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## Place-name evidence for an Anglo-Saxon animal name: OE *\*pobha*/*\*pocca* ‘fallow deer’

CAROLE HOUGH

It is well known that the extant corpus of Old English literature preserves only a proportion of the vocabulary that once existed. In some instances, terms for concepts that must have been familiar to the Anglo-Saxons have been lost without trace; in others, they may be reconstructed from non-literary forms of evidence such as the place-names coined by early settlers in the areas now known as England and southern Scotland. The main dictionary of place-name terminology, Smith's *English Place-Name Elements* of 1956,<sup>1</sup> includes many entries for words which are otherwise either unattested, or attested only with other meanings. Animal names in particular constitute an area of vocabulary which is under-represented in literary sources but common in place-names, and for which toponymic evidence often proves crucial. Old English animal names unattested in the extant literature but included in *English Place-Name Elements*<sup>2</sup> are *\*bagga* ‘badger’,<sup>3</sup> *\*bula* ‘bull’, *\*ean* ‘lamb’, *\*gæten* ‘kid’, *\*galt* ‘pig, boar’, *\*græg* ‘badger’,<sup>4</sup> *\*hyrse* ‘mare’, *\*padde* ‘toad’, *\*padduc* ‘frog’, *\*pigga* ‘young pig’, *\*stedda* ‘horse’, *\*tacca* and *\*tagga* ‘teg, young sheep’, *\*tige* ‘goat’, *\*todd* ‘fox’ and *\*wiðer* ‘ram, wether’. Those identified more recently include *\*brun* ‘pig’<sup>5</sup> and *\*wearg* ‘wolf’.<sup>6</sup> As the English Place-Name Survey progresses, providing detailed coverage of the country's toponyms in a series of annual volumes inaugurated in the 1920s, further examples may be expected to come to light. The aim of this article is to offer a new addition to the corpus.

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 vols., EPNS 25–6 (Cambridge, 1956). Currently in preparation is a new edition, of which one fascicle has so far appeared: *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names (A–Box)*, ed. D. Parsons and T. Styles with C. Hough (Nottingham, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, s.vv. Smith also treated OE *hogg* ‘hog’ as an unattested word, but this was corrected in the *Addenda and Corrigenda* published in *JEPNS* 1 (1968–9), 9–52, at 25.

<sup>3</sup> This interpretation was regarded as uncertain by Smith, but is placed on a securer footing by P. Kitson, ‘Quantifying Qualifiers in Anglo-Saxon Charter Boundaries’, *Folia Linguistica Historica* 14 (1993), 29–82, at 72–4. The most recent discussion is in *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names (A–Box)*, ed. Parsons *et al.*, pp. 36–7.

<sup>4</sup> An alternative interpretation as ‘wolf’ is suggested by C. Hough, ‘OE *græg* in Place-Names’, *NM* 96 (1995), 361–5; and independently by C. P. Biggam, *Grey in Old English: an Interdisciplinary Semantic Study* (London, 1998), pp. 79–80.

<sup>5</sup> C. Hough, ‘OE *brün* in Place-Names’, *ES* 79 (1998), 512–21, notes that this sense may also be attested as a nonce occurrence in Riddle 92.

<sup>6</sup> C. Hough, ‘OE *wearg* in Warnborough and Wreighburn’, *JEPNS* 27 (1994–5), 14–20.

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According to the entry in *English Place-Name Elements*, OE *pobba*, *pocca* ‘a pouch, a bag’ is ‘used in some undetermined sense in p[lace-]n[ame]s, possibly as a by-name’.<sup>7</sup> The only other sense attested in literary sources is as a medical term ‘sinus’, and no additional light is thrown on the matter by the related adjective *pobbed* ‘baggy, loose’ or by the compound nouns *cramming-pobba* ‘some sort of snare’ and *nest-pobba* ‘a bag for food, wallet’.<sup>8</sup> An attempt to establish the likely range of meaning in toponyms is made under the entry for Poughley Farm in the English Place-Name Survey for Berkshire,<sup>9</sup> where Gelling argues for a transferred topographical sense on the grounds that all known place-names from OE *pobba*, *pocca* have topographical terms as second elements, whereas a personal name or a by-name would be expected to compound with a wider range of generics.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation has been adopted in later volumes of the Survey, and currently holds the field. While disproving the by-name theory, however, the evidence adduced by Gelling is insufficient to establish a topographical sense beyond reasonable doubt.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, she herself raises the alternative possibility that the element may function as an animal name, having presumably developed along similar lines to OE *\*bagga* ‘badger’, an animal named from its bag-like shape. Either sense would appear to represent a native development, without recorded parallels in cognate languages. This article will support an interpretation as an animal name through a closer examination of the toponymic contexts in which OE *pobba*, *pocca* occurs, and will attempt to identify the type of animal in question.

Besides Poughley itself (OE *leab* ‘wood, clearing’), place-names cited by Gelling in her discussion of OE *pobba*, *pocca* are Poughill (OE *hyll* ‘hill’) and Poflet (OE *hlype* ‘leap, leaping place’) in Devon,<sup>12</sup> Poffley in Oxfordshire (OE *wiella* ‘spring, stream’),<sup>13</sup> and Poughill in Cornwall (either OE *hyll* ‘hill’ or OE

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* II, 68, s.v. *pobba*, *pocca*.

<sup>8</sup> J. Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. T. N. Toller (Oxford, 1898); T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement* (Oxford, 1921); A. Campbell, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement: Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda* (Oxford, 1972), s. vv. A. C. Amos and A. diP. Healey, *Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto, 1986–) defines the *hapax legomenon* *cramming-pobba* as “a cramming bag or pouch” . . . or perhaps take as “bag of tricks”, but has not yet reached letters *N* or *P*.

<sup>9</sup> All references are to the county boundaries preceding the local government reorganization of 1974.

<sup>10</sup> M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire*, 3 vols., EPNS 49–51 (Cambridge, 1973–6) II, 290–1.

<sup>11</sup> K. Cameron, *English Place Names*, new ed. (London, 1996), p. 181, notes cautiously: ‘It has been usual to interpret Poughill . . . as “Pohha’s hill”, but a possible alternative meaning is certainly “pouch-shaped hill”’. A. D. Mills, *A Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1998), p. 277, s.n. *Poughill*, also gives both alternatives.

<sup>12</sup> J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Devon*, 2 vols., EPNS 8–9 (Cambridge, 1931–2) II, 415; I, 216.

<sup>13</sup> M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, 2 vols., EPNS 23–4 (Cambridge, 1953–4) II, 322.

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*niella* ‘spring, stream’).<sup>14</sup> The second elements of all these place-names are topographical terms used elsewhere of the habitat of wild creatures,<sup>15</sup> and there are three aspects of the group as a whole which point towards an interpretation of OE *pobba*, *pocca* as an animal name. The first is the incidence of identical formations within limited geographical areas. It is unclear whether or not a second occurrence of the place-name Poughley in the Berkshire parish of East Garston, some four miles from Poughley Farm in Chaddleworth, represents an independent formation.<sup>16</sup> Gelling’s interpretation of the name as ‘probably “wood by a feature resembling a bag”’ makes it necessary to assume that both places were named from the same wood, which, as she points out, must in that case have been very extensive, lying on both sides of the river Lambourne. An alternative possibility that both *leabs* might have been named independently from the same type of animal is strengthened by the occurrence of another Poughley Farm in the Berkshire parish of East Hanney.<sup>17</sup> This is considerably further north than the other two, and cannot be taken to have been named from the same wood, although it could of course be a transferred name. Finally, a fourth compound with *leab* occurs as Pophley’s Farm in the neighbouring county of Buckinghamshire.<sup>18</sup> Since all the attested spellings are from personal names, the Buckinghamshire editors suggest that this is a manorial name from the Berkshire Poughley; but it may well be the case that all four toponyms were named from an animal indigenous to the whole area. Similarly in Oxfordshire, a lost place-name *Pochwele* about four miles from Poffley again represents a second instance of the same formation with OE *niella* ‘spring, stream’.<sup>19</sup> Here it is highly unlikely that two springs or streams four miles apart would be named from a single topographical feature, but fully plausible that the same type of animal would be found throughout the district.

A second point against an interpretation as a topographical feature is the fact that such a term would be unlikely to occur exclusively as a qualifying element. Only two occurrences of OE *pobba*, *pocca* as a generic have been identified in volumes of the English Place-Name Survey published to date, both in Staffordshire field-names. The first is a lost field-name in Forton parish,

<sup>14</sup> O. J. Padel, *A Popular Dictionary of Cornish Place-Names* (Penzance, 1988), p. 145. A derivation from *hyll* is supported by the Domesday Book form, but all other early spellings are indicative of *niella*. Since both generics are represented in other place-names from OE *pobba*, *pocca*, the matter is difficult to resolve.

<sup>15</sup> The entry for each of these terms in Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, includes a section for animals or wild creatures. <sup>16</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire* II, 331.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* II, 478. Unfortunately there are no early spellings, and so the etymology cannot be regarded as certain.

<sup>18</sup> A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*, EPNS 2 (Cambridge, 1925), 195. <sup>19</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* II, 332.

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recorded as *Scaberds pokkis* in a single spelling dating from 1487.<sup>20</sup> The second is Matthew's Pow Field in the nearby parish of Gnosall, for which no early spellings are available.<sup>21</sup> Neither can be regarded as secure. Even if these do represent topographical uses of the term, however, this would not rule out an alternative use as an animal name. The two possibilities are not mutually exclusive, since a term which developed an extended sense as an animal name may have developed another sense as a topographical feature. Again, comparison with OE \**bagga* 'bag' is useful, as the sense 'badger', which is well evidenced in place-names, appears to have existed alongside a sense 'bag-like feature', found for instance in the Dorset field-names Croam Bags (1838) and *Cleybagge* (1538),<sup>22</sup> and in the West Riding of Yorkshire field-names the Bag(s) (1575), *Bagg acre* (1636), *le Bagge* (1560), *Ruddge Bagge* (1575) and *Ruggbagge* (1640).<sup>23</sup>

Thirdly, and most crucially, it appears hitherto to have escaped notice in this connection that OE *hlype* 'leap, leaping place', the second element of Poflet in Devon, rarely appears as a place-name generic in combination with anything other than an animal name or a personal name. Smith's headword entry explains that the term is characteristically used in place-names of "a place that can be crossed by leaping" such as "a chasm, a narrow defile, that part of a fence which some animals can leap over but which restrains others", and he notes that 'in compounds the first el[ement] is usually (i) the name of an animal or bird . . . (ii) a word denoting people', citing three instances of the first type and one of the second, and also drawing attention to the charter spellings *swealewan hlypan* (KCD 739; S 960) and *presta hlype* (KCD 813; S 1036).<sup>24</sup> Several additional instances have been identified in post-1956 volumes of the English Place-Name Survey. Putting these together with Smith's examples and with others not cited by him from earlier county surveys, the following pattern emerges:<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> J. P. Oakden, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire: Part I*, EPNS 55 (Cambridge, 1984), 152.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

<sup>22</sup> A. D. Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part I*, EPNS 52 (Cambridge, 1977), 236; A. D. Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part III*, EPNS 59/60 (Cambridge, 1989), 346.

<sup>23</sup> A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 8 vols., EPNS 30–7 (Cambridge, 1961–3) VII, 100.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *English Place-Name Elements I*, 251, s.v. \**blēp*, *blīep*, *hlyp*. In references to Anglo-Saxon charters, S = P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography*, R. Hist. Soc. Guides and Handbooks 8 (London, 1968), followed by the number of the document; BCS = W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, 3 vols. (London, 1885–93); KCD = J. M. Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, 6 vols. (London, 1839–48).

<sup>25</sup> Included in this corpus are place-names which may derive from later reflexes of the term, conventionally assigned to Old English etymons by the EPNS editors. The field-name Deelips in Rutland is attributed to ModE *deer-leap* 'a low place in a hedge or fence over which deer may jump' in B. Cox, *The Place-Names of Rutland*, EPNS 67/69 (Nottingham, 1994), 277, but has evidently been in existence long enough to undergo phonetic change.

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[More information](#)*Place-name evidence for an Anglo-Saxon animal name*Fig. 1 Occurrences of OE *hlype* 'leap, leaping place' as a second element in place-names**(i) References to wildlife****a) Deer**Hartlip, Kent (OE *beorot* 'hart, male deer')<sup>26</sup>Hindleap, Sussex (OE *bind* 'hind, female deer')<sup>27</sup>Hindlip, Worcestershire (OE *bind* 'hind, female deer')<sup>28</sup>Horsley Bank, Cheshire (OE *beorot* 'hart, male deer')<sup>29</sup>f.n. Dear Lips, Gloucestershire (OE *deor* 'deer')<sup>30</sup>f.n. Dear Leap, West Riding of Yorkshire (OE *deor* 'deer')<sup>31</sup>f.n. Deelips, Rutland (OE *deor* 'deer')<sup>32</sup>f.n. Deer's Leap, Cheshire (OE *deor* 'deer')<sup>33</sup>f.n. *Deere leape flatt* (1639), Staffordshire (OE *deor* 'deer')<sup>34</sup>f.n. *Hindeblypan* (780), Gloucestershire (OE *bind* 'hind, female deer')<sup>35</sup>f.n. *Hyndelepe dale* (1300), Nottinghamshire (OE *bind* 'hind, female deer')<sup>36</sup>**b) Other animals**f.n. *Catlepbeybyll* (n.d.), West Riding of Yorkshire (OE *catt* 'cat')<sup>37</sup>*wulfblype* (1062), Essex (OE *wulf* 'wolf')<sup>38</sup>**c) Birds**Birdlip, Gloucestershire (OE *bridd* 'bird')<sup>39</sup>*swealewan blypan* (1023), Hampshire (OE *swealwe* 'swallow')**(ii) References to people****a) Personal names**Cudlipptown, Devon<sup>40</sup>?St Lucas Leap, Dorset<sup>41</sup><sup>26</sup> J. K. Wallenberg, *The Place-Names of Kent* (Uppsala, 1934), pp. 249–50.<sup>27</sup> A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Sussex*, 2 vols., EPNS 6–7 (Cambridge, 1929–39) II, 331.<sup>28</sup> A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Worcestershire*, EPNS 4 (Cambridge, 1927), 139.<sup>29</sup> J. McN. Dodgson, *The Place-Names of Cheshire*, 5 vols. in 7, EPNS 44–8, 54, 74 (Cambridge and Nottingham, 1970–97) [part 5.2 completed and ed. A. R. Rumble] II, 298.<sup>30</sup> A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire*, 4 vols., EPNS 38–41 (Cambridge, 1964–5) IV, 139. (f.n. = field name.) <sup>31</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* VII, 205.<sup>32</sup> Cox, *The Place-Names of Rutland*, p. 277.<sup>33</sup> Dodgson, *The Place-Names of Cheshire* II, 302.<sup>34</sup> Oakden, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire: Part I*, p. 126.<sup>35</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire* IV, 139.<sup>36</sup> J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire*, EPNS 17 (Cambridge, 1940), 284.<sup>37</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* VII, 205.<sup>38</sup> P. H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, EPNS 12 (Cambridge, 1935), 65.<sup>39</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire* I, 156–7.<sup>40</sup> Gover *et al.*, *The Place-Names of Devon* I, 232.<sup>41</sup> Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part I*, p. 49, suggests a link with Richard Lucas, rector of Studland 1536–78, but notes an alternative tradition that the allusion may be to 'a greyhound which fell from the cliff here while coursing a hare'.

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Fig. 1 (*cont.*)**(ii) References to people** (*cont.*)**a) Personal names** (*cont.*)Postlip, Gloucestershire<sup>42</sup>Wintour's Leap, Gloucestershire<sup>43</sup>Freobearnes *hlype* (1062), Essex<sup>44</sup>**b) Appellatives**Clerkenleap, Worcestershire (OE *clerc* 'cleric')<sup>45</sup>Lad's Leap, Cheshire (OE \**ladda* 'servant, youth')<sup>46</sup>st.n. Counterslip, Gloucestershire (ME *contasse*, *-esse* 'countess')<sup>47</sup>*presta hlype* (1062), Essex (OE *preast* 'priest')<sup>48</sup>**(iii) Others**Poflet, Devon (OE *pobba*, *pocca* '?)Ruislip, Middlesex (?OE *rysc*, *risc* 'rush')<sup>49</sup>

Altogether, then, fifteen of the twenty-six known toponyms from OE *hlype* contain animal or bird names, eleven of which are terms for deer. All others refer to people, with the sole exception of Ruislip in Middlesex, the etymology of which is highly uncertain. There is thus a strong case for interpreting OE *pobba*, *pocca* in Poflet, Devon, as one of these types of word.<sup>50</sup> Since, as Gelling points out,<sup>51</sup> a personal name is unlikely to occur solely with topographical terms, the balance of evidence clearly favours an animal name.

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire* II, 34–5. The etymology of this place-name is uncertain. Alternative possibilities discussed by Smith include an unattested Old English personal name \**Pott* or a transferred topographical use of OE *pott* 'pot' to refer to a pit or deep hollow. Since the latter would represent an anomalous formation out of line with all other known place-names from OE *blep*, *hlype*, a personal name must be preferred.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire* III, 267.

<sup>44</sup> Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, p. 135.

<sup>45</sup> Mawer and Stenton, *The Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 145.

<sup>46</sup> Dodgson, *The Place-Names of Cheshire* I, 324.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire* III, 87. (st.n. = street-name.)

<sup>48</sup> Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, p. 73.

<sup>49</sup> J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Middlesex*, EPNS 18 (Cambridge, 1942), 46–7. The etymology of this place-name is uncertain. Gover *et al.* suggest a compound of OE *rysc*, *risc* 'rush' with OE *hlype* 'leap', but comment that 'the application of the second element here is uncertain'. E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1960), p. 396, s.n. *Ruislip*, prefers a derivation from OE *rysc*, *risc* 'rush' with OE *slap* 'slippery spot', which is topographically more appropriate. The fact that Ruislip is outside the general pattern of place-names from OE *hlype* may throw further doubt on the EPNS etymology.

<sup>50</sup> P. H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, EPNS 19 (Cambridge, 1943), 331, also identifies a usage of OE *hlype* 'in the special sense *Fyshynglepys* (1441), as in *Horesdescroft*-, *Newe*-, *Nordonelepes* (1240), *Vitlep* (1277)'.

<sup>51</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire* II, 291.

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Other possible occurrences of OE *pobba*, *pocca* have been identified in later volumes of the English Place-Name Survey. In Shropshire, a lost field-name recorded in 1301 as *Pogh Wenhale*, *Poghwenhale* is tentatively attributed to OE *pobba*, *pocca* ‘bag’ and OE *halb* ‘nook’ with the comment that ‘the middle el[ement] and the structure of the name are obscure’.<sup>52</sup> In Staffordshire, a lost field-name *Powefeldes* (1570) is attributed to OE *pobba*, *pocca* and OE *feld* ‘open country’,<sup>53</sup> another element which more commonly combines with the names of wild than of domestic animals.<sup>54</sup> In Dorset, Bowridge Hill (*Pogbrigge* 1292) is interpreted as ‘probably “ridge shaped like a pouch or bag”’, from OE *pobba*, *pocca* and OE *brygg*,<sup>55</sup> but could equally well refer to a ridge frequented by a certain type of animal, as do place-names such as Bageridge in Dorset and Staffordshire and Baggridge in Somerset ‘badger ridge’, Hawkridge in Berkshire and Somerset ‘hawk ridge’, and Henstridge in Somerset ‘stallion’s ridge’.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, given the precision with which Old English topographical vocabulary is now known to have been used,<sup>57</sup> a reference to shape would appear to be redundant with this type of word. The Dorset editor also notes that Bowridge Hill ‘gave name to *Pough’rygge*-, *Pokeryge brygge* 1501’, adding: ‘the same bridge is apparently earlier called *Pough’fordebrig*’ . . . from the same first el[ement] with **ford**’.<sup>58</sup> It strains credulity to believe that a bridge, as well as a nearby ridge, was considered to be bag-shaped; but again there are many instances of place-names combining OE *ford* with animal names, which as Gelling explains ‘must have been mentioned because they were frequently seen in the vicinity of the ford’.<sup>59</sup>

There may in fact be more occurrences of OE *pobba*, *pocca* than have yet been identified. *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English* reveals a reference to *on Pabolte* in the eighth-century bounds of an estate at Zoy in Somerset (BCS 143; S 251), and to *pohweg* in the eleventh-century bounds of an estate at Elmley Castle in Worcestershire (KCD 764; S 1396).<sup>60</sup> These appear to represent combinations of OE *pobba*, *pocca* with OE *holt* ‘wood’ and OE *weg* ‘way’ respectively. Again, both are terms which are recorded elsewhere in combination with animal names. The second element of the lost field-name *Poghole* (1313) in Berkshire is identified by the county editor as OE *hol* ‘hole, hollow’.<sup>61</sup> No attention has as yet been paid to the first element, which bears a striking resemblance to certain early spellings of

<sup>52</sup> M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Shropshire: Part II*, EPNS 70 (Nottingham, 1995), 118.

<sup>53</sup> Oakden, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire: Part I*, p. 66.

<sup>54</sup> M. Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London, 1984), p. 244.

<sup>55</sup> Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part III*, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, p. 169.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. the many publications by M. Gelling and A. Cole, and in particular the survey of topographical vocabulary presented in Gelling’s *Place-Names in the Landscape*.

<sup>58</sup> Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part III*, p. 11. <sup>59</sup> Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, p. 71.

<sup>60</sup> A. diP. Healey and R. L. Venezky, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English* (Toronto, 1980), s.vv. *pabolte*, *pohweg*, *pohweges*. <sup>61</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire I*, 276.

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place-names from OE *pobba*, *pocca*, including Poughley Farm in the same county (*Poghelye* (p), *Poghel*, *Poghele* 1241, *Pogheleg* 1242–3, *Poghely* 1275–6, *Poghelee* 1297, *Pogh'ele* 1436–7),<sup>62</sup> Poflet in Devon (*Poghelippe* 1242, *Poghelyp(e)* 1296, *Poghlippe* 1303, *Poggelyp* 1346, *Poghleþ*, *Poghlup* 1412)<sup>63</sup> and Poughill in Devon (*Poghelle* 1279).<sup>64</sup> It seems to me most likely that the field-name represents another occurrence of OE *pobba*, *pocca*. If this suggestion is correct, an interpretation as an animal name is again supported by the combination with OE *hol* 'hole, hollow', an element which very commonly designates the lair or den of a wild creature.<sup>65</sup>

It is also possible that some occurrences of OE *pobba*, *pocca* may have been wrongly attributed to OE *puca* 'goblin', since the two elements are sometimes difficult to distinguish and the latter has tended to be preferred on grounds of sense to the attested meaning of OE *pobba*, *pocca* as 'bag, pouch'. In Devon, for instance, the minor names *Pokemore* (1463), *Pokepytte* (1473) and *Pokemersbe* (c. 1500)<sup>66</sup> could all formally derive from OE *pobba*, *pocca* rather than from OE *puca*, and the same applies to Pock Field in Cambridgeshire (*Pokefeld(e)* c. 1190, 1305, *Pock-*, *Pooke-feild(e)* 16th)<sup>67</sup> and the field-name *Pokefelde* (1513) in Essex.<sup>68</sup> Comparison with spellings such as *Pokeleia* 1176–7, *Pokel* 1214, 1220, *Pokeleygh* 1220 for Poughley Farm in Berkshire suggests a common derivation,<sup>69</sup> and again, the second elements are topographical terms found elsewhere in combination with animal names.

In other instances, there may be confusion with a personal name *Pobba* or \**Poca*, the first element of place-names such as Pockthorpe in the East Riding of Yorkshire (*Pochetorp* 1086, *Poketorp*, *-thorp(e)* 1195–8 etc.),<sup>70</sup> Pockley in the North Riding (*Pochelaf*, *-lac* 1086, *Pokelai*, *-lay* 1184–98, 1279–81, *-le* 1232, 13th, *-ley(e)* 1282, 1301, *Pockeley(a)* 1252, 1259, *Poklee*, *Pockele* 1285),<sup>71</sup> Powick in Worcestershire

<sup>62</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire* II, 290. ((p) = personal name or surname.)

<sup>63</sup> Gover *et al.*, *The Place-Names of Devon* I, 216.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* II, 415. The page number is wrongly cited as 445 in Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire* II, 290, s.n. *Poughley Fm.*

<sup>65</sup> As noted for instance by M. G. Williamson, 'The Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Edinburgh Univ., 1942), p. 234, and Kitson, 'Quantifying Qualifiers in Anglo-Saxon Charter Boundaries', p. 33. For further discussion, see C. Hough, 'Carolside in Berwickshire and *Carelholpit* in Lincolnshire', *Nomina* 23 (2000), 79–86.

<sup>66</sup> Gover *et al.*, *The Place-Names of Devon* II, 691.

<sup>67</sup> Reaney, *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, p. 272.

<sup>68</sup> Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, p. 587.

<sup>69</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire* II, 290.

<sup>70</sup> A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York*, EPNS 14 (Cambridge, 1937), 95. However, G. Fellows-Jensen has recently suggested an alternative interpretation of this and similar formations from 'a derogatory compound appellative \**pūkatorp* to denote an insignificant settlement' ('Scandinavian Settlement Names in East Anglia: Some Problems', *Nomina* 22 (1999), 45–60, at 53).

<sup>71</sup> A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, EPNS 5 (Cambridge, 1928), 72. Pockley is not included in Gelling's discussion of names from OE *pobba*, *pocca*, and neither is

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Excerpt

[More information](#)*Place-name evidence for an Anglo-Saxon animal name*

(*Poincguic* 972 [c.1050], *Poinic(h)(a)* 1086, etc.),<sup>72</sup> Poxwell in Dorset (*Pocesnylle* 987 [13th], *Pocheswelle* 1086, *Pokeswel(l)e* 1188, etc.),<sup>73</sup> and the lost field-name *Poketorp* (1202) in Norfolk,<sup>74</sup> with a diminutive form *\*Pocel(a)* occurring in Pocklington in the East Riding of Yorkshire (*Poclington* 1086, *Poc-*, *Poklington(a)*, *-y-* 13th *et freq.* to 1524, *Pochelinton* 1100–8, etc.).<sup>75</sup> The personal name is recorded independently (in the form *Pobta*) in the witness list to BCS 91 (S 22).<sup>76</sup> Although generally associated with OE *poc* ‘smallpox’ by modern scholars,<sup>77</sup> it could well be based on an animal name, as are many other Anglo-Saxon eponyms. The diminutive might either constitute a hypocoristic form of the personal name or be adopted directly from a diminutive form of the appellative, apparently evidenced in a lost Shropshire field-name recorded as *Pokelbroc* 1222–c. 1230, *Powelbrok* 1291–8, concerning which the county editor comments that the first element ‘looks like a diminutive in *-el* of *pobha* “pouch”’.<sup>78</sup> Again, references to wild creatures are common in combination with OE *broc* ‘brook, stream’, and an OE *\*pohbel* could plausibly represent an animal name, possibly referring to the young or to a small variety of the species.<sup>79</sup> The same formation may occur in the Northamptonshire place-name Polebrook (*Pochebroc* 1086, *Pokebroc* 1207 *et passim* to 1428 with variant spelling *-brok(e)*, *Pokesbrok* 1314; *Pockebro* 1203, *Pokbrok* 1229, *Pakebrok* 1428; *Polebroc* 1254, *-broke* 1428, *Polbrok* 1316; *Polebroke* *al.* *Pokebroke* 1608).<sup>80</sup> Initially attributed to OE

the derivation from a personal name challenged by Mills, *A Dictionary of English Place-Names*, pp. 274–5, s.n. *Pockley*. However, the place-name seems to me almost certain to represent a doublet of Poughley in Berkshire.

<sup>72</sup> Mawer and Stenton, *The Place-Names of Worcestershire*, pp. 223–4.

<sup>73</sup> Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part I*, pp. 143–4, suggests an OE *\*poc(c)e* ‘frog’ related to MLG, MDu *po*ge as an alternative possibility, and notes that the same first element may occur in the nearby Pixon Barn (*ibid.* p. 214). The second element is taken to be probably OE (*ge*)*swell(e)* ‘steeply rising ground’ rather than OE *wiella* ‘spring, stream’, but a combination of the latter with a strong personal name *\*Poc* is not entirely ruled out. OE *\*poc(c)e* ‘frog’ was proposed by Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, s.n. *Polebrook*, as the first element of Polebrook in Northamptonshire, and is at least as likely as a personal name in Pockington and *Pockham Moor* in Gloucestershire (*The Place-Names of Gloucestershire* II, 235). An interpretation as ‘frog’ may also be possible in some of the other place-names attributed to OE *pobha/pocca* – particularly those in combination with water-words – but does not fit the toponymic context in a majority of instances.

<sup>74</sup> K. I. Sandred, *The Place-Names of Norfolk: Part II*, EPNS 72 (Nottingham, 1996), 9.

<sup>75</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York*, p. 182.

<sup>76</sup> W. G. Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: a List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names From the Time of Bede to That of King John* (Cambridge, 1897), p. 390. Searle also cites *Pobanleah* from BCS 366, but this is an early spelling of Poughley Farm in Berkshire discussed above.

<sup>77</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, p. 72; Mills, *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part I*, p. 144. <sup>78</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Shropshire: Part II*, p. 148.

<sup>79</sup> Compare for instance OE *puca*, *pucel* ‘goblin’, OE *\*putta* ‘kite’, *pyttel* ‘hawk, mousehawk’ (Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, s.vv.).

<sup>80</sup> J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire*, EPNS 10 (Cambridge, 1933), 215. Additional spellings cited at 209 under the entry for Polebrook Hundred are *Pocabroc* a.1076, *Pochebroc* 1086, *Polebroke* 1316, 1346.

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*puca* ‘goblin’ by the Northamptonshire editors, a subsequent *addendum* to the Survey drew attention to Anderson’s suggestion that ‘in view of the absence of any *u*-forms, . . . the first element is OE *pobba, pocca*, “bag” used in some topographical sense or as a personal name’.<sup>81</sup> Again, the second element is OE *broc* ‘brook, stream’, and here the alternative spelling traditions with /k/ or /l/ may reflect an alternation between *pobba, pocca* and a diminutive form \**pobbel, \*poccel*.

To summarize the argument so far, I suggest that the range of second elements recorded in combination with OE *pobba, pocca* points towards an interpretation as an animal name, and that this is supported by occurrences of identical formations within limited geographical areas. The type of animal in question is difficult to establish, but it is at least suggestive that nearly half the known place-names from OE *hlype* ‘leap, leaping place’ contain words for types of deer, referring, like the compound OE *hlyp-geat*, to ‘a gate in a fence over which deer and other animals can leap but which restrains others such as sheep and cattle’.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, deer are also the commonest type of living creatures to appear in place-names with OE *leah* ‘wood, clearing’. This is demonstrated by Gelling, who cites Darley (two occurrences) in Derbyshire, Durleigh in Somerset, Durley in Hampshire, Hartley in Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire (three occurrences) and Kent (two occurrences), Hurstley in Herefordshire, Hiendley in the West Riding of Yorkshire and Hindley in Cheshire.<sup>83</sup> Compounds with OE *hyll* include Harthill ‘hart hill’ in Cheshire, Derbyshire and the West Riding of Yorkshire,<sup>84</sup> and with OE *wielle*, Hartwell ‘harts’ spring’ in Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Staffordshire:<sup>85</sup> in both instances, these are the only formations to occur more than twice in Gelling’s corpus. Similarly with OE *ford*, where out of twenty-two instances relating to wild creatures in the corpus of names discussed by Gelling, no less than five refer to deer: Harford in Gloucestershire, Hartford in Cheshire and Northumberland, Hartforth in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and Hertford in Hertfordshire.<sup>86</sup> Compounds with OE *feld* ‘open country’ appear in Darfield in the West Riding of Yorkshire<sup>87</sup> and Hartfield in Sussex.<sup>88</sup> Deer are not particularly common in combination with OE *hol* ‘hole, hollow’, but are represented in names such as Hartshole in Devon<sup>89</sup> and Hart Holes and Harts Hole in the West Riding of Yorkshire,<sup>90</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, p. lviii.

<sup>82</sup> Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* I, 252, s.v. *hlyp-geat*.

<sup>83</sup> Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, p. 205. Another possibility is Hattersley in Cheshire, where the first element may be OE *beab-deor* ‘a stag, a deer’ (Dodgson, *The Place-Names of Cheshire* I, 307). <sup>84</sup> Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape*, p. 171. <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31. <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>87</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* I, 95.

<sup>88</sup> Mawer and Stenton, *The Place-Names of Sussex* II, 365–6.

<sup>89</sup> Gover *et al.*, *The Place-Names of Devon* I, 221.

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* II, 290.