A
DICTIONARY
OF
SURNAMES

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INTRODUCTION

Scope of the Work

This dictionary is intended as a reference work for surname researchers, genealogists, family historians, local historians, social historians, historical linguists, comparative linguists, demographers, and other readers, in all parts of the world where European surnames are of interest. It contains entries for most major surnames of European origin, as well as for many rarer ones. For purposes of this dictionary, a surname is defined as a hereditary name borne by the members of a single family and handed down from father to son. Thus, surnames contrast with given names, which pick out individuals within the same family. There are of course unrelated families bearing the same surname, but it is nevertheless a characteristic of surnames that all members of a particular family normally have the same surname. There are also a few cases in which a surname is inherited from the mother, but again, the norm is patrilineal descent.

Surnames in the United States, Canada, Australia, and other English-speaking countries come from all parts of Continental Europe, as well as from Britain. Although the surnames of the British Isles are the primary focus of this dictionary, they are not its exclusive focus. On the world scene, British surnames constitute only a fraction of the surnames borne by English speakers.

European surnames are remarkably homogeneous. With few exceptions, the communities of Europe have similar social structures, similar social histories, and similar social attitudes. With the exception of Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian, Basque, and a few minor languages, the languages of Europe are cognate. In many parts of central and Western Europe, hereditary surnames began to become fixed at around the same time (i.e. from the 12th century onwards), and have developed and changed slowly over the years, down to the present day. Usually the earlier naming system supplanted or supplemented by a surname system was patronymic—that is, it was one in which the bearer of a particular given name was distinguished from other bearers of the same given name by identification of his father, and on occasion of his father's father, and even of a third, fourth, and fifth generation. In addition, the bearer of a given name was sometimes distinguished from others by reference to a locality—the one in which he lived or from which he originated. Both patronymics and local names have been major sources of surnames.

Absence of linguistic homogeneity in Europe has been no bar to cultural homogeneity. So, for example, even though the Hungarian language is unrelated to the languages which surround it, Hungarian culture (including Hungarian naming practice) has been strongly influenced by the surrounding cultures of central and Eastern Europe. In the far north of Europe, we can observe that Finnish surnames have social characteristics in common with other Scandinavian surnames—for example, late formation, and in many cases arbitrary or ornamental reasons for adoption. These are characteristics shared by many Ashkenazic surnames (the Jewish surnames of central and Eastern Europe), most

of which are likewise of late formation: the continuing use of patronymics was one of the features marking out the Jewish communities as culturally distinct from their neighbours, until the intervention of bureaucracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries forced the adoption of hereditary surnames.

Lexicographers are much concerned with inventorizing their subject, and we are no exception. We were determined to take an international view of surnames in the English-speaking world, but of course it would call for a work many times the size of the present one and far more resources than we had at our disposal to attempt to account for *every* known surname in the English-speaking world, let alone every surname in Europe. Selection was clearly called for: the question was, how to achieve a balanced selection on rational principles. The entries in some earlier surnames dictionaries seemed to us to have been more or less randomly selected, leaving many common surnames unexplained and unrecorded. The entries in the present work are selected on two separate but overlapping principles: frequency and informativeness. The surnames of all the countries of Europe, together with those found elsewhere in the English-speaking world, have been systematically sampled. Where we found a really common surname, we generally included an entry for it in the dictionary, even if we could say no more about it than that it exists in a particular country or region. But for the majority of common, everyday surnames, a great deal of information is available, and our task has been to evaluate and present sensibly rather than to originate. Our second principle, informativeness, meant that where we had reasonably reliable information available to us about a name, we decided to include it, even though the name itself might be quite rare. Many of these entries for less common names are based on information kindly supplied to us by one-name researchers and genealogists (see Acknowledgements). Thus, the dictionary consists of a mixture of common names, which are included whether or not their origin is known, and uncommon names about which useful information can be offered.

Reluctantly, it was decided not to attempt to deal with the comparatively recent advent of surnames derived from other naming traditions—in particular, those of India, Pakistan, China, and Japan—even though such names are found with ever-increasing frequency in English-speaking countries. Perhaps in a future edition it will be possible to tackle these names too, and show how different systems of nomenclature from different cultures have been transmuted into 20th-century surnames.

The form of each name selected for entry gave cause for thought. Eventually it was decided that it would be more useful to explain surnames in their original, European forms than to concentrate on the Anglicizations to which they have given rise. In the case of Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian, where questions of transliteration arise, we have as a general rule followed the transcriptions of Unbegaun, which approximate closely to the forms in which Russian surnames are normally Anglicized by emigrés themselves, and which are not overloaded with pedantic detail. In the case of those Jewish (Ashkenazic) surnames that are derived from Russian, the spellings cited are always those that are actually in use among English speakers, without any concern about issues of transliteration. Transliterations from Bulgarian are based on those of Holman and his colleagues, although some of the minor modifications that they have introduced into their transcription system reached us too late to influence this edition of the dictionary.

As a general rule, all the spellings of each name that are known to be in common use are listed in the dictionary, either as main entries or as variants or derivatives. There is an alphabetical index of names at the end of the work, and the reader is advised always to consult this first, since spelling variation may occur at the beginning of a name. Thus, for example, *Acket* is dealt with as a variant of *Hackett* and *Adar* as a variant of *Oder*.

The Origins of Surnames

Of the parameters mentioned above, the time plane shows greatest variation. It would be wrong to imply, as some writers do, that 'the surname period' in each culture had a fixed beginning and end. The acquisition of surnames in Europe during the past eight hundred years has been affected by many factors, including social class and social structure, naming practices in neighbouring cultures, and indigenous cultural tradition. On the whole, the richer and more powerful classes tended to acquire surnames earlier than the working classes and the poor, while surnames were quicker to catch on in urban areas than in more sparsely populated rural areas. These facts suggest that the origin of surnames is associated with the emergence of bureaucracies. As long as land tenure, military service, and fealty were matters of direct relationship between a lord and his vassals, the need did not arise for fixed distinguishing epithets to mark out one carl from another. But as societies became more complex, and as such matters as the management of tenure and in particular the collection of taxes were delegated to special functionaries, it became imperative to have a more complex system of nomenclature to distinguish one individual from another reliably and unambiguously.

Even after hereditary surnames were adopted, there was considerable variation. Hereditary surnames tended to coexist with more or less noticeable vestiges of patronymic systems. A child would know not only his surname, derived from his father, but also his lineage. Choice of the masculine possessive in the preceding sentence (*'his* father', *'his* lineage') is a reminder that in European cultures surnames have mostly been handed down from father to son, with women adopting the surname of the husband on marriage. The notion of free choice between adopting the mother's or the father's surname is a recent phenomenon, although it is now enshrined in the law in Denmark.

The bulk of European surnames in countries such as England and France were formed in the 13th and 14th centuries. The process started earlier and continued in some places into the 19th century, but the norm is that in the 11th century people did not have surnames, whereas by the 15th century they did.

In Ireland, surnames developed naturally out of a more ancient system of clan and sept names. These were themselves originally patronymic, but stretched back over a thousand years, so that by the 12th century a 'son of Murchadha' in Ireland could be many generations removed from the original bearer of the given name Murchadha. This system could in fact be regarded as an early version of a system of surnames. It was gradually incorporated into the system that was introduced into Ireland by the Normans and, later, the English. (In these circumstances it may seem somewhat surprising that Welsh surnames should be typically late in formation, in view of the fact that the neighbouring English have had surnames for some seven or eight centuries and that the sur-

name tradition in the related Gaelic language goes back even further than it does in English. Explanation may be sought in differences of social organization between early Welsh and early Gaelic society.)

At the other end of the time scale lies Scandinavia, the region that has been the last to abandon patronymics in favour of hereditary surnames. Surnaming crept northwards from Germany through Denmark and into Norway (which was for much of its history administratively part of Denmark) in the 15th and 16th centuries. In Iceland, the traditional patronymic naming system has still not fully given way to hereditary surnames. Magnús Pálsson is Magnus the son of Pál, and his eldest son may well be called Pál Magnusson, preserving a traditional alternation that in some families goes back over a thousand years. His daughter would be called, for example, Gudrun Magnusdottir. Since this is a dictionary of surnames, not a study of naming practices, this is tantamount to saying that Icelandic names have no more place in this book than the names of the Arab world or Africa. The patronymic naming system still found in Iceland was common throughout Scandinavia until about two hundred years ago, and Swedish family histories still contain anecdotes about the incredulity and derision met by women who first called themselves Anna Andersson rather than Anna Andersdotter.

Over the centuries, most people in Europe have accepted their surname as a fact of life, as irrevocable as an act of God, however much the individual may dislike the name or even suffer ridicule as a result of unpleasant connotations associated with it. Sometimes these unpleasant connotations are of more recent origin than the surname. The surname *Daft*, for example, thrives in England, being characteristic of Leicestershire. The vocabulary word originally meant 'submissive', 'humble', or 'gentle', rather than 'stupid', and it is an open question with what force the nickname was applied at the time when it became established as a surname. What is undeniable is that generations of Dafts have borne the name uncomplainingly, if not proudly, undeterred by the taunts of schoolfellows and workmates. They have not sought to change the surname by deed poll, the mechanism in Britain for registering a change of surname. Mechanisms exist in most countries for official alteration of one's surname, but they are employed quite rarely in Europe. Alteration by personal choice is a much more common phenomenon in America, where each year many thousands of Americans choose to change their surname officially. A more common source of variation is in fact *involuntary* official change, in other words, clerical error.

Among the humbler classes of European society, and especially among illiterate people, individuals were willing to accept the mistakes of officials, clerks, and priests as officially bestowing a new version of their surname, just as they had meekly accepted the surname they were born with. In North America, the linguistic problems confronting immigration officials at Ellis Island in the 19th century were legendary as a prolific source of Anglicization. In the United States, according to Mencken, such processes of official and accidental change caused *Bauch* to become *Baugh*, *Micsza* to become *McShea*, *Siminowicz* to become *Simmons*, and so on. Many immigrants deliberately Anglicized or translated their surnames on arrival in the New World, so that *Mlynář* became *Miller*, and *Schwarz* became *Black*. These examples illustrate three of the main strands in Anglicization: phonetic assimilation to an unrelated name, phonetic assimila-

tion to a cognate existing name or word, and straightforward translation of the vocabulary element, with no phonetic influences. A further feature is arbitrary adoption of an existing American name, with little or no apparent connection with the original name, as when *Chiariglione* became *Flynn* or when *Fischbein* became *Sullivan*. Mencken gives many examples: his chapter on proper names is still the most informative concise account of the Anglicization of surnames in America, though it is not always possible to check his sources, which are mostly anecdotal. In this dictionary, we have not attempted to deal systematically with the vast field of Anglicization, although it has been mentioned where the information was at hand.

Organization of Entries

The names in the dictionary are listed in 'nested' groups under a main entry. Where there are several names in a group, the choice of main entry is made on a variety of criteria such as comparative present-day frequency, historical priority, and etymological simplicity. Simple forms, that is, those having no overt diminutive, patronymic, or other morphemes, are usually preferred as main entries, and within each main entry the nested groups consist of variants, cognates in other languages, diminutives, patronymics, and so on, subdivided according to language. The spelling selected for the main entry is normally the one that is most common now as a surname. Other spellings of what is basically the same name are listed as variants. Preference has been given to English names when selecting a form for the main entry. Where there is no English name in a group, or where the English members of the group are comparatively rare, the main entry form is from one of the other languages of Europe, generally the one in which the name is most prominent.

In several cases, non-cognate equivalents, derived from words in other languages with similar meanings but of different derivation, are listed under an English heading. For example, at *Carpenter*, reference is made to German *Zimmermann*, Polish *Cieślak*, Russian *Plotnik*, and Hungarian *Ács*. This information is important because it sheds light on a frequent source of Anglicization among immigrants to English-speaking countries. It has not been possible to list these equivalents exhaustively, but they have been given for the main occupational names. Nicknames are more difficult, and require further study to elucidate the actual processes of Anglicization.

Each entry explains the linguistic origins of each surname, together with peculiarities of its history, current distribution, and other relevant facts. In many cases, more than one origin is postulated. There is a tendency for uncommon surnames to assimilate to more common ones, which partly underlies the phenomenon of multiple origin.

Selection of Entries

A little more should be said about how the entries were selected.

Preliminary studies had yielded some fascinating comparisons of the different surname forms in different languages derived from biblical personal names. In the absence of any other comparative dictionary, we decided to pursue the task systematically. Our first step was to survey the published literature on surnames throughout Europe, and to

write some draft entries. We then spot-checked our draft text against an international survey of telephone directories. This was necessary because surnames study is a remarkably neglected field. There are some excellent studies of individual names, often from a genealogical rather than a linguistic point of view, and usually done by dedicated amateurs, few of whom have a linguistic training. Systematic surveys are rare. In few countries is there any substantial literature on surnames, and in some the names that have been researched are not necessarily those that are actually borne by large numbers of families. For an inventory of common surnames, the most convenient tool is the telephone directory. To establish an entry list, then, we first looked at the telephone directories of London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Dublin, New York (Manhattan), Chicago, Cleveland Ohio, Los Angeles, Toronto, Vancouver, Sydney, and Melbourne, noting names with a frequency of over 50 subscribers. In the case of London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Dublin, we noted any name with a frequency of over 20 subscribers. For Britain, the 1978 issues were used; for other countries, 1980–2 issues. We were also fortunate in obtaining from British Telecom a listing of names with a frequency of over 174 subscribers in any one region, which provided a useful first check on frequent names outside the capital cities. This formed the basis of our list of items needing to be explained. Even given the weighting in favour of the British Isles, it was immediately clear that a large number of non-English names would call for explanation. Moreover, it is also well known that some ostensibly simple 'English' names such as *Begley* and *Terry* are not what they might appear to be.

For each country of Europe, then, we started by reviewing the existing literature on surnames. In so far as this proved adequate for our purposes, we drew on it to produce a summary of known facts about the common surnames in that country. Our initial spotchecks suggested that for Italy, Germany, and Russia there already exist adequate accounts of the common present-day surnames among those national and cultural groups. The work of de Felice on Italian surnames calls for special mention. It was supported by SEAT, the Italian telephone organization, and is computerized and systematic. The books which represent the fruits of his research are not only scholarly but also readable and well-informed. If every country in Europe possessed a study of its surnames as thorough as that of de Felice, the present work would be superfluous.

Unfortunately, the Italian case is the exception rather than the rule. In many of the countries of Europe, there is hardly any literature at all on surnames, and the information provided by what does exist is often very limited and sometimes of doubtful reliability. We therefore went on to compile an inventory of the common present-day surnames in French, Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Czech, and Polish, by examining the telephone directories for Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Prague, and Łódź.

Next, we turned again to surnames in the British Isles, and decided to survey regional distribution in more detail. We took eight English regional directories for more detailed study: (from south-west to north) Plymouth (including Cornwall), Bristol, West Midlands, Nottingham, Norwich, Leeds, Preston (Lancs.), and Tyneside. To these we added the directories for Northern Ireland, and Ireland outside Dublin. Scotland was already represented by Edinburgh in the international survey. We knew that although

individuals move around, surnames (statistically) are more stable. That is, more often than not the centre of greatest frequency of a surname is its place of origin, or is geographically very close by. At the very least, its distributional centre will normally be a place where the surname has been long established, and this fact alone is of importance to family historians. We wanted to study this aspect in more depth and, with this in mind, selected names with a frequency of greater than 20 listed subscribers in the regional directories mentioned above. We used our previous listings for London as a control. Our main interest in this part of our task was in the distribution of names that are, proportionally, more frequent outside London than in the capital.

Where a particular regional bias was evident, we tried to discover its centre of distribution by checking the name in question against directories for neighbouring regions to those actually surveyed, against earlier geographical studies such as that of Guppy, and indeed against the locations of early forms cited by Reaney and other writers. Where appropriate, we added brief comments on regional distribution, eliminated hypotheses that were incompatible with patterns of distribution, and began to seek explanations for names that were evidently habitational in form, but for which we had not found a source. In this latter task, Dr Margaret Gelling's encyclopedic knowledge of English placenames and of the work of the English Place-Name Society was invaluable: again and again she pointed out to us minor places, often as small as a farm, a field, or a lost hamlet, as probable sources of present-day surnames. An example is *Blakeway*, a surname found most commonly in the West Midlands and Shropshire. This is probably derived from Blakeway Farm near Much Wenlock, and is entered in the dictionary as such. In an ideal world, evidence from family-history research would always be available to confirm or disconfirm such hypotheses. We hope that people with such evidence for any name, evidence which will confirm, correct, or supplement the statements made in this dictionary, will write to the publisher.

Distribution of Surnames

In Britain and Continental Europe, few surnames are evenly distributed throughout the countries in which they occur. Some are characteristic of particular regions, while others are concentrated in quite small villages. Brett has shown how the surnames *Walker*, *Fuller*, and *Tucker* have a complementary distribution consequent on differences of the vocabulary word for this occupational term in the medieval cloth trade. He has also shown that even the commonest of English surnames, *Smith*, has interesting peculiarities of distribution. As an example of the distribution of less common surnames, we may mention *Hanks*. This is found randomly scattered in many different parts of England, but is concentrated in the village of Naunton in Gloucestershire, in which vicinity it has been established for some four hundred years.

Typical patterns of distribution may be illustrated by considering the case of Cornish surnames. Some Cornish surnames have migrated directly abroad, for example to the United States. Others have scattered more or less randomly throughout the rest of England. A few Cornish surnames which survive elsewhere have died out completely in Cornwall, but these are not and never have been common. The statistically interesting

fact is that there are no large concentrations of Cornish surnames outside Cornwall that are not matched by even larger concentrations of Cornish surnames within Cornwall. Thus, there are 14 subscribers named *Tregear* in the London telephone directory; these are matched by 18 in Cornwall itself. A Tregear family history would perhaps tell us when the first Tregears moved to London and why. Given their comparative frequency in London, it is likely that the first move took place quite a long time ago—centuries ago rather than decades—and that most of the London Tregears are descended from a common ancestor. It is most unlikely that 14 separate Tregear families moved to London independently and recently.

Large cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool have had a distorting effect on the distribution of surnames, in that they attained their present size by attracting large numbers of immigrants from surrounding and even distant regions. However, a clustering of identical surnames in a particular place, even in a large city, indicates either that the surname is polygenetic (see below) or that it has been established there for a long time. The distribution patterns of monogenetic surnames, of which *Tregear* is almost certainly an example, are of particular interest. Surname distribution has been used as a basis for study of the genetic structure of human populations by geneticists such as Lasker. Lasker and his associates give distribution maps for a few selected English surnames, based on marriage records for the first quarter of 1975. They compare these statistics with Guppy's comments of 1890, and find that they correlate remarkably closely. Others have drawn distribution maps based on analysis of telephone directories: Brett has developed a computer program that will automatically draw such a map for any English surname from an input of telephone-directory data. Unfortunately, at present such data has to be collected from the directories clerically rather than automatically. Such maps are of the greatest interest to students of surnames. They can, for example, show where a surname is most strongly established and whether it has a single origin or multiple origin.

If the distribution pattern for Cornish surnames such as *Tregear* is skewed as stated here—and in fact the distribution of other names is even more skewed towards Cornwall, *Tregear* being exceptional in the high proportion of its bearers who are found in London—then why should we believe that, say, Yorkshire surnames or indeed Dutch or Czech surnames are any different? If a surname is common abroad, then it is probably even more common at home: the task is to find out where 'home' is. (Matters may be different in countries such as Poland and Germany, where the Second World War brought terrible upheavals and displacements of whole populations. Comparison of pre- and post-War distribution in these countries would no doubt shed light on the currents and cross-currents that were at work during resettlement in post-War Europe.)

In his study of West Yorkshire surnames, Redmonds shows how the surname *Armitage* originated in the parish of Almondbury, near Huddersfield, and spread out over the centuries from there. It is now widely distributed: there are, for example, nearly a hundred telephone subscribers in London called *Armitage*. Nevertheless, it is still a characteristically West Yorkshire surname, with ten times as many subscribers in Leeds and Bradford as in London.

If we now consider the case of a city such as Cleveland, Ohio, we find that the pattern

of distribution of surnames in its telephone directory is rather different from those in any English regional directory. There are many thousands of different surnames in Cleveland, of an enormous variety of linguistic origins. (It is sometimes claimed that Cleveland is the most cosmopolitan city in the United States.) If we look at the common names in Cleveland, we find that the vast majority of them are of Anglo-Saxon etymology. This does not mean that the population of Cleveland is of predominantly Anglo-Saxon stock: rather, it means that processes of linguistic assimilation have been hard at work. The common surnames in Cleveland are almost certainly all polygenetic, and they are of a type that will have attracted assimilation from many non-Anglo-Saxon names. So, for example, *Adams*, which is the surname of nearly 700 subscribers in Cleveland, has probably assimilated many surnames from other linguistic stocks, based on the same biblical root. A glance at the surrounding columns of the telephone directory suggests the following candidates among others: *Adamcek*, *Adamcik*, *Adamczak*, *Adamczek*, *Adamczyk*, *Adamczyk*, *Adamec*, *Adamek*, *Adamescu*, *Adametz*, *Adamic*, *Adamich*, *Adamik*, *Adamitis*, *Adamo*, *Adamonis*, *Adamopoulos*, *Adamos*, *Adamowski*, *Adamov*, *Adamovich*, *Adamovsky*, *Adamowicz*, *Adamski*, and *Adamus*. A really common surname such as *Brown* has surely assimilated many cases of German *Braun* and hundreds of surnames from other languages with similar meanings, as well as some, no doubt, that were totally unrelated.

Out of the 420,000 telephone subscribers in Cleveland, only 24 per cent have surnames with a frequency greater than 100, and there are only around 400 such surnames in Cleveland. By contrast, the telephone directory for Plymouth, England (which covers all of Cornwall as well as the city of Plymouth) is less than half the size, with 192,000 subscribers. There are some 640 surnames with a frequency greater than 50 (the equivalent of Cleveland's 100, given the difference in size of the two directories). These account for very nearly 40 per cent of the subscribers in Plymouth and Cornwall, and quite a large number of these common Cornish names are of monogenetic origin, such as *Polkinghorne* or *Trethowan*.

In spite of our efforts to associate local names with their places of origin, it must be acknowledged that this dictionary contains entries for some quite common surnames, apparently habitational in form, that remain unexplained. These stand as a challenge to future researchers.

The regional survey was more fruitful than we had dared to hope. Resources did not permit us to cover every directory in the British Isles, especially since the source material was not available in machine-readable form for computer processing, and so had to be collected clerically. The survey continues steadily, and already clerical work has been completed on directories for Colchester, Oxford, Canterbury, and Southampton: information from these directories will be incorporated into the survey, and will contribute to future editions of the dictionary. A more distant aim is to set up systematic computerized procedures for checking current distribution throughout the British Isles against distribution in earlier centuries. If this can be done systematically for Britain, no doubt it can be done for other places, and an even longer-term aim is to extend the survey to other countries, taking account where necessary of recent and not-so-recent political and other upheavals.

The Explanations

Armed with lists of common surnames and a growing understanding of their distribution, we went back to our draft texts and wrote many thousands of new entries. Generally, any name with a frequency of more than 50 subscribers in any of the directories surveyed was given an entry in our dictionary, even if its origin could be explained only tentatively, or indeed if nothing at all could be said about it beyond recording its existence in a particular community. We prefer to record the existence of a common surname, and admit that we do not know its origin, than to pretend that it does not exist. Perhaps such entries will serve as a stimulus to genealogists and one-name researchers. If so, future editions of the present work will be able to be more informative on these names.

In addition, many entries for less common names found in the surveys were included in the dictionary, but usually only where we felt able to give a reasonably reliable explanation or to state with some certainty that all reasonable efforts to discover an origin had been made and had proved fruitless. Accounts of the origins of many individual surnames, in the present state of our knowledge, contain an element of tentativeness; some are more tentative than others. We have not been afraid to speculate, using words like 'probably' and 'possibly', knowing that more detailed research may yet prove our speculation wrong. Surnames research is still in its infancy. Even though surnames are generally of much more recent origin than placenames, certainty is a rarer phenomenon in surnames studies. The student of placenames can, in cases of doubt, go to a place and inspect the lie of the land before deciding on the most probable elements of which the name is composed. But the surnames researcher cannot go and inspect the original bearer of a surname to decide whether he was dark or fair (see *Blake*), or had a father called *Gerald* or *Gerard* (see *Garrett*).

The international survey prompted other decisions. In some cases the common present-day spelling of a surname was chosen as the main entry, in preference to a less common one preferred on etymological grounds by other authors. In other cases we did more research, in order to try to account for apparent discrepancies between present distribution and supposed origin. In other cases we consulted expert colleagues and advisers for further information; in still others we found we could do no more than record a doubt.

The sample surveys and checklists that form the basis of selection of entries for the present dictionary represent no more than a first modest step in the direction of what could be done. With computer technology, it would be comparatively simple to survey all the directories of a given country or region, and to define much more closely the centres of distribution of each surname. This would not, of course, yield any explanations; rather, it would give us some hard facts requiring explanation. One cannot claim that such-and-such a name is a Devonshire surname or a Kentish surname until one has surveyed all the other counties of the British Isles to ensure that it is not more frequent elsewhere.

After we had surveyed the telephone directories selected and compiled a checklist, our next priority was to provide some etymological explanations and to decide how to

arrange the information. Our overall aim has been to group related entries together, and as far as possible to take a name back historically through all the vicissitudes of naming, borrowing, and renaming, until finally a vocabulary word is reached, and then to give some information about the meaning, origin, and cognates of that vocabulary word. Sometimes our journey is a short one, as in the case of the surname *Short*, which is derived from the English vocabulary word *short*, which means and has always meant 'short in stature'.

Often, however, the journey is long and fascinating. The huge clusters of common surnames in every language of Europe derived from biblical names and from the names of early Christian evangelists and saints take us back to Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, as well as to ancient Irish. Sometimes, we travel with early missionaries, and see how their influence has dominated the naming practices of other parts of Europe, as may easily be seen from a glance at such entries as *Coleman* 1, *Gall* 2, and *Vojtěch* and their lists of cognate and derivative surnames. In other cases, we reach back to and beyond the earliest records in Germanic languages, perceiving cognate relationships among forms not only in English, Dutch, and German, but also in non-Germanic languages such as French, Italian, and Spanish, and even Polish, Czech, and Hungarian for long-established European 'noble' names such as *Richard* and *William*.

Useful information was sometimes available from family-history research, but this generally peters out long before the researcher gets back to the actual point of origin of the surname. An ideal, but (alas) exceptional case is that of *Jewisson*, listed at *Julian*, where the original bearer, Juetta des Arches, of the eponymous personal name has actually been tentatively identified. Such cases are exceptional, and even so the identification cannot be more than tentative. More commonly, several dark and tantalizing centuries lie between the earliest recorded occurrences of a surname (or more precisely, of forms that can be tentatively identified with a modern surname) and the earliest bearers traced by family historians. For surname researchers, this remains a potentially fruitful area for exploration. In this book, genealogical notes are appended to some entries: these are no more than a first step in this direction, and no attempt has been made to be systematic. Many of the genealogical notes are derived from information kindly supplied by genealogists and one-name researchers (see Acknowledgements). Those whose chief interest is genealogy will no doubt consult some of the innumerable works of local and national genealogy or will join their local genealogical societies, or will start by consulting an international register such as the *Genealogical Research Directory* compiled and published each year by Keith A. Johnson and Malcolm R. Santy. The present work is not concerned primarily with genealogy or family history: it is a dictionary, and as such is concerned with surnames as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon.

Evidence and Interpretation

It is sometimes said that collection of the earliest forms is an essential component of the study of surnames. This is something of an overstatement. Surnames are generally of more recent origin than placenames. The great changes which English underwent in the Middle English period, long after most placenames were coined, has rendered the

etymology of most English placenames opaque. Continental placenames show in some cases traces of a language that is no longer spoken in the region where they occur. By contrast, the etymology of many surnames is transparent, as in the case of such common surnames as *Wright*, *Miller*, *Baker*, and *Smith*. Only a little more knowledge is required to establish that *Webster* was an occupational name for a weaver, Middle English *webbe* being another word for a weaver, while *-ster* is a common agent noun suffix (it was originally feminine in meaning, but by the Middle English period was no more than a variant of *-er*). Similarly, *Baxter* is derived from the verb 'to bake', with the same suffix, and so is a doublet of *Baker*. In such cases, an account of the relative importance of these medieval occupations will shed more light on the surname than a collection of early spellings. In other cases, such as *Mallory*, only detailed family-history research can even hope to disentangle early members of this family from those bearing similar but unrelated surnames, and so tentatively identify the origin of the name.

Sometimes the older forms of a placename can help to identify the origin of a surname. So, for example, the surnames *Stopford*, *Stopforth*, *Stoppard*, and *Stopper* are all derived from *Stopford*, which is an older form of *Stockport* in Greater Manchester.

No special skill is called for to observe that the surname *Milton* is derived from a place called *Milton*. On the other hand, knowledge beyond the scope of the onomastician or the lexicographer is called for to say which of the thirty-odd places in Britain called Milton is the source of the surname for any particular present-day family. It is the task of the family historian to associate particular families with particular places. What the onomastician can observe is that the surname is and has long been widely distributed: many (if not all) of the places called *Milton* appear to have given rise to surnames. Occasionally it is possible to suggest that one rather than another placename is the source of the surname. Thus, although there are five places that are possible sources of the surname *Steventon*, the distribution pattern makes the one in Shropshire the best candidate.

Similar phenomena may be observed on the international scene. For example, it requires no more than a knowledge of the Polish or Czech languages to identify the surname *Ryba* with the vocabulary word *ryba* 'fish'. But to say whether a given family bears the Polish or the Czech surname is, again, a matter for the family historian. The dictionary can only note that both exist.

TYPOLOGY OF SURNAMES

Monogenetic and Polygenetic

How many different types of surname are there? One important distinction already mentioned is between *monogenetic* surnames and *polygenetic* surnames. Monogenetic surnames are those which have a single origin, often being derived from just one original bearer or family of bearers at one particular place and time. Most polygenetic surnames were coined independently in many different places. *Smith*, *Brown*, and *Newton* are classic examples of English polygenetic surnames.

It is not normally possible to identify the original bearer of a monogenetic surname,

but it is sometimes possible to postulate that a name must be monogenetic on the basis of its distribution. Thus *Asquith* and *Auty*, the one a local name and the other from a Norse personal name, are both so strongly identified with West Yorkshire that the chances of their being monogenetic must be rated very high. However, whether present-day bearers of the surname *Asquith* are all descended from a single individual, or whether there are several lines stretching back to different individuals all from the village of *Askwith*, is another matter for family-history research rather than for a dictionary of surnames, and it may well be that, as in many questions arising about surnames, not enough evidence survives to give a definitive answer. However, it is also certainly the case that much evidence remains to be discovered and evaluated.

Classification by Type of Origin

Broadly, surnames are conventionally divided into a small number of types according to their origin. Cottle distinguishes just four broad types: those based on patronymics, those derived from local names, those from occupational names, and those from nicknames. We use a fuller classification, but Cottle's four types can be clearly seen underlying them.

Patronymic Surnames

The oldest and most pervasive type of surname is that derived from a given name. Two main strands in the origins of given names may be singled out: vernacular naming traditions and religious naming traditions. In vernacular naming traditions, names were originally composed of vocabulary elements in the local language, and no doubt bestowed for their auspicious connotations (e.g. *Raymond* is derived from elements meaning 'counsel' and 'protection'). In religious naming traditions, names were bestowed in honour of a cult figure. Leaving aside for the moment Jewish naming traditions, it is obvious that the most powerful religious influence on naming in Europe has been the Christian Church. There is hardly a country in Europe that does not have surnames derived from forms of *Peter*, *Paul*, and the other saints, apostles, and missionaries. It comes as something of a surprise, therefore, to note that in many countries, especially in northern Europe, baptismal names honouring Christian saints and biblical figures were a fairly recent introduction at the time when the bulk of surnames were taking shape. These Christian names were in competition with the older and better-established vernacular naming traditions, for example the Germanic names in use at the time of Charlemagne (742–814).

Surnames derived from ancient Germanic personal names have cognates in many languages. The court of Charlemagne was Christian and Latin-speaking, but the vernacular was the Frankish dialect of Old High German, and the personal names in use were Germanic and vernacular. These personal names were adopted in many parts of northwest Europe, especially among the ruling classes. They were in use among the Normans; hence, many common English and French names such as *Richard*, *Robert*, and

William (*Guillaume*) are of Germanic origin and have cognates in other European languages.

Some Germanic personal names such as *Siegfried* also have Slavonic derivatives, but on the whole the Slavs had their own inventory of personal names. In western Slavonic-speaking areas (in particular, in Poland and Czechoslovakia), native Slavonic names have given rise to surnames. In Russia, on the other hand, vernacular Slavonic names were proscribed as given names by the Orthodox Church in favour of those honouring Christian saints. For this reason, Russian patronymic surnames are mostly derived from saints' names rather than vernacular Slavonic names.

The most basic type of surname derived from a patronymic—that is, from a person's father's given name—simply presents the father's name as a distinguishing epithet placed either before (as in the case of Hungarian) or more usually after the bearer's own given name. Surnames of this type are found in almost all European languages, but in most of them they are rather, or considerably, less common than names formed with explicitly patronymic endings.

The range of affixes which have been utilized with a patronymic function is very wide. Some are prefixes (Gaelic *mac*, Welsh *ap*, *ab*, Norman French *fitz*, Italian *fi-*), but more are suffixes. These were for the most part originally adjectival or possessive in function (English -*s*, North German -*ing* and -*er*, Rumanian -*esco*, Russian -*ov*), or else result from a more or less reduced form of a phrase meaning 'son of' (English -*son*, Danish/Norwegian -*sen*, Swedish -*son*).

In such cases the surname was almost always originally patronymic in function, although the reference seems occasionally to have been to a grandfather or more distant relative, and in some early examples women are known to have acquired the given name of their husbands as a distinguishing epithet: it may be that some hereditary surnames are derived from this use.

In this category also belong surnames that are derived from shortened or familiar forms of given names, pet forms, and forms with diminutive suffixes. In the Middle Ages such forms were in common use, often almost to the exclusion of the official baptismal form, hence the frequency of such common English surnames as *Hobson* and *Dobson*, based on popular forms of the baptismal name *Robert*, or the equally common North and central European derivatives of *Hans*, a German pet form of *Johannes* John, or the great profusion of Italian surnames derived from diminutive forms of given names.

Metronymic Surnames

Much less common than patronymics, with no more than a handful of surviving examples in the majority of European languages, are metronymics, derived from the name of the first bearer's mother. Since European society has been patriarchal throughout the historical period, it has naturally been the given name of the male head of the household that has been handed on as a distinguishing name to successive generations of sons (and daughters, until their marriage). The few exceptions (e.g. *Catling*, *Marguerite*, *Dyott*) seem to be derived from the names of women who were either widows for the