made non-suit in a case of battery.³⁴⁴ Not in tithing, since he was a vagrant and *extraneus*, Robert *Spillewater* was outlawed for entering the house of the dean of Haseley and killing the dean's son-in-law.³⁴⁵ Despite reportedly having no chattels, Hugh *Welifed* and two associates were outlawed for the death of Hugh, so perhaps he had lived off illicit comestibles.³⁴⁶

Table 10 Descriptive statistics of taxpayers with nickname bynames indicating 'criminality'

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
262	27	24	24.03	20	12	33

³³⁵ Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 160.

³³⁶ Martin, *Percy Chartulary*, pp. 112, 121 (nos cccxx, cccxxiii); Purvis, *Helaugh Park*, p. 62.

³³⁷ 'Somerset', p. 230.

³³⁸ Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 154.

³³⁹ Meekings & Crook, *1235 Surrey Eyre*, 2, pp. 405, 433, 435, and 440 (nos 462, 566, 573 and 588).

³⁴⁰ Clanchy, *Berkshire Eyre 1248*, p. 364 (no. 933).

³⁴¹ Meekings & Crook, *1235 Surrey Eyre*, 2, p. 385 (no. 377).

³⁴² Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*, pp. 152, 179, 201-2, 219, 233, 240 and 253 (nos 3, 271, 275, 418, 463 and 545).

³⁴³ Cooper, *Oxfordshire Eyre 1241*, pp. 125 and 142 (nos 821 and 946).

³⁴⁴ Cooper, *Oxfordshire Eyre 1241*, p. 120 (no. 784).

³⁴⁵ Cooper, *Oxfordshire Eyre 1241*, p. 126 (no. 826).

³⁴⁶ Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, p. 32 (no. 152).

By and large, the assessments of these taxpayers fell slightly below the general level for those assessed who had nickname bynames. Fifty per cent of them contributed 19d. or less. The category of 'crime' includes, of course, attributions discussed elsewhere – particularly, sexual misdemeanours and anti-social behaviour. Here therefore concentration will be directed to other residual 'crimes' encoded in nickname bynames.

Those breaches can be divided into two groups: those bynames which imputed the committing of a felony and those which concerned misdemeanours. The former almost comprehensively invoke such generic terms as *Utlagh*, *Renaway* and cognates. Twenty-seven taxpayers were identified by this form of nickname byname, the mean of their taxation being 21d. (standard deviation 10.53) and median 20d., so slightly lower than taxpayers with other 'criminally'-informed bynames.

Bynames which contain misdemeanours recount trespasses or 'misbehaviour' in agrarian contexts. Into this category fall the taxpayers called *Breghurdel* at Witheridge in Devon, *Percehaye* at Holcombe Rogus in that county, *Cuttethorne* at Martin in Wiltshire, *Brystymbre* at Roxby and Sawcliffe in Lincolnshire, *Coupgrayne* ('cut corn') in Binbrook in that county, *Brisebank* ('break mound') in Grimsby there also, *Brekewall* in Kirton in Lindsey, *Brisewod* ('break wood') in Brisco and Dalston in Cumberland, *Pollethorne* in Blackheath in Kent, *Stertinthehegg* in Mitton in Worcestershire, and *Pickepese* in Hadleigh in Suffolk.³⁴⁷ The marginal connotation of this last byname consists in Walter *Peckepese* who was appealed for theft in Wiltshire in 1281 and perhaps the same Walter (*Pikkepese*) in trespass and battery in 1306.³⁴⁸

The code-mixed byname *Brisewod* was prevalent in Buckabank in Cumberland, a manor of the bishop of Carlisle, in c.1328-32, for there two daughters of Ralph *Brisewod*, Mariota and Joan, held small amounts of land with their messuages, William, their brother, held a messuage and more land, Richard *Brisewod* was tenant of a messuage and six and a half acres of arable and half an acre of meadow, Adam *Brisewod*, although holding a messuage, held less land, Gilbert son of Gilbert *Brisewod* occupied a similar amount of land as Adam, and John son of Richard *Brisewod* held a messuage, six and a half acres, and eighteen perches.³⁴⁹ Moreover, on another episcopal manor, Unthank, William *Briswod* was listed as a former tenant of a messuage, four acres and eight perches.

Some thirty taxpayers were identified by these transgressive bynames, six of whom were called *Percehai* or variants, four had bynames with the verbal element *breke-* or similar, and seven the French verbal synonym *Brise-*, often code-mixed. One such code-mixed byname existed in John *Brisepot* ('break vessel'), a free tenant, whose rent and services in Muswell in Buckinghamshire were attorned in 1222x1238.³⁵⁰ In the third decade of the fourteenth century one of the former free tenants of a virgate in Kingston Deverill (Wiltshire) was Walter *Perchay*.³⁵¹

Another semantic aspect of bynames connected with 'crime' as anti-social behaviour or 'victimless' crime existed in the compound *pike-*, perhaps exemplified by John *Pikescull* (sc. *Pikestull*) on the manor of Wakefield, whose byname connoted greed – arrogating the major part.³⁵² It is intriguing therefore that John was hired by five other tenants in the hamlet of Thornes on the manor to beat up William, the five being collectively amerced 20s.³⁵³

³⁴⁷ *Devon*, pp. 28, 87; *Wiltshire*, p. 13; P. R. O. E179/135/16 mm. 3-4, 20, 53, 56; *Cumberland*, pp. 61. 63; 'Kent', p. 139; *Worcestershire*, p. 70; *Suffolk*, p. 155.

³⁴⁸ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, pp. 63 (no. 197), 153 (no. 1047).

³⁴⁹ Storey, *Register of John Kirkby*, p. 7 (rental).

³⁵⁰ Jenkins, *Cartulary of Missenden Abbey Part III*, p. 65 (no. 635). The same etymology might have been shared by John *Brekedis de Acle* who acquired a virgate in Alrewas in 1260, but was also known as John *de Acle Brekedis*: W. N. Lander, 'Alrewas court rolls, 1259-1261' *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* edited by the William Salt Archaeological Society new series 10, part 1 (1907). pp. 275. 277-8.

³⁵¹ Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office 429/30.

³⁵² Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 142.

³⁵³ Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 218.

Nevertheless, the byname was becoming an hereditary surname by the time of John, for it had previously been attributed to Philip and Cecily.³⁵⁴ Diverse *pike*- formations were employed in the social discipline of other minor tenants of the manor of Wakefield who engaged in petty misdemeanours, their low and marginal status indicated by their infrequent inscription in the court rolls: in 1315 John *Pikehuskes* amerced 6d. for an offence against the vert, his description implying gleaning; in 1316 John *Pikenote* offering 12d. to take a small piece of land; in the same year William *Pikehakes* for felling a tree; and in 1327 John *Pikebusk* for collecting nuts.³⁵⁵

The final category of the transgression of social expectations comprised a sort of nonfeasance or malfeasance, consisting of such bynames as *Dolittel*, *Litewerk*, *Unnyredy*, and *Careles*; indeed, eight taxpayers were chastised as *Dolitel* and its variants, although the range of their assessment suggested success as much as failure. Their perceived indolence – if *Dolitel* was not being employed ironically – thus did not entail indigence: mean assessment at 33d. (standard deviation 15.24) and median at 32d. In these cases there is a hint of social critique.³⁵⁶

Violence and anger

Nigel *Skakedag[er]* (‘shake-dagger’) was killed by misadventure by a fallen oak, his byname imputing his own impetuosity and short temper.³⁵⁷ In similar vein, John *Shakeshaf* was indicted for murder in Wiltshire in 1305.³⁵⁸ Proscription of anger and violence through bynames is difficult to extricate from bynames intimating ‘criminality’; the two were associated. Whilst perceptions of what constituted violence were polyvalent – socially and culturally constructed as to what was and was not perceived to be ‘legitimate’ – nickname bynames invoked a reprehension of violence amongst lower social groups.³⁵⁹ Tendencies towards infraction of social order by precipitate resort to displays of anger were disdained through bynames and those who were notorious for lack of temperament were accordingly stigmatised. The principal problem in diagnosing this apprehension about anti-social behaviour is the ambiguity of a large proportion of the bynames. Bynames such as *Shakespeare*, *Brekespeare*, and their cognates might equally be interpreted as insinuating sexual misdemeanours.

In the middle of the thirteenth century several charters in the Cockersand area of Lancashire were attested by Roger *Briselance*.³⁶⁰ William *Briseban* (‘break bone’) held a bovate in Bolton in 1274 – his (code-mixed) byname perhaps alleging the breaking of other people’s bones rather than his own, presumably.³⁶¹ The association of this byname with lower social levels is featured in William *Briseban* of Malasis in Yorkshire who held a toft and croft in the early-mid thirteenth century.³⁶² In the same vill, slightly earlier, was encountered Elias *Tempersnaye*.³⁶³ His son, John, featured in a number of charters relating to land in Bolton in Bolland, including as grantor in 1287/8 and as quitclaimant in c.1294.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, III, p. 86; IV, pp. 8, 106; V, p. 108.

³⁵⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, III, pp. 103, 137; IV, p. 60; V, p. 134.

³⁵⁶ See also Alexander *Dolitel*, a cottar at Ely in 1222: B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fo. 86r; Brewer & Martin, *Registrum Malmesburiense*, I, pp. 129, 130, 133 (Juliana and Thomas *Dolitel* who held a tenement in Malmesbury).

³⁵⁷ *Yorkshire Crown Pleas 1218-19*, p. 275 (no. 738).

³⁵⁸ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 101 (no. 482); see below for an alternative significance of this byname.

³⁵⁹ S. D. White, ‘The politics of anger’ in Rosenwein, *Anger’s Past*, pp. 127-152; P. Maddern, *Violence and the Social Order. East Anglia 1422-1442* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 75-110.

³⁶⁰ Farrer, *Cockersand Chartulary*, I, ii, pp. 294 and 317; 2, i, p. 345.

³⁶¹ Littledale, *Pudsay Deeds*, p. 136 (no. 63). The code-mixing is French with Northern ME.

³⁶² McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*, I, p. 109 (no. 172).

³⁶³ Littledale, *Pudsay Deeds*, p. 134 (no. 61).

³⁶⁴ McNulty, *Sallay Chartulary*, I, pp. 91 (134) and 116 (no. 186): John *filius Tempersnaye* and John *filius Elie Tempersnaye*.

In Cumberland at the turn of the thirteenth century, William *Dragespere* appealed Adam as an accessory to the murder of Jordan.³⁶⁵ In the manorial court of Ruislip in 1246, the peasant Nicholas *Brakespere* was discovered not to be in tithing although he held land there.³⁶⁶ Thomas *Brekaspere* was killed in 1227 by Alan who fled.³⁶⁷

These bynames attached to taxpayers in the lay subsidies consisted of *Brisseban* (code-mixed 'break-bones'), *Brekedore*, *Drauspere*, *Brekespere*, *Shakesper*, *Drauwebat*, *Drauwerswerd*, *Brekelaunce* (code-mixed), *Shakeshaft*, *Brekebot*, *Bruselaunce*, *Schakelaunce* (code-mixed), *Lyuelaunce*, *Brekeheued* and perhaps the rather unusual *Fisti Fasty* found in Beverley in 1297.³⁶⁸ Despite a wide variety in the levels of individual assessment, these thirty-eight taxpayers with these bynames were assessed at a mean level of 24d. (standard deviation 21.51) and median of 18d., somewhat lower than taxpayers with other forms of nickname byname. Indeed, fifty per cent were assessed at 15d. and below.³⁶⁹

In Wighill in Yorkshire, one of these bynames became attached to a kinship of free tenants as a family surname. Simon *Saccespee* ('shakespear') attested charters c.1170; his son, another Simon *Saccespee*, had male issue Ralph, William and Robert, who continued there into the middle of the thirteenth century. Their successor, Henry *Sakespei*, made benefactions to the priory of Helaugh Park, including rents in Wighill for lighting in the Lady Chapel and two selions for the burial of his body in the priory.³⁷⁰

Although violence was a quotidian experience, recent examinations of medieval and early-modern violence have tended to emphasise its cultural contexts: how restraint of anger is contingent and how violence is legitimised for different social groups. Some violence and direct emotional response consisted not merely of bare emotions, but political strategies through which power was expressed and communicated, encompassing the social and political rules and conventions about the deployment of violence. In these actions, the perpetrators moved through different social spaces where the employment of violence was subjected to different conventions (moving between different 'emotional communities').³⁷¹ It is, however, the everyday experience of violence which is important in this present context.

[A] Willelmus de Haleghton' queritur de Johanne le Clerke ate Huthe quod die dominica proxima ante festum sancti Gregorii pape anno regni Regis Edwardi xxj^o post prandium venit ad domum dicti Willelmi et ipsum cepit cum utrisque manibus per guttur' et tenuit et postea percussit ipsum cum dextro pugno circa maxillas et cum dictus Willelmus euasisset a manibus suis et fugisset dictus Johannes extraxit cultellum suum et persequabatur ipsum volens ipsum occidisse si posset ~~et ipse le~~ ad dampnum xxs. Et dictus Willelmus leuauit hutesium.

Et Johannes totum defendit et petit quod inquiratur Et Johannes (*sic*) similiter Ideo inquiratur³⁷²

[B] Thomas de Pydyngton' queritur de Willelmo de Wodestok' cissore quod ubi fuit in domo sua propria ubi manet in parochia sancti Petri in Ballio Oxon' die sabbati proxima post festum sancti Leonardi abbatis anno regni Regis Edwardi xxj^o hora vesperina venit dictus Willelmus et fecit insultum ipsum Thomam in domo sua propria et hamsokn' et non eo contentus extraxit cultellum suum et per medium grennum supertunice sue proprie percussit dictum Thomam in ventrem et voluit ipsum occidisse nisi vicini venissent in auxilium ipsius Thome propter clamorem per

³⁶⁵ Stenton, *Pleas before the King*, III, p. 138 (no. 980).

³⁶⁶ Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, p. 8.

³⁶⁷ Fowler, 'Roll of the justices in eyre at Bedford, 1227', p. 149 (no. 363).

³⁶⁸ *Yorkshire 1297*, p. 151.

³⁶⁹ Ironically, Peter *Draheswerd* held the office of chief pledge in Norwich (1288): Hudson, *Records of the City of Norwich*, p. 359.

³⁷⁰ Purvis, *Healaugh Park*, pp. xiii, 7, 18-19, 24, 27, 29, 31-2, 34-7, 39, 90, 96-7, 204, 217-18. A variant was *Saxpey*.

³⁷¹ B. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', *American Historical Review* 107 (2002), pp. 821-45; and, for the later middle ages, P. Maddern, *Violence and the Social Order*.

³⁷² Oxford City Library D17/1b,

ipsum Thomam leuatum et dictus Willelmus statim fugit ad ecclesiam unde dicit dictus Thomas quod deterioratus est et dampnum habet ad valenciam .C.s. et hoc paratus est &c.

Et Willelmus venit et dicit quod eisdem die et hora dictus Thomas insultum fecit in ipsum Willelmum et cum quodam baculo percussit ipsum ex transverso dorsi et dicit quod non percussit dictum Thomam cum cultello prout uersus ipsum narravit et hoc petit quod inquiratur Et Thomas petit similiter Ideo preceptum venire facere patriam ad inquirendum &c.

Postea veniunt Juratores et dicunt super sacramentum suum quod dictus Willelmus percussit dictum Thomam cum cultello suo sub forma predicta ~~propter quod consideratum est quod~~ ad dampnum xl denariorum Ideo consideratum est quod dictus Willelmus committatur gaole propter hutesium leuatum ad iniuriam suam et propter sanguinis effusionem donec satisfecerit dicto Thome de transgressione predicta &c. et d Balliuo de misericordia.³⁷³

Although surrounded by the legal and rhetorical conventions of pleading the count (*narratio*), the relation of these violent episodes was not unusual in the Oxford portmoot in 1293-5. In such a cultural context of resort to fists and weapons, what distinguished the bearers of nickname bynames which expressed an easy recourse to violence and producing weapons? It can only be assumed that their reaction was even less restrained than this casual norm and that their unreasonable behaviour was habitual.

Speech and language

In 1323, John Fairspeche was murdered.³⁷⁴ At Brightwaltham in Berkshire in the late thirteenth century, three tenants, John, William and Alice, had the byname *Parlefrens* ('speak French').³⁷⁵ Importantly, this byname confirms that some of the peasantry at least had some (perhaps limited) understanding of French; from that surmise, we might expect that other peasants knew some French lexis. The significance of this byname is confirmed by John and William *Parlefrens* – of peasant status – pledges in inter-peasant personal litigation in Brightwaltham manorial court in 1293-6.³⁷⁶ A taxpayer contributing merely 12d. to the lay subsidy in Hakewell in Essex was described as *Spilleffraynsshe*.³⁷⁷ In contrast, those presented before the Devon Crown Pleas in 1238 included Ranulph *Chagchefranchis* or *Chaggefrenchisse* and Jordan *Kagchefrenkis*.³⁷⁸ The crime involving Roger *Cachefreyns* in Wiltshire was more convoluted, for he slept with Emma, the wife of John son of Aldrich in their house, but, on John's return, was slain by John.³⁷⁹ Two shillings were assessed on a taxpayer in Somerset in 1327 called *Cachefreynsch*.³⁸⁰ This byname existed in Sussex too, where the villein tenant Ralph *Kacheuurens* (alias *Kachefrench*) held a virgate and (jointly) a briar patch.³⁸¹

Depictions of characteristics of speech comprise about 240 taxpayers, just under forty per cent of whom received the nickname byname *Baret(t)(e)* (and sometimes more firmly *Baratour*).³⁸² Aggressive and quarrelsome speech was thus mainly represented in the French

³⁷³ Oxford City Library, D17/1b.

³⁷⁴ *Chancery Miscellanea Part IV* (List and Index Society 38, 1968), bundle 67, file 6, no. 225.

³⁷⁵ S. R. Scargill-Bird, ed., *Custumals of Battle Abbey in the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, 1282-1312* (Camden Society new series 41, 1887), pp. 62, 65.

³⁷⁶ Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, pp. 170, 172-3.

³⁷⁷ *Essex*, p. 4.

³⁷⁸ Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, pp. 26 (nos 107-8) and 60 (334).

³⁷⁹ Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249*, p. 194 (no. 227).

³⁸⁰ 'Somerset', p. 265.

³⁸¹ W. D. Peckham, ed., *Thirteen Custumals of the Sussex Manors of the Bishop of Chichester* (Sussex Record Society 31, 1925), pp. 16, 21.

³⁸² For an example of a peasant called *le Baretur*, Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Court*, p. 10; Robert *le Baretur*, a pledge in the manorial court at Wantage in 1246.

vernacular. The next most frequent of this form of nickname amongst taxpayers – but some distance behind *Baret* – was *Parlebien*, the precise intention of which is ambiguous: loquacity? diction? (in ironic or non-ironic senses?). Otherwise, code was immaterial in describing taxpayers with speech characteristics: *Botirmouth* and *Buttermouth*; *Jevousdy*; *Greteword*; *Singsmal*; *Chauntecler* ('sing clearly'); *Godspec*; *Catchefrensh*; *Boniour*; *Spychesach*; *Belchant* ('sweet song'); *Purquei*; *Aleheylle*; *Farewel*; *Goudtyd*; *Soxspit*; *Stamerere*; and *Godemorwe*.³⁸³ Some of these bynames, such as *Botirmouth* have the insinuation of ingratiating which was repugnant; others, such as *Greteword*, imply that the bearer was suspected of being a braggard.³⁸⁴

From sources other than the lay subsidy, it is apparent that description of speech in the French vernacular did not represent status. At Calystock, one of the *nativi conventionarii*, John *Parlebien*, held a messuage and twenty-one acres English for an annual rent of 5s.³⁸⁵ Another John *Parlebien* was a tenant on the manor of Monk Friston and Richard *Parlebien* held there a typical peasant holding of a toft and bovate.³⁸⁶ One of those appealed as an accessory to a homicide before the Bedfordshire coroners in 1274 was Richard *Belebouch*.³⁸⁷

Sex, love and courtliness

Two taxpayers in Somerset in 1327 were designated *Brekehert* and *Loueschefit*, neither assessed at exceptional levels, that is at 1s. and 2s. respectively. Both might be construed as bynames disciplinary of the emotions. Barely disguised, and probably well comprehended, sexuality was contained within the byname *Smalstones* which occurred within the admissions to the freedom of the borough of Leicester in 1210, for *stones* pertained to the testicles.³⁸⁸

Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 11 for the assessment of 305 taxpayers with nickname bynames imputing sexual proclivity, love or courtliness. Fifty per cent of these taxpayers contributed less than 18d. Some of these bynames have been considered above since they might represent either violence and anger or concealed sexual content. The referent in those ambiguous bynames above is the male member, metaphorically a spear, lance, sword, or staff. Other taxpayers' bynames symbolise or directly refer to male sexual organs: *Pyntel*; *Blakballok*; *Ballock*; *Scharpyntil*; *Silvirpintel*; *Selverspyr*; and *Cadeballe*.³⁸⁹

Table 11 Descriptive statistics of taxpayers with bynames representing sexuality, love and courtliness

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
305	31	24	57.67	18	12	33

Whilst *-tail* names frequently related to female pudenda, the male member might be involved, or, in some cases, it is impossible to decide. In the following instances, the penis

³⁸³ For *stamera*, Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 336. For the peasant William *Jouedy* at Havant in 1301-2: M. Page, ed., *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1301-2* (Hampshire Record Series 14, 1996), p. 238.

³⁸⁴ Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, pp. 68, 105. For *Greteword*, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, II, pp. 113, 187 (1307-8).

³⁸⁵ Hull, *Caption of Seisin of the Duchy of Cornwall 1337*, p. 101.

³⁸⁶ T. A. M. Bishop, 'Extent of Monk Friston 1320', *Miscellanea IV* (YASRS 94, 1937), pp. 56. 59.

³⁸⁷ Hunnissett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, p. 62 (no. 134).

³⁸⁸ Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester I*, p. 6; T. G. Duncan, *Late Medieval English Lyrics and Carols* (Harmondsworth, 2000), pp. 147 (no. 116), 150 (no. 122), p. 172 (no. 142 – in this case in Latin: *lapides*).

³⁸⁹ *Wiltshire*, p. 110; P. R. O. E179/135/15 m. 13; E179/135/16 mm. 31, 54; *Cumberland*, p. 18; *Northumberland*, pp. 102, 106, 177; *Buckinghamshire*, p. 11; *Surrey*, p. 9; 'Kent', p. 137; 'Staffordshire', p. 23; *Yorkshire 1297*, p. 139; Suff: p. 199.

seems to be at issue: *Pytayl* at Creeton in Lincs.; *Schaketaille* at Ludford (Lincs.); *Strektail* at Stainton in Yorks., to which might be added *Schaktre* at Aislabry in Yorks. as contemplating the male member.³⁹⁰ The male member seems most demonstrable in William *Lyngetayle* who attested a York charter in 1292.³⁹¹ Male sexual acts against women might be considered to inhere in *Pryketayl* in Aston in Worcestershire in c.1280.³⁹²

Such exploitation of females by males explains a number of other forms of these bynames: *Plukkerose* at Berwick in Wilts.; *Takelove* at Horndon in Essex; *Ledelady* at Crowland and Ulceby in Lincs. and at Harpham and Sherburn in Yorks.; *Cacelady* at Scott Willoughby in the former county; *Triperose* in Lea in Lincs.; *Ringros* in Dacre in Cumberland; perhaps *Rederose* in Cundall in Yorks.; *Knythquene* in Aske, *Levedyfoster* in Rokeby, *Wakelevedy* in Farndale, *Pullerose* in Stillingfleet, all in Yorks.; *Schakerose* in Wing, Bucks.; *Ringotherose* in Ashton in Makerfield in Lancs.; *Falerose* in Reydon in Suffolk; and *Pluckerose* in various forms in Rottingdean in Sussex and Milton Abbas in Dorset.³⁹³ The level of assessment of the seventeen taxpayers with these bynames appeared to be generally lower: mean of 23d. (standard deviation of 13.98) and median of 20d., fifty per cent contributing 16d. or less.

Preoccupation with the lower body inherently encompassed sexuality, the sexualised body. The robust sexual language of the 'North' has been epitomised above. It remained there an overt language use employed in nickname bynames, the principal constituents of which were *tail* and *cunt*. Occasional residual nicknames of this overt type were not entirely precluded outside the 'North', so that encountered at Hardwick (Warws.) in 1279-80 was William *Grungetyl*, a tenant of a half virgate and Alice and John *Pryketayl* taxed in Worcestershire.³⁹⁴ These explicit forms should be supplemented by less blatant, but well understood verbal phrases such as *Shakespeare* and *Waggestaffe*.

Predominantly, such epithets were directed to males, but occasionally females, often through marriage or inheritance, acquired these *cognomina*, explaining Sarah *Wagstaf*, a thirteenth-century widow, or Alice *filia Helene Waggestaff*.³⁹⁵ A similar explanation must underlie Alice *Plukkerose* assessed at 1s. 8d. at Berwick in Wiltshire in 1332, for that byname implied ravishment of a woman (a rose).³⁹⁶ In other cases, some female agency is intimated, as in the female taxpayers called *Sautrebedde* and *Springabedde* (below) and in the Poll Tax for Essex in the late fourteenth century Cecily *Swetabedde*, a widow, who perhaps was uninhibited in her sexual liaisons.³⁹⁷ An imputation of sexual misconduct was applied in 1222 to Leveva *Longtail*, a tenant of two acres and three roods at Elm (Cams.).³⁹⁸ Infrequently, sexual activity induced a nickname byname of a woman with strong sexual overtones. When an interlocution occurred between two men who visited a house in All

³⁹⁰ P. R. O. E179/135/15 m. 14; P. R. O. E179/135/16, mm. 39, 40, 63; *Yorkshire1301*, p. 40.

³⁹¹ *Yorkshire Deeds* VI, p. 183 (no. 595)

³⁹² *Worcestershire*, p. 77.

³⁹³ *Wiltshire*, p. 87; *Essex*, p. 99; P. R. O. E179/135/14 mm. 11, 14; P. R. O. E179/135/16 mm. 6, 9; *Cumberland*, p. 6; *Yorkshire1301*, pp. 3, 12, 17, 48, 104; *Buckinghamshire*, p. 64; 'Lancashire', p. 18; *Yorkshire1297*, pp. 135, 145; *Suffolk*, p. 74; *Sussex*, p. 171; *Dorset*, p. 20.

³⁹⁴ T. John, ed., *The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80. Stoneleigh and Kineton Hundreds* (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History new series 19, 1991), p. 204; *Worcestershire*, p. 3.

³⁹⁵ Bodl. Fairfax MS. 9, fos 12r and 14v.

³⁹⁶ *Wiltshire*, p. 87. For the implication of *-rose* representing woman, S. Kay, 'Women's body of knowledge: epistemology and misogyny in the *Romance of the Rose*' in Kay & M. Rubin, eds, *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 211-35, and for that poet's misogynistic expression of taking the rose as a life-cycle ritual stage as proof of masculinity, since that is woman's proclivity, p. 218.

³⁹⁷ Fenwick, *Poll Taxes* I, p. 246; for the sexual connotations of ME *bedde*, J. Coleman, 'The treatment of sexual vocabulary in Middle English dictionaries' in J. Fisiak, ed., *Middle English Miscellany. From Vocabulary to Linguistic Variation* (Poznai, 1996), pp. 183-206. I am grateful to Julie Coleman for a copy of this paper.

³⁹⁸ B. L. Cotton Tib B II, fos 153v-156r.

Hallows Colmansburch where six prostitutes plied their trade in 1262, the women were presented at the London eyre of 1276, mostly identified by toponymic bynames reflecting their immigration to London; one, however, received a quite brusque and brutal labelling as *Notekina Hoggenhore*.³⁹⁹

Encompassed therefore are the verbal-phrase composite nicknames with noun *-rose*, included in which are William *Schakerose*, taxed at 1s. 4d. in Wing (Bucks.); the same implication might have resided in the nickname bynames of John *Plantrose*, a customary tenant holding a standard holding (*plena terra*) from the Bishop of Ely in Stretham and Ralph *Ringerose*, another of the Bishop's tenants, holding fourteen acres at East Dereham (Norfolk).⁴⁰⁰ As intriguing is the byname of Walter *Coupe Rose* who held urban property in Newcastle in 1251x1259.⁴⁰¹

Similar in intention are many of periphrasal forms of verb plus noun in which the noun is *-lady*, examples of which include Adam *Lovelady* on the manor of Wakefield, married but perhaps with a roving eye, and the taxpayer called *Ledelevedy* in the West Riding assessment of 1297.⁴⁰² Bynames of this formation continued throughout the country into the middle of the fourteenth century.

Into this category belong *Swengtele* at Kentisbeare (Devon), *Schaketaille* (Ludford, Lincs.), *Selverspyr* (Blackheath, Kent), *Strokehose* (Canterbury, Kent), *Pryketayl* (*bis*, Aston, Worcs.), the female taxpayer called *Sautrebedde* ('jump into bed') at West Hampnett in Sussex, *Prickeloue* (*bis*, Warminghurst, Sussex), the widow of *Plukkerose* (Rottingdean, Sussex), *Plockerose* (Milton Abbas, Dorset), and the female taxpayer referred to as *Spryngabedde* at Rodden in Dorset.⁴⁰³ A tenant of Guisborough Priory, holding tofts in Stainton, had a byname (*Strektayle*) the origin of which was 'stroke tail', *tail* a synonym for female pudenda.⁴⁰⁴ Richard *Wagetail*, a free tenant of the lordship of Forton, more likely bore a byname with sexual overtones rather than derived from the pied wagtail bird.⁴⁰⁵ More euphemism still perhaps inheres in the bynames of Thomas *Huggedamme* who held a house in Guisborough in the thirteenth century, Peter *Strekelevedy* who alienated three acres in Sandall in 1315, and Henry *Danceleuedi* who in 1281 was an accessory to homicide in Derbyshire (but whose chattels were valued at the curiously high level of 30s.).⁴⁰⁶ In 1222, the nickname bynames attributed to a free tenant of the Bishop of Ely in Ely suggested his sexual desires: Robert *Quinteluue*.⁴⁰⁷

There remains a category of nickname bynames which might be ambivalently and implicitly sexual in content or might represent short temper or easy arousal to anger. In either case, a group condemnation of individual actions is the concern. Into this category fall such

³⁹⁹ Weinbaum, *London Eyre of 1276*, p. 34 (no. 119). We have to be careful here as *hore* more usually represented grey (haired). In this case, however, we seem to be justified in an interpretation as *hogge* (a castrated male swine or young sheep before shearing – probably the latter to the extent that the clientele of the women might well have been juvenile males) and *hore* (prostitute): *Middle English Dictionary* 4 G-H, pp. 826-7 and 939. See also, P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Pigs and prostitutes: streetwalking in comparative perspective' in K. J. Lewis, N. J. Minuge & K. M. Phillips, eds, *Young Medieval Women* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 172-943.

⁴⁰⁰ *Buckinghamshire*, p. 64; B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fos 102v-104v, 200v-207r.

⁴⁰¹ Oliver, *Early Deeds Relating to Newcastle*, p. 96 (no. 144).

⁴⁰² *Wakefield Court Rolls* IV, p. 271; he occurred in 1306 at Ossett: *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, p. 60: *Yorks1297*, p. 135. It is doubtful that *Lovelady* signifies devotion to the Virgin.

⁴⁰³ *Devon*, p. 90; *Essex*, p. 99; P. R. O. E179/135/14 m. 11; E179/135/15 mm. 6, 14; E179/135/16 mm. 9, 39; *Yorkshire1301*, p. 104; 'Lancashire', p. 18; 'Kent', pp. 137, 160; *Yorkshire1297*, pp. 135, 145; *Worcestershire*, p. 77; *Suffolk*, p. 74; 'Shropshire', p. 138; *Sussex*, pp. 126, 159, 171; *Dorset1332*, pp. 20, 93.

⁴⁰⁴ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, I, p. 429.

⁴⁰⁵ Farrer, *Cockersand Cartulary* vol. II, Part 1, pp. 360-1.

⁴⁰⁶ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne*, I, p. 159 (ccc); *Wakefield Court Rolls* III, p. 49; Hopkinson, *Rolls of the 1281 Derbyshire Eyre*, p. 142 (no. 558).

⁴⁰⁷ B. L. Cotton MS Tib B II, fo. 86r.

familiar nickname bynames as *Shakespeare* and *Wagstaff*.⁴⁰⁸ As it is impossible to disentangle these two categories, it seems sensible to consider them compositely without attempting to differentiate them. In 1204, William *Dragespere* appealed Adam *filius Alani* as an accessory to homicide, his byname perhaps reflecting the appellant's own swift recourse to violence.⁴⁰⁹ Shortness of temper is perhaps also indicated by the byname *Brusebat*.⁴¹⁰ Roger *Briselaunce* (fl. 1240x1268) was a free tenant in the N.W. of England who attested several charters to Cockersand Abbey.⁴¹¹ Marginal status, conversely, is illustrated by John *Bruselaunce*, indicted for burglary in Wiltshire.⁴¹²

The byname *Strokehose* can be assumed to have intimated sexual proclivity rather than apparel. Some biographical information of one of the bearers of this byname derives from the composite manor of Wakefield in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century as the byname reached the stage of becoming hereditary. Adam *Strekayse* appeared in the earliest extant court roll of 1274; he was presented for battery in 1297. In 1298, presented for an escaped beast in the township of Holne, he produced as his pledge William *Strekayse*, who had been placed in mercy for an offence against the vert in 1297. Both William and Adam remained thereafter frequently mentioned in the court rolls, in the normal routine of peasant affairs.⁴¹³ As William was elected reeve of Holne in 1308, he was probably an unfree tenant; he was later succeeded in that office by Adam in 1316.⁴¹⁴ He was also involved in the acquisition of small amounts of (additional) land from 1309, whilst Adam entered more considerably into the land market from the same time.⁴¹⁵ Both can thus be established as unfree peasant tenants of the township of Holne in the manor of Wakefield. In 1330, Margery *Strekeyse* impleaded William *Withir* in the court for Holne township for a debt of 3s. 6d. for her wages for the last half year in service. William responded that as she had withdrawn from his service for two weeks for no ostensible reason, he had hired another *ancilla* (maid), by which defence he was acquitted.⁴¹⁶ By 1331 Margery had died, for William acted as her executor, offering the lord (the Earl) a mark for assistance in levying the debts owed to Margery within the lordship, reckoned to amount to 60s. 5d.⁴¹⁷ About a year earlier, Adam had been indicted for usury, upon which he made a fine of £10 for all his trespasses and was further bound over in £10 not to commit usury again.⁴¹⁸ In this particular context, a nickname byname with (ambiguous) sexual significance was associated with the peasant elite of unfree status in the north of England at the point when that the byname was incipiently hereditary.

In the N.W. of England, these euphemistic phrasal formations persisted into the late fourteenth century, so that, for example, Richard *Shakelaedy* was a tenant in the borough of Ormskirk in 1366 who contributed to the subscription for the stipend of the priest there.⁴¹⁹ In

⁴⁰⁸ For *Wagstaff* in the West Midlands in the late thirteenth century, Philip *Waggstaff* on the manor of Halesowen in 1271 and 1282: Amphlett & Hamilton, *Court Rolls of the Manor of Hales* I, pp. 34 and 192 (essoin).

⁴⁰⁹ Stenton, *Pleas before the King* III, p. 138 (930).

⁴¹⁰ 'Somerset', p. 230 (assessed at only 6d.).

⁴¹¹ Farrer, *Cockersand Cartulary* I Part 2, pp. 294, 317; vol. II Part 1, p. 345.

⁴¹² Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 72 (no. 253).

⁴¹³ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, pp. 19, 304; II, pp. 3, 6, 40, 189, 194,

⁴¹⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, pp. 190 (as *Strecayse*), 225; III, p. 186.

⁴¹⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, p. 195 (William: entry fine of 12d. for 2.5 acres); pp. 215, 218, 221, 225 (Adam buying and selling land on a largish peasant scale); III, p. 154, IV, pp. 132, 193, V, pp. 40, 81 (mainly Adam).

⁴¹⁶ *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, pp. 158, 160.

⁴¹⁷ *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, p. 178.

⁴¹⁸ *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, p. 160. His usurious practices had been detected as early as 1316 when he had been presented for loaning 4s. to Richard *de Holme* at a rate of interest of 1d. per week, for which he was fined 3s. 4d.: III, p. 124.

⁴¹⁹ *Miscellanea* vol. 2 (Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society 31, 1896), p. 110. The context is the persistence of a small number of compounded verb-phrasal and 'bahuvrihi' nicknames in the rental of Ormskirk at this time, so that the sexually-informed periphrasal nickname was simply part of the survival of ME periphrases in general.

the Lancashire Poll Taxes over a decade later, John *Shakeshaft* was enumerated at Aughton, Richard *Ledelady* at Windle, and Richard *Shakelady* at Lathom.⁴²⁰ In Yorkshire can be observed the same linguistic phenomenon, the survival of phrasal nickname bynames of sexual disposition into the Poll Tax of 1379. In that assessment are enumerated taxpayers with the bynames *Schakesper*, *Brekeballe*, *Smalehorne*, *Pyntylwagge* (twice at Ilkley), *Serueledy*, *Shakeshaft* and *Ledelady*.⁴²¹

Some of the regulation of local sexual morality was thus achieved through the attribution of descriptive bynames into the middle of the fourteenth century. The ascription of these *cognomina* was intended to humiliate and shame those to whom they were directed, for transgressing or being suspected of breaching local group norms. Whilst the construction of phrasal or compounded nickname bynames did not inhibit inheritance of some of these names (such as *Shakespeare*, *Wagstaff*), the formation of others (*Pyntylwagge*, for example) implied some continuing agency and deliberate action. That such apparently creative compounds continued to be produced into the late fourteenth century in the 'North' of England suggests a difference of language use.⁴²² That phenomenon resulted from the flexible use of ME in the 'northern' zones in all forms of nickname byname, not just sexually-informed ones. Nevertheless, the continuation of these sexually-charged names in the 'northern' regions represented northern ME as a more direct and blunt language use, whilst in other areas language had become marked.

Noticeable is how virtually all this lexis is Middle English; only *Cacelady*, ('take woman') which is code-mixed, imports some French lexis. Confirmation of that difference derives from the vocabulary for sexually aggressive males; apart from *Playndamurs* ('full of love') and the code-mixed *Launcelevedi*, Middle English was the 'preferred' code: *Fuloflof* (the ME cognate), *Ledelevedy*, *Maydenloue*, *Tippelevedy*, *Wakelevedy*, *Strekelevedy*, and *Shakelauedi* – incidentally mostly revealed in the 'North' and Lincolnshire.⁴²³

It was, however, quite otherwise with the language of love. Amongst taxpayers in the lay subsidy, the vocabulary constituting love consisted of the French terms *Drury* ('beloved'), *Paramour*, *Amour*, *Amaunt*, and *Ameraunde*, by comparison with ME *Triweloue*, *Louibound*, *Loveswete*, *Swetelove*, *Godelove*, *Byndelove*, and *Leman*. *Drury* singly accounted for fifty-three per cent of these taxpayers, whilst *Leman* comprised only nineteen per cent. Both terms were applied to taxpayers of moderate and lesser means. For all ME terms, the mean payment stood at 49d., but heavily skewed by an extremely high single assessment (standard deviation 145.3). Accordingly the trimmed mean diminished to 23d., with a still lower median of 18d. For French lexis, the mean produced was 27d. (standard deviation 23.07), with both trimmed mean and median at 24d. Whilst fifty per cent of taxpayers with ME bynames made payments at 16d. or below, their French counterparts contributed 20d. or below. There was, consequently, little socio-economic difference between the two codes, although French pertained to a slightly higher tax cohort. Perhaps accordingly, John *Bonamur* held part of a burgage in Burton on Trent in 1319 and William *Pleindamur* belonged to the townspeople of Trowbridge in the first decade of the fourteenth century.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁰ Fenwick, *Poll Taxes*, I, pp. 459, 470-1: again the context is the perpetuation of ME periphrasal forms of all kinds.

⁴²¹ 'Rolls of the collectors in the West Riding of the Lay Subsidy (Poll Tax) 2 Richard II', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 6 (1880), pp. 3, 317, 324, 338, 459 and 470-1. *Serueledy* might have been potentially occupational or even devotional (the Virgin), but a sexual imputation seems more likely.

⁴²² For a syntactical byname in Norwich in 1289, Thomas *Gosonthegrene*, attached for forestalling the fish market: Hudson, *Records of the City of Norwich*, p. 367.

⁴²³ All these terms are explained by Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, pp. 93, 119, 120, 131, 143, 158, 171, 177, 183. For *Fuloflove* in the 'South', *Bedfordshire*, p. 49 (Biggleswade, 1297).

⁴²⁴ Stuart, 'A rental of the borough of Burton, 1319', p. 41; Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office 192/1. Compare John *Makeloue*, who raised the hue in Broome (Wiltshire) in the early fourteenth century, obviously of peasant status with an ME form of byname, although it is ambiguously sexual since it might just conceivably have represented reconciliation at law: Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office 192/3.

Occasionally, ME terms for intense affection are revealed in other sources. A *Mikkiloue* kinship existed in the borough of Leicester, evidenced in the admissions to the freedom and the internal borough subsidies, between 1260 and 1318 and in the lay subsidy of 1327.⁴²⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, nevertheless, the cottars of Osbaldwick in Yorkshire included Stephen *Ledeleuedy*, combining importunity with disreputable byname.⁴²⁶

Age and authority?

In 1264, Gilbert *Langlif* held land in Newcastle upon Tyne, his byname indicative of the perception of his age.⁴²⁷ Despite consideration allowed to the authority of age in privileged medieval and early-modern social groups, older age was represented in bynames less frequently than comparative lesser age.⁴²⁸

Table 12 Descriptive statistics of taxpayers whose bynames represented age

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviaton	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
528	28	26	23.81	21	12	36

The total of 528 taxpayers identified by age-related bynames contributed at levels not markedly different from other taxpayers with nickname bynames. Fifty per cent were assessed at 20d. or less.

Fully eighty-seven per cent of the bynames of these taxpayers, nevertheless, reflected junior status rather than seniority. Taxpayers with bynames reflecting seniority numbered only fifty-nine, contributing a mean taxation of 32d. (standard deviation 25.45), a trimmed mean of 29d., and a median of 24d. Fifty-two percent of these taxpayers paid 24d. or less and the first and third quartiles were located at 14d. and 44d. Overall, therefore, taxpayers with bynames of seniority contributed at a higher level and there existed taxpayers of more affluence with this form of byname. Bynames of seniority therefore tended to correlate more closely with assessed personal estate. Nevertheless, there remained a proportion of taxpayers with bynames of seniority who had low assessed wealth, twenty-four per cent being assessed at 12d. or less. This distribution contributes to the divide between those who were able to maintain their dignity in old age and those who were incapable of a dignified existence. Although these latter had chattels over and above those required for subsistence, their allocation was still marginal.

Notwithstanding those statistical differences, the analysis cannot be quite so uncomplicated. What precisely are the meanings of such categories as *le Yonge* (*le Yunghe*), *Oldeman*, *le Ald*, and their cognates? It is clear that the Latin terms *senior* and *junior* might only be comparative rather than representing absolute age – that is, comparative between two people of the same kinship or same *cognomen*. How far did that distinction only obtain in the vernacular ME terms? In fact, it seems equally clear that *senior* and *junior* were hardly ever employed as sobriquets (rather than as affixes) in the taxation returns.

⁴²⁵ Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester I*, p. 21.

⁴²⁶ T. A. M. Bishop, 'Extents of the prebends of York [c.1295]', *Miscellanea IV* (YASRS xciv, 1937), p. 9.

⁴²⁷ Oliver, *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne*, p. 33 (no. 39).

⁴²⁸ K. Thomas, 'Age and authority in early modern England', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (1976), pp. 205-48; the respect for age varies, of course, by social group as to whether the aged are able to enjoy a dignified life or not: A. Blaikie, *Ageing and Popular Culture* (Cambridge, 1999); for experience of ageing historically: S. Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages: 'Winter Clothes us in Shadow and Pain'* (London, 1997); G. Minois, *History of Old Age* (Chicago, 1989); P. Thane, *Old Age in English History. Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford, 2000); M. Pelling & R. M. Smith, *Life, Death and the Elderly. Historical Perspectives* ((London, 1991).

For the most part, these bynames of age/status provide few examples of creativity; they are all fairly conventional. The exceptions are *Oldino(u)gh* at Great Sherston (48d.) in Wiltshire and at Laceby (9d.) in Lincolnshire.⁴²⁹

Waste and spille-

Amongst verbal phrasal nickname bynames, one of the most interesting formations has the prototheme *spille-* which confers the sense of 'to waste'. In the middle of the fourteenth century Thomas *Spilbrede* inhabited Cumberland.⁴³⁰ In Yorkshire, in Skelton, William *Spillebrede* quitclaimed his right in a toft to Guisborough Priory.⁴³¹ At the turn of the fourteenth century, John *Spilbrede* was killed at Ireby in Cumberland.⁴³² At an earlier time, the element had occurred in an urban as well as a rural context: in 1211 one of the burgesses admitted to the freedom of the borough of Leicester had the designation *Spillecorn*.⁴³³ On the manor of Wakefield, John *Spillewod* was recorded in the court rolls on a small number of occasions in the role of a minor peasant.⁴³⁴

It has been suggested that these compound *spille-* bynames depict wastage or destruction, equivalent to French *-waste/-gaste*.⁴³⁵ That must be so in the sense that it is a social critique of a loss, epitomised perhaps by the taxpayer at Guisborough, assessed merely at 6d., John *Spilhaver*, a reference to the destruction of oats, of fundamental importance in parts of the 'North'.⁴³⁶

Occasionally, however, perhaps the critique is towards ostentation as in the case of Adam *Spilgold* in Holm Cultrum in Cumberland, a taxpayer assessed at 51d.⁴³⁷ That byname, *Spilgyld*, still existed in Cumberland in 1354, in the guise of Thomas, a legatee under the will of the rector of Melmerby.⁴³⁸

If we take the manor of Wakefield, the context of the verbal phrase is illustrated, John *Spillewod* having been mentioned above. Roger *Spillewood* was presented for default of suit to the tourn in 1315.⁴³⁹ In the hamlet of Ossett in 1332, appurtenant to the immense manor of Wakefield, Walter *Spilnubir* and William *Spilwode* were amerced for escape of animals.⁴⁴⁰ *Spilwode* was transformed into William *Spilletimbre* when he was fined 3d. for an offence against the vert in Ossett in the following year and Richard *Spiltimbir* surrendered three acres in Sowerby in 1331.⁴⁴¹ The byname persisted there for in May 1349, the wife of Roger *Spilwod* was presented as a common brewer.⁴⁴² *Spillewod* existed as an ignoble byname in other woodland areas of the West Riding, epitomised by Roger *Spillewod* at Hundsworth who was unsuccessful in a case of detinue in 1326.⁴⁴³

Metonyms and metaphors

Two of the principal burgesses in Kingston upon Hull in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were Robert and John *Rotenhering*.⁴⁴⁴ This byname recurred

⁴²⁹ *Wiltshire*, p. 103; P. R. O. E179/135/16, m. 25.

⁴³⁰ P. R. O. Chancery Miscellanea bundle 53, file 1, no. 33.

⁴³¹ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne* I, p. 134 (dcccxxv).

⁴³² *Chancery Miscellanea* vol. III (List and Index Society 26, 1967), p. 269.

⁴³³ Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, I, p. 7.

⁴³⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, I, p. 54 (1306)

⁴³⁵ Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 167.

⁴³⁶ *Yorkshire 1301* p. 33.

⁴³⁷ *Cumberland*, p. 28.

⁴³⁸ Storey, *Register of Gilbert de Welton*, p. 12.

⁴³⁹ *Wakefield Court Rolls* III, p. 74. He was plaintiff in trespass in 1316: pp. 124-5, 130.

⁴⁴⁰ Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 92.

⁴⁴¹ Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 175; *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, p. 186.

⁴⁴² Jewell, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 114.

⁴⁴³ Nottinghamshire Archives Office DDSR 1/6/3.

⁴⁴⁴ Hull, *Caption of Seisin of the Duchy of Cornwall 1337*, pp. 31, 33, 35, 38, 41.

amongst the taxpayers in Ravenser, just along the Humber, where this taxpayer was assessed at 180d.⁴⁴⁵ Variants of this proscriptive byname appeared at Kessingland and Higham in Suffolk – *Oldhering* (assessed at 15d.) and *Euelhering* (taxed at 8d.) – and in Norwich in c.1311 in the person of William *Blendehering*.⁴⁴⁶ The attribution of a metonym for shaming and humiliation remained a device amongst social groups in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England, especially in the ‘North’. In this particular case, those affected were of fairly substantial status. In other cases, the shame of a pejorative metonymic byname was directed towards the more marginal. Of this circumstance must have been the attachment of the byname *Sourmilk* to a peasant kinship on the manor of Wakefield in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, a byname which, despite its insidiousness, developed into an hereditary surname there, held in 1349 by Richard, a tenant of villein land in Sowerby.⁴⁴⁷ Directed at an individual, *Sourhale* was applied to Alice of Stanley who in 1323 owed 4s. 8d. by an agreement by which she agreed to withdraw from marriage litigation; the implication is that her brewing activity, producing a notably inferior product, had allowed her to accumulate some capital.⁴⁴⁸ Humiliation through metonymic bynames was available against both substantial and insubstantial.

A significant proportion of these metaphorical nickname bynames belonged to the category of verbal phrase forms. Frequent amongst these was *Passelew*. For example, three taxpayers in Stapleford in the Leicestershire lay subsidy of 1327, assessed at 12d., 13d., and 26d., bore this byname.⁴⁴⁹ The distribution of this byname was extensive through England, comprising taxpayers in Suffolk, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Devon, Wiltshire, Essex, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Nineteen taxpayers called *Passelew* or a variant were assessed at a mean contribution of 30d. and median of 21d., a quarter of them paying 10d. or less. The range of their assessment was therefore wide, embracing different levels of personal estate or chattels. The jurors for Aspley Guise in 1259 included Peter *Passeleue*.⁴⁵⁰ Although Tengvik considered this byname to have existed from the late eleventh century, he remained uncertain about its meaning.⁴⁵¹ It is possible, however, that an English cognate existed in Agnes *Sparewater* of Stanton, a minor tenant, holding a garden, in which case both the byname and this bearer reflect a fairly lowly status despite the code used and some of the *Passelew* taxpayers being assessed at higher levels.⁴⁵²

This presumed etymology associates *Passelew* to bynames like *Drinkwater* which allude to economic position and pattern of consumption. Roger *Drinkwater* exemplified the lower status as an escaped thief.⁴⁵³ *Drynkwater* and variant bynames were borne by taxpayers in Lyneham (Wilts.), Barholm in Lincolnshire, Canterbury in Kent, and Northleach

⁴⁴⁵ *Yorkshire 1297*, p. 118. See also Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 152.

⁴⁴⁶ *Suffolk*, pp. 93, 203. Stranger and more elusive etymologically is John *Scakehering* (= ‘shake herring’), an unfree (bond), but substantial tenant of two bovates in Fulford in c.1295: T. A. M. Bishop, ‘Extents of the prebends of York [c.1295]’, *Miscellanea IV* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 94, 1937), p. 25; Hudson, *Records of the City of Norwich*, p. 379.

⁴⁴⁷ For example, *Wakefield Court Rolls* II, pp. 85-6; III, pp. 65, 73; IV, 11, 121, 145; V, pp. 67, 159, 190; Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 19; Jewell, *Court Rolls*, pp. 4, 21, 51-2, 55, 199, 207 – involving the usual peasant transactions including acquisition of small parcels of land.

⁴⁴⁸ *Wakefield Court Rolls*, V, p. 6; R. M. Smith, ‘Some issues concerning families and their property in rural England, 1250-1800’ in Smith, ed., *Land, Kinship and Life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 28.

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Leicestershire’

⁴⁵⁰ Fowler, ‘Calendar of inquisitions post mortem, no. 1’, p. 226.

⁴⁵¹ Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, p. 386. The possibility remains that the intended meaning was ‘ferryman’.

⁴⁵² B. L. Add. MS. 40,008, fo. 72v. Jönsjö suggests for *Passelewe* ‘one who has to pass water to go home’ and derives *spare-* from OE *sparian* to save: Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, pp. 139, 166. He seems to exclude without reason several other interpretations of *spare* allowed by *Middle English Dictionary* 10 SM-SZ, pp. 36-6, including (6) at p. 365 ‘to give away’; *Middle English Dictionary* cites at (8) at p. 366 other bynames such as *Sparegod*, *Sparbottle*, and *Sparbakoun*.

⁴⁵³ Weinbaum, *The London Eyre of 1276*, p. 87 (no. 316).

borough and Stow on the Wolds in Gloucestershire.⁴⁵⁴ In some circumstances, that byname had strong association with marginal status. Philip *Drynkewater* was indicted for theft in 1305, although acquitted; he was, however, simultaneously accused of battery and robbery.⁴⁵⁵ Social identity was thus formulated through consumption, perhaps as somewhat deviant behaviour since it was not the norm for consumption (ale).⁴⁵⁶ Deviation from that norm was explicit too in the byname of two taxpayers named *Drynkedregges* in Stamford and adjacent Thurlby, although, surprisingly, both were assessed at middling to high levels, 24d. and 48d..⁴⁵⁷ Their unacceptable behaviour – with the implication of drunkenness – may have been increased because of their comfortable status, perhaps implying a miserly attitude.⁴⁵⁸ The decision to forego ale and exhibit difference was inherent too in *Drinckemilk*, a taxpayer in Northumberland assessed at 42d.⁴⁵⁹ Equally, excessive drinking was stigmatised, especially when combined with poverty, as in the case of the taxpayer called *Potfulofale* assessed at 6d. in Pickering in 1301.⁴⁶⁰ Lack of sobriety must have been intended also in applying the byname *Drinkale* to the taxpayer in Ormsby in 1301 who was assessed at 16d.⁴⁶¹ Stricture of this kind was not novel for *al for drunken* was an epithet applied in the late eleventh century, perhaps the etymon of *aydrunken* in Northumberland in 1279.⁴⁶²

Eating habits received treatment in a number of miscellaneous bynames, such as *Honylikkere*, borne by two Somerset taxpayers both assessed at 1s.⁴⁶³ Metonyms and metaphors thus (ambiguously) reveal patterns of consumption and how those patterns were perceived by others and thus constrained individuals. In some cases, therefore consumption contributed to identity as well as identification, although not quite in our contemporary perception of consumption as part of an embodied project, with the emphasis on project. John *Etebrede*, a member of the watch in Canterbury, was indicted for the death of John Edmund in the early years of the fourteenth century.⁴⁶⁴ Gluttony was ridiculed through bynames such as that of John who contributed tax of 18d. at Milton in Somerset: *Chasseporc* ('take pig').⁴⁶⁵ Sometimes the marginal status of the bearers of these bynames becomes evident, as in the case of Adam *Sparebutter*, who, on seemingly his only occasion of being recorded in the court rolls of Wakefield manor, in 1323, was fined 3d.⁴⁶⁶

Selective consumption is revealed in the byname *Pikewastel*, denoting a preference for the finest, white bread, as in Robert *Pikewastel*, a free tenant, who attested a charter for land in Kirkleatham.⁴⁶⁷ Robert witnessed another charter relating to Broughton, whilst John *Picwastel* made a benefaction of a toft and croft in Skelton to Guisborough Priory.⁴⁶⁸ William

⁴⁵⁴ *Wiltshire*, p. 96; P. R. O. E179/135/15 m.3; 'Kent', p. 160; *Gloucestershire*, pp. 46, 60. For the association with poverty, Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 84.

⁴⁵⁵ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, pp. 107 (no. 549), 112, 131 (nos 639, 641, 854).

⁴⁵⁶ J. M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England. Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford, 1996), p. 17.

⁴⁵⁷ P.R.O. E179/135/15, mm. 2, 4.

⁴⁵⁸ For the imputation of drunkenness, Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 83.

⁴⁵⁹ *Northumberland*, p. 160. Jönsjö suggests an implication of effeminacy: *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 83.

⁴⁶⁰ *Yorkshire 1301*, p. 56; for confirmation of the imputation, Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 144; for the French synonym, Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 55 (*Beueben* in Yorkshire in 1260).

⁴⁶¹ *Yorkshire 1301*, p. 33.

⁴⁶² Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*; Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 50.

⁴⁶³ 'Somerset', p. 197.

⁴⁶⁴ *Chancery Miscellanea Part IV* (List and Index Society 38, 1968), bundle 64, file 9, no. 266.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Somerset', p. 102.

⁴⁶⁶ *Wakefield Court Rolls V*, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁷ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne I*, p. 97 (dccxvi-dccxlvii).

⁴⁶⁸ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne I*, pp. 134, 140 (dcccxxxvi, dcccxcxlv).

Pikewastel attested a number of other charters in this region, relating to Skelton and Lofthouses.⁴⁶⁹

Although such metonyms were largely associated with lower social groups, they were not exclusively so. Indeed, occasionally the gentry received such bynames which became hereditary surnames as in the case of the *Graindorge* ('barleycorn') kinship in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, William *Graindorge* attesting a multiplicity of charters sometimes with the title *dominus*.⁴⁷⁰ In this case, the byname acted as a metonym for the agricultural product of the lordship.

Metaphors for the body encompassed too other natural products, so that culture and nature were in tension in bynames of the body. Alan *Bulethistel* belonged to the unfree tenantry of Fraistingthorpe in Yorkshire.⁴⁷¹

Legal expertise or frequent recourse to law – whether as plaintiff or, reluctantly, as defendant – may have been the inspiration behind the byname *Handsex* in the borough of Malmesbury. The byname connotes six-handed compurgation or oath-helping. Property in the borough was held by Ralph Handsex, Sarah, Cecily, Roger, Cusse, and Henry Handsex in the rental of Malmesbury Abbey. Moreover, Walter Handsex received a grant of the fulling mill. Henry remained a principal burgess of Malmesbury.⁴⁷²

Metaphors and metonyms from animals

Metaphor was deployed as well to be proscriptive: Hugh *Lawdog* appeared infrequently in the Wakefield court rolls, but his description when he was placed in mercy for a false claim in a plea of debt in May 1350 perhaps explains his moniker.⁴⁷³ The metaphorical employment of *-dog* prescriptively provided another tactic for the social group.⁴⁷⁴ For example, Walter *Trudogge* was summoned in 1238 for a breach of the peace.⁴⁷⁵ The intention of some of these references to dogs is sometimes elusive: the first finder of a body in 1227 was Stephen *Hangehund*, but why this description was applied to him is unclear as he was not suspected of foul play.⁴⁷⁶ In both cases, speculation can be made about the linguistic etymology, but there is no information about their characters. More secure ground is attained with William *Greydogge* who, with accomplices, killed Robert *capellanus* in the hall of a parsonage and who was discovered to have no chattels when he was outlawed.⁴⁷⁷ Appearing in the Chester city court in 1317, Adam *Drawdogge* initiated a plaint of trespass.⁴⁷⁸ Covetousness is perhaps implied in John *Acornedogge*, a tenant of Vale Royal Abbey in Cheshire.⁴⁷⁹ In 1305, Nicholas *Doggetayl* acted as a pledge at trailbaston in Wiltshire, the imputations perhaps extending further than mere canine comparative to sexual innuendo.⁴⁸⁰ Amongst the peasantry of South Newton (Wiltshire) in 1315, Roger *Whitdogge*, an unfree (customary) tenant, delivered a rent of 10d., probably for a cottage which he held.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁶⁹ *Cartularium ... Gyseburne* I, pp. 130, 132, 152, 167 (dcccxxi-dcccxxiii, dcccxxvii-dcccviii, dcccclxxv, dcccclxxv).

⁴⁷⁰ Littledale, *Pudsay Deeds*, pp. 94, 98, 100, 105, 124 (nos 8, 12, 23, 46).

⁴⁷¹ B. L. Add MS. 40,008, fo. 148v.

⁴⁷² Brewer & Martin, *Registrum Malmesburiense*, I, pp. 118-21, 126, 137, 435, II, pp. 153.

⁴⁷³ Jewell, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 240.

⁴⁷⁴ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley, 1984), pp. pp. 29-30 on strategies and tactics in relationship to the distribution of power.

⁴⁷⁵ Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, p. 73 (no. 430).

⁴⁷⁶ Jenkins, *Calendar of the Roll of the Justices on Eyre 1227*, p. 63 (no. 701).

⁴⁷⁷ Hopkinson, *Rolls of the 1281 Derbyshire Eyre*, p. 146 (no. 572).

⁴⁷⁸ A. Hopkins, ed., *Selected Rolls of the Chester City Courts: Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Chetham Society 3rd series 2, 1950), p. 50.

⁴⁷⁹ J. Brownbill, ed., *The Ledger-book of Vale Royal Abbey* (Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society 68, 1914), pp. 95, 102.

⁴⁸⁰ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 127 (no. 809).

⁴⁸¹ Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office 1422/8.

Whilst the symbolism of animals continued to be a regular motif in metaphorical nickname bynames – almost a personal totemism – the symbol of the animal should not be accepted uncritically or superficially. In 1238, William Angot appealed two men before the Devon eyre for robbery and battery; one was Richard *le Mus* (mouse) – importantly *alias le ventrer* (probably big-bellied).⁴⁸² Robert *Gileberd* in 1280 appealed John *le Mous* for the death of Robert's son, and, although Robert did not pursue his appeal and acknowledged that John was not culpable, there must have been some animosity in their relationship.⁴⁸³ Twice in 1294 a John *le Mous* was arrested, at Bradford on suspicion of burglary and at Wilton suspected of theft; although acquitted on both occasions, suspect character was of primary importance in 'criminal' proceedings, providing a context for the irony of the byname.⁴⁸⁴ In 1324, another John Mous was presented on the tourn court at Wakefield for battery against Matilda.⁴⁸⁵ With greater consequence, in 1286, Molle *de Mora* and her son were expelled from their house, their dog put to death, their ten ells of cloth and a cloak stolen – by William *Wodemous*.⁴⁸⁶ *Wodemous* counterpleaded for trespass against Molle! Not surprisingly, he was presented again in 1306, this time for battery against his son, Henry, for which he received the fine of 12d., substantially higher than the norm of fines.⁴⁸⁷ Presented at the 1235 eyre in Surrey, John *Sparwe*, bailiff of the Prior of Bermondsey, was accused of *heavily* beating (*verberavit graviter*) Richard *Knust*.⁴⁸⁸ In these cases, a certain amount of ironic disdain rather than laughter must be predicated.

In other cases, reference to an animal indicated a more direct association: in 1170x1185 one of the unfree tenants of the Bishop of Worcester, holding a virgate, was Elgar *Storkesnest*, presumably a metaphor for dishevelment.⁴⁸⁹ Robert *Pusekat* was beaten by Ylif *le Messer* near Corbridge bridge in the mid thirteenth century, perhaps intimating Robert's temperament.⁴⁹⁰ An agreement about a burgage tenement in Axminster involved Roger *Biggeffysch*.⁴⁹¹ Referring to his characteristics, a pledge at West Keal (Lincs.) in 1287 was William *Wetherhogg*, whilst a charter of 1348 in Newcastle upon Tyne was attested by William *Blaklambe*.⁴⁹²

Whilst not all these animal allusions belonged to lower social groups, there certainly was something of an association. This correspondence can be illustrated by William *Sparhawk* on the manor of Conisborough in Yorkshire. In 1275-6, it was presented in the manorial court that he was one of the Earl's villains but had migrated to Stainton where he was residing and had taken a wife. He subsequently paid chevage of 1s. to remain outside the Earl's lordship.⁴⁹³

Several compounded nicknames associated with animals were constituted as metonyms, indicative of the actions of the bearer. *Scaldehare*, a verbal phrase, probably

⁴⁸² Summerson, *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre 1238*, p. 12 (no. 24).

⁴⁸³ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 56 (no. 145).

⁴⁸⁴ Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, pp. 79-80 (nos 297, 308).

⁴⁸⁵ *Wakefield Court Rolls V*, p. 42.

⁴⁸⁶ *Wakefield Court Rolls I*, p. 235.

⁴⁸⁷ *Wakefield Court Rolls I*, p. 55.

⁴⁸⁸ Meekings & Crook, *1235 Surrey Eyre*, 2, p. 420 (no. 519).

⁴⁸⁹ *Worcester*, p. 407.

⁴⁹⁰ Page, *Northumberland Assize Roll*, p. 76. Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 147, confirms the etymology.

⁴⁹¹ Bodl. MS top Devon d 5, fo. 37r.

⁴⁹² L. R. Poos & L. Bonfield, eds, *Select Cases in Manorial Courts 1250 - 1550: Property and Family Law* (Selden Society 114, 1988), p. 143; Oliver, *Early Deeds relating to Newcastle upon Tyne*, p. 102 (no. 154).

⁴⁹³ Doncaster Archives DD/Yar/C/1/2: *Dicunt quod Willelmus Sparhawk est villanus Comitis et est manens apud Staynton' et ibidem duxit uxorem ideo &c ... Willelmus Sparhawk' Natiuus Comitis dat .xij.d. per sic [sic] quod possit manere extra terram Comitis per aliquod tempus.* (They say that William *Sparhawk* is the Earl's villein and he is staying at Stainton and he took a wife there, therefore &c ... William *Sparhawk* the Earl's villein gives 12d. that he may stay outside the Earl's land for whatever time.)

identified a poacher as did William *Stichehare* a small free tenant holding eight acres from the Templars in 1185.⁴⁹⁴ William *Scaldehare*, a free tenant and witness to a number of charters in the east of Yorkshire in the early thirteenth century, was a substantial tenant in Fraistingthorpe.⁴⁹⁵ A lowlier status had been occupied by Edric *Scaldehare* in the late eleventh century, the tenant of two and a half acres in Suffolk.⁴⁹⁶ Land in Tadcaster was held by a Gilbert who was perhaps notorious for his ability to castrate piglets – *Geldgres*.⁴⁹⁷ The occupation of Henry *Prikestirck* may be contained within his byname consistent with his low status as the tenant of an assart in Yeland and the same sort of occupational imputation probably inhered in the byname of Roger *Prikeviel*, assessed at 2s. 2d. in the lay subsidy for Wiltshire in 1225.⁴⁹⁸ Contributors to the lay subsidies were identified by the bynames *Geldehogg*, *Servstirck*, *Godgamen*, *Freshering*, *Knokehog*, *Tirehare* (code-mixed, ‘pull or skin hare’), *Turnehare*, *Oldhering*, *Euelhering*, *Pullehar*, and *Baterhog*.

On the manor of Wakefield, in Stanley, German *Cokspore* (‘cock-spur’, a byname imputing ‘strutting’ like a cock) alienated land in 1284, whilst William *Cokkespore* accounted in arrears in 1297 for a collection made for the fraternity from Sandall, a hamlet appurtenant to the manor of Wakefield.⁴⁹⁹ Presumably fleet-footed or timid, Richard *Yonghare* was convicted in a debt case at Hipperholme on the manor of Wakefield in 1331, but appeared infrequently otherwise in the record of the court.⁵⁰⁰ Equally elusive was Matilda *Bullyfrogge*, plaintiff in a debt case at Horbury on the same manor in 1333, but not recurring in the record.⁵⁰¹ About the same time and on the same manor, residing in Stanley, John *Pibridd* was presented for offences against the vert.⁵⁰² Appearing in the court rolls only once, Adam *Whitphether* suffered battery at the hands of John son of Robert in 1326, his byname perhaps connected to his aversion to violence.⁵⁰³ Continuing in this vein of connection between low status on the manor of Wakefield and metaphorical bynames derived from animals, only in 1286 did John *Styhog* occur in the rolls, once for raising the hue without sufficient reason and for battery himself, and once and finally when he was convicted of stealing two oxen from Roger *Foulmouth* and was committed to York gaol.⁵⁰⁴

The familiarity of some of these bynames is epitomised by the reference simply to *Greygos* without forename who formerly held two messuages in Burton on Trent in the early fourteenth century.⁵⁰⁵ As a former tenant, it was appropriate that a minimum identification was satisfactory, but there is also an element of awareness of his byname. The chaplain called John *Throstilberd*, a plaintiff in the Chester city court in 1295, may have been

⁴⁹⁴ Lees, *Templars*, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁵ B. L. Add MS 40,008, fos 15r, 65v, 116r, 141v, 142r, 144r, 151v, 154v, 166r, 172r, 213r. He was the son of Robert *Scaldehare*. Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 155 for *scald*-.

⁴⁹⁶ Douglas, *Bury St Edmunds*, p. 31.

⁴⁹⁷ Purvis, *Healough Park*, p. 201.

⁴⁹⁸ Bodl. Rawl. MS. B 449, fo. 111r-v; F. A. & A. P. Cazell, eds, *Rolls of the Fifteenth of the Ninth Year of the Reign of Henry III for Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Wiltshire and Rolls of the Fortieth of the Seventeenth Year of the Reign of Henry III for Kent* (Pipe Roll Society new series 45, 1983 for 1976-7), p. 66.

⁴⁹⁹ *Wakefield Court Rolls* I, pp. 187, 260; this *cognomen* became hereditary on the manor – for example, Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, pp. 118, 124 (1332). Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, p. 72.

⁵⁰⁰ Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 21. For William *Yonghare* in 1315: *Wakefield court Rolls* IV, pp. 5, 15.

⁵⁰¹ Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, p. 179.

⁵⁰² Walker, *Wakefield Court Rolls*, pp. 167, 221. The allusion here is probably to his hair – pie-bird or black-and-white bird. Alexander and Robert *Pibridd* were as elusive, appearing in 1327 for breaking the park gate and default of suit: *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, pp. 103, 127.

⁵⁰³ *Wakefield Court Rolls* V, p. 90.

⁵⁰⁴ *Wakefield Court Rolls* III, pp. 158, 160.

⁵⁰⁵ Stuart, ‘A rental of the borough of Burton, 1319’, p. 19.

appropriately named for one whose responsibility was to sing the mass daily and presents an interesting comparison with a pledge in the same court in 1317, Richard *Dunfoul*.⁵⁰⁶

The frequency of these nickname bynames derived from animals is represented by the 2658 taxpayers in the lay subsidies identified in this way, fifty per cent of whom contributed less than 18d.

Table 13 Statistics of assessment of taxpayers with bynames associated with animals

Number	Mean (d.)	Trimmed mean (d.)	Standard deviation	Median (d.)	Q1 (d.)	Q3 (d.)
2658	28	23	32.782	18	12	33

The vast proportion of these taxpayers were consigned uncompounded nickname bynames associated with animals, whilst only a very small element consisted of compounded bynames: *Swethog*; *Lytelion*; *Vayrfox*; *Wildegos*; *Cokrobyn*; *Longepocok*; *Dunfoul*; *Smalgos*; *Litelfouel*; *Pallehogge*; *Pybridd*; *Metegos*; *Swetebrid*; *Wyldebor*; *Whytlamb*; *Whytegos*; *Pyfinch*; *Luttifox*; *Throstelkoc*; *Fathogge*; *Somerfoul*; *le Langfole*; *Wyldeboef*; *Littelhare*; *Wodefoul*; *Colfox*; *Starkweder*; *Wetherhog*; *Ramhog*; and *Whitehen* – encompassing in all about only forty taxpayers. Comparison with bynames in court rolls would therefore tend to suggest that compounded nickname bynames associated with animals probably pertained to marginal inhabitants.

Persistence in the ‘North’?

Even in the late fourteenth century, some creative nickname bynames of devotion appeared in the ‘North’. In Carlisle in 1377, those enumerated in the Poll Tax comprehended Adam *Blisidblode* and John *Blissidblode*.⁵⁰⁷ That byname had existed in Carlisle in the middle of the century, for Adam *Blissedblode*, in contradiction of his moniker so that it was possibly ironically attributed, was involved with others in preventing the Bishop’s servants from purchasing victuals in 1355.⁵⁰⁸ It is equally clear, however, that small numbers of inventive bynames continued to be formed in other places as well. In most parts of the country, the bynames of a tiny proportion of villagers remained flexible and examples are not difficult to discover. The following are merely illustrative examples: Letice *Shaueberd* in Edgefield in Norfolk; Thomas *Cheseandbred* in Litcham in Norfolk; *Pikkebarlyk* in Swafield in that county; John *Brekerop* in the urban centre of King’s Lynn in the county; William *Ofthebest* in Kilsby, Northamptonshire; John *Gotoreste* in Banbury, Oxfordshire; *Godbeourhelp* in Gatcombe, Hampshire; Perkin *Pyggiffyst* in Eardisland in Herefordshire; John *Spyllespeche* (garrulous?) in Weobley in that western county; and John *Godsgrace* in Canterbury; all were taxed in the Poll Taxes of 1377-81.⁵⁰⁹ In Norfolk, there is even continuation of a few overtly salacious nickname bynames, perhaps borne without too much embarrassment by John *Shakebollok* in Hilborough in 1381 and Roger *Holdballych* (presumably a sort of pocket billiards rather than a hypercorrect description of the age of his appendages) in Worstead.⁵¹⁰

Although the numbers were not extensive, however, it was in the ‘North’ and particularly parts of Yorkshire, where freer forms continued, like William *Snatchberd* at Whitley, Adam *Brekebalk* at Helaugh, William *Smalbyhind* at Bradfield, John *Snytail* at Lotherton, Roger *Munkhayt* at Collingham, John and William *Pyntilwagge* at Ilkley, and

⁵⁰⁶ Hopkins, *Selected Rolls of the Chester City Courts: Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries*, pp. 13, 38.

⁵⁰⁷ Fenwick, *Poll Taxes*, I, p. 91.

⁵⁰⁸ Storey, *Register of Gilbert Welton*, p. 17.

⁵⁰⁹ Fenwick, *Poll Taxes*, I, pp. 344, 373, 378, 430; II, pp. 117, 155, 164, 182, 234 and 325.

⁵¹⁰ Fenwick, *Poll Taxes*, II, pp. 196, 198.

Adam *Siluermouth* at Knaresborough.⁵¹¹ Such bynames are evident in an enumeration of tenants in Ormskirk who supported a special subscription in 1366: *Shakerewet*; *Childesfadre*; *Pykhare*; *Hopcrone*; *Hertblod*; *Wyldeblod*; and others.⁵¹² That creativity in ME may have long been a feature of ‘Northern’ nickname bynames, represented, for example, in Robert *Hypouerhumber* who held land in Spofforth in Yorkshire.⁵¹³

Conclusion

Language use in nickname bynames was deployed for a range of purposes: to identify, certainly, but no less to stigmatise, to label, to define, and particularly to marginalize through the regulation of local morality by social groups. In that way, it performed the same purposes and intentions as shaming and humiliation in other contexts, such as gossip. Indeed, this language use was closely associated with gossip in the intentionality of speech acts. In the same way it was exclusive, deciding who was in and who was outside the ‘moral community’ in terms of the dominant social group. Usually, those strictures were exercised against the poor on the margins, but not exclusively so. Attempts could be made to regulate social deviance at all social levels through nickname bynames, but the most inventive bynames were more frequently attributed to the margins. Whilst derogatory nickname bynames were a small proportion of bynames (and also of nickname bynames), they retained an important social purpose.

The satirical and ironic connotations of the attribution of these bynames may perhaps be best illustrated by the local social criticism of some members of the clergy through bynames. Imputations of the byname of the taxpayer called *Hoggeprest* at Parham in Sussex in 1327 fairly elucidate that context.⁵¹⁴ Although promulgated in the French vernacular perhaps in deference to their status, the bynames of some of the ordinands in the diocese of Exeter in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries barely conceal familiarity with the seven deadly sins: *Chaceporc* (‘take pig’ – gluttony); *Chauceboff* (‘take beef’); *Coupegorge* (‘cut-throat’); *Sachebien* (‘know well’); *Pernegarde*; *Sanzfaille*; and *Mangepayn* (‘eat bread’), for example.⁵¹⁵

All those predicates, however, depend on the social group as authors of the bynames, but it is also important to consider the attitudes of their bearers. Reception of the bynames by the bearers was not constrained to shaming or humiliation. Given the polyvalence of masculinities, it is possible that some bearers regarded the bynames not as strictures but as illustrative of their masculine stature, so that the bearers appropriated the nickname bynames to their own uses.⁵¹⁶ Acceptance of a byname was thus not equivalent to contrition or humiliation. It is, of course, difficult to acquire evidence of these attitudes and the notion remains speculative. Occasionally, on the other hand, it can be perceived how nickname bynames achieved some honorific status. In 1294, Alina widow of Adam *de la hurne* was placed in mercy in Cuxham manorial court because Robert *le Champion* threatened the reeve with bodily harm by which the lords (Merton College, Oxford) suffered damages because of the fear that the reeve had of Robert.⁵¹⁷ This Robert does not seemingly recur in the Cuxham

⁵¹¹ ‘Rolls of the collectors in the West Riding of the Lay Subsidy (Poll Tax) 2 Richard II’, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 5 (1879), p. 36; 6 (1880), pp. 39, 137, 316-18; 7 (1881), pp. 9, 182;

⁵¹² *Miscellanea* vol. 2 (Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society 31, 1896), pp. 110-121.

⁵¹³ *Yorkshire Deeds* VI, p. 139 (nos 462-3).

⁵¹⁴ *Sussex*, p. 148 (assessment: 22d.)

⁵¹⁵ D. Postles, *The Surnames of Devon* (Oxford, 1995), p. 240; for Richard *Mangepayn*, *capellanus*, involved in battery: Pugh, *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trailbaston Trials*, p. 104 (no. 515).

⁵¹⁶ D. Gilmore, ed., *Manhood in the Making. Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, 1990); M. Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood. Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village* (Princeton, 1985); D. M. Hadley, ed., *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (Harlow, 1999); T. Hitchcock & M. Cohen, eds, *English Masculinities 1660-1800* (Harlow, 1999).

⁵¹⁷ P. D. A. Harvey, ed., *Manorial Records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, circa 1200-1359* (Historical Manuscripts Commission JP 23, 1976), p. 610.

court rolls and may have been imported by Alina. Nor is it likely that he was a champion in the strict sense, but earned that byname for his action on behalf of Alina.

At the other end of the scale, nickname bynames imputed salacious and incontinent characteristics. As language use became more marked under influences from several different directions, irregular language in the content of nickname bynames diminished. In the 'North', however, that reduction was more protracted and creative sexually-charged nicknames continued into the late fourteenth century. That continuation in the 'North' perhaps owed much to the nature of ME vernacular language use there. Whilst both vernacular codes were sufficiently flexible to allow the formation of compounds with implicit or overt sexual content, the persistence of these piquant bynames was predominantly in ME vernacular.

Analysis of nickname bynames thus informs us about language use in speech communities, language codes in contact, the registers of speech, the marking of language, and the lexis of local speech communities. It is one of the points at which some limited familiarity becomes available with common discourse, with the intentionality of language use at lower social levels in the middle ages, and with the exchange of words between actors of moderate and low socio-economic status. Although it did indeed involve its own rhetoric, that purpose was internal to the exchange rather than, as with literary representations, a persuasion deriving from outside. Like court records, it had a rhetorical content, but its intention was more transparent and not the responsibility of an individual but the action of a social group – the internal dialectic of a local speech community. For this short window between the eleventh and the early fourteenth century, the language of burgesses and peasants themselves is open for interpretation.

Appendix

The lay subsidies and their exploitation

Although it has long been appreciated that the lay subsidies of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries are wealth-specific (in a number of ways), they nevertheless allow a quantitative approach on a large geographical scale into personal naming. It remains, of course, necessary to supplement these taxation lists with qualitative data from other sources such as manorial court rolls, (for the free) charters, and manorial surveys and rentals. That methodology of combining quantitative and qualitative data from different sources is at the foundation of this chapter.

The wealth-specific nature of the assessments introduces two problems. First, the assessment related only to personal estate – that is chattels or movable goods. Land was excluded from the assessments and, although the two are not entirely unassociated, it is possible that there were in some cases disparities between the levels of personal estate and real estate of taxpayers. Such a complication is minor by comparison with the difficulty contained within the levels of inclusion and exclusion. The assessment was levied on personal estate, but more importantly on personal estate not required for subsistence (i.e. assessed only on disposable chattels), and furthermore there was a threshold for inclusion, frequently at disposable chattels valued at 10s. or above.⁵¹⁸ The level of exclusion, although it varied from one region to another, was thus consistently high. It has, for example, been suggested that on average only about forty per cent of the tenants of the Bishop of Worcester contributed to the subsidies – and note here that the criterion is tenants, not adult inhabitants – whilst Barbara Harvey maintains that in the much more densely populated Fenland of south Lincolnshire perhaps only twenty-six to thirty-five per cent of the tenantry was encompassed by the subsidies.⁵¹⁹

For the purposes of this chapter, taxpayers with nickname bynames have been entered into a database for the following counties: Devon; Dorset; Wiltshire; Sussex; Kent; Surrey; Gloucestershire; Worcestershire; part of Bedfordshire; Buckinghamshire; Essex; Suffolk; Huntingdonshire; Warwickshire; Shropshire; Staffordshire; Derbyshire; Lincolnshire; Yorkshire (all Ridings); Lancashire; Northumberland; and Cumberland. Additionally, data have been employed on a selective basis from the lay subsidies of 1327 for Somerset and Nottinghamshire. The palatinate counties of Cheshire and Durham were exempt. No data have been deployed for the following counties: Hampshire; Oxfordshire; Berkshire; Cornwall; Northamptonshire; Westmoreland; Middlesex; Norfolk; and Cambridgeshire.

In citations to information from the lay subsidies, a precise reference is provided only when a specific individual is mentioned. For the short forms for lay subsidies used in the notes, see the List of Abbreviations at the front of this volume.

⁵¹⁸ J. F. Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property 1290-1334: A Study in Mediaeval English Financial Administration* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 81-5; J. R. Maddicott, 'The English peasantry and the demands of the Crown 1294-1341' repr. in T. H. Aston, ed., *Landlords, Peasants and Politics in England* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 302.

⁵¹⁹ C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society. The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester 680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 109; B. F. Harvey, 'The population trend in England between 1300 and 1348', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series xvi (1966), p. 28; see also A. Jones, 'Caddington, Kensworth, and Dunstable in 1297', *Economic History Review* 2nd series xxxii (1979), p. 324, even more valuable for taking into consideration sub-tenants.