

# New Light from Old Wicks: The Progeny of Latin *vicus*

*Richard Coates*  
University of Sussex

## **OE *w\_c* and its Relatives**

The aim of this article is to explore and establish the meaning of the Old English (OE) word *w\_c* in its lexical use and in its use as a place-name element in England. The word is shared with several other West Germanic languages and their naming-systems. It may be compared with Old Frisian *wík* (f.), Old Saxon (in the epic known as the *Heliand*) *wík* (m.), Middle Low German *wík* (n., f.), Middle High German *wîch* (m.). In Old English the word is originally neuter, but presumably because of the general resemblance of the neuter plural to the feminine singular, and because *w\_c* often appears in the plural, it is sometimes treated as feminine—a feature shared with the coastal continental languages, as can be seen.

## ***Vicus***

These words are generally believed to have been borrowed on the Continent from Latin *vicus* /wi:kus/ (see e.g. Frings 1932: 87); Frings (1942: 222) notes the contiguity of the entire continental Germanic-speaking area where they are found with the Romance-speaking areas to the west. *Vicus* has several strands in its sense-development. It may be contrasted with *urbs* 'town'; *Eranam .... quae fuit non vici instar sed urbis* (Cicero); *Phrygia .... pluribus vicis quam urbibus frequens* (Curtius) '... Erana, which was not like a *vicus* but an *urbs*'; 'Phrygia, stocked with many *vici* rather than *urbes*'. It is well known that the larger urban units were known as *urbs*, *municipium*, *oppidum* or *civitas* according to their administrative status and/or conformation, so we can infer that *vicus* was applied to a group of dwellings smaller than a town. It could be applied to a free-standing place like Hostilia (modern Ostiglia) on the river Po, or to a division of a town with some social or administrative cohesion: *spatium urbis in regiones vicosque divisit* (Suetonius) 'he divided the area of the town into *regiones* and *vici*', especially with respect to Rome itself. Rivet and Smith (1979: xviii) gloss the term as follows: 'This has both a colloquial and a technical meaning. Colloquially it means any village or insignificant town.'

Technically it means a town which, though possessing some administrative organization of its own, is yet subordinate to a higher authority, whether civil (a *civitas*) or military (as in the case of *vici* attached to forts) or the administrator (*procurator*) of an imperial estate; in this technical sense it was also applied to the internal wards of large cities.' This is very helpful to our project of explicating the derived English term, as we shall see. Cicero apparently uses the term to refer to some part of a villa estate: *omnium vicos et prata contemno* 'I pay no heed to the *vici* and meadows of all'. The usage of the term in medieval Latin is well summed up by Du Cange: 'Castella et pagi sunt, qui nulla dignitate civitatis honorantur; sed vulgari hominum cœtu incoluntur, et pro parvitate sui civitatibus attribuuntur. .... Castrum sine munitione murorum.' ('[*Vici*] are fortified places and villages which do not have the status of a city, but which are tilled by the common people, and are assigned [i.e. subordinated] to cities because they are small .... [*vicus*:] a *castrum* without walls.') The editor of *MLLM* agrees essentially, adding specifically: 'settlement of some importance, not being an episcopal city'. *MLLM* usefully gives examples of *vici* called such in early medieval texts, e.g. Brioude (Haute-Loire), Augers (Seine-et-Marne), Rott am Inn (Tirol, Austria). Coulmiers (Loiret) is described as 'urbis vicu[s]'. Other medieval meanings identified by *MLLM* are approximately 'suburb of a diocesan city or abbey-town', 'landed estate', 'vice-county', 'churched parish', 'trading station', 'centre for boating, river-fishing, saltworking, mining', and ultimately 'fortified town' and 'street'. A meaning 'royal or aristocratic estate' seems to be implied by the use of the word in the dating-clause of certain charters written in Frankia. In modern France, the traces of these various usages can be seen in present-day place-names containing *Vy* or *Vic(q)*, depending on the region and the degree of learned reformation of the name.

There is thus considerable diversity in the use of the term; certainly many of these applications were available during the same period. It is possible to distil from the above list some notions that appear crucial for the sense-development of the term as borrowed by the West Germanic languages, namely 'place dependent on some other in either secular or ecclesiastical administration' and 'centre for some specialized activity (i.e. not subsistence agriculture)'. I do not believe in the 'suburb' senses offered by *MLLM*, but regard these as illusions which have been inferred from the fact that some place could simultaneously be characterized by both my 'crucial' notions. For example, a given place could be (1) dependent on and

adjacent to a lord-bishop's central place, and (2) a centre licensed by him for the specialized activity of trading. That could give it the appearance, for example, of a 'suburb of a diocesan city, etc.'

### *W\_cing*

A complicating factor in the prehistory of *w\_c* is the existence of OE *w\_cing* 'viking', and it is best to get it out of the way before embarking on a discussion of *w\_c* itself. This word actually has nothing to do with *w\_c*, but since there is, or has been, a school of thought which believes the opposite (*OED*–1, –2; Ahldén 1953; *Deutsches Wörterbuch* XIV: 1639–40), we must take the time to establish on what grounds we should dismiss this delusion.

The first Old English record of the word *w\_cing* is not in its simplex form, but in the compound *uuicingsceadan*, *uuicingsceadae*, *w\_cinc-sceaðan* (glossed 'piraticum, piraticam, piraticam' i.e. 'pirate, piracy, piracy') in the Épinal, Erfurt and Corpus glossaries respectively. These related documents are today believed to have a common archetype dating from the early eighth century at the latest. Toon (1983: 86, summary table) dates the MSS to c.700, 740 × 750 and c.800 respectively. Another mention with an original of possibly before 800 is an Aldhelm gloss of the Digby group in MS Brussels Royal Library 1650, which, with other later uses of the English word, is discussed with great care by Fell (1987b). The simplex is also found twice in the poem *Widsith*, which I follow Chambers (1912: 150–51, linguistic evidence 167–76) in attributing to the seventh century (MS c.980), but see Fell (1987b: 308–09 and references there) for caution with respect to this dating. The importance of these facts is that they demonstrate the existence of the word *w\_cing* in English before the first known destructive Norse raid on the British Isles, the sack of Lindisfarne in 793. Together with the corresponding word *wising*, *wizing* attested in Old Frisian, they apparently require us to believe one of two difficult and incompatible theories:

(1) the word originated in Frisia or England in the meaning 'man associated with a *w\_c*'; this requires a difficult story about how a word evidently denoting in all its applications a settled place developed a derived noun which was felt suitable for labelling marauders, and Scandinavian ones in particular, and about why those Scandinavians should have adopted this as a self-designation

(2) the word is Scandinavian, and was borrowed from the Scandinavians before 700; this date is a century before the first documented contacts.

Its origin has not been clarified to the satisfaction of everyone, and there are several schools of thought about it, discussed incisively by Munske (1964: 123–25). I shall review them now in detail, and establish an alternative source for it.

One theory takes the word *w\_cing* as derived from *w\_c*, and Fell (1987b: 307) appears to imply that she believes in a connection when, in relation to discussion of Scandinavia in the Old English *Orosius*, she says: 'Neither a tribal name *wicingas* nor a place-name *wic* occur.' Her business in that lecture was not, however, to provide an etymology for the word, as it was also not at a comparable point in another essay (1987a: 114–16). In English, it is known exclusively in the sense 'seaborne marauder' and, in some but by no means all of its recorded occurrences (as Fell demonstrates irrefutably), specifically a Norse/ Danish one. But any word of the form \**w\_cing* derived from *w\_c* must have started from a sense to do with a *w\_c* in the application 'trading station' (see below) rather than 'military camp' as envisaged by Ahldén (1953); the 'military camp' application is by no means the dominant one, as we shall see, and there is reason to believe that it may be illusory (see below, 105–07). The connection between the Norse marauders and the great trading stations was not one of benefit to the latter; for example they pillaged Dorestad in Frisia before its demise in the third quarter of the ninth century, and slaughtered away in Quentovic and London in 842. Their own trading stations, e.g. at Ribe and Åhus, were small beer in the eighth century; even the greatest, Hedeby, had negligible westward trade (Clarke and Ambrosiani 1995: 62–63) and there are no Anglo-Saxon finds at Birka (1995: 75). The Scandinavian seafarers are therefore not likely to be known in the lands of the North Sea for their association with any *w\_c*, whether their own or those in other territories.

The Old English word *w\_cing* may appear in the place-names Whissonsett and Witchingham in Norfolk and Whissendine in Rutland, though for the last Cox (1994: 55) has a counter-proposal involving an offshoot of the Hwicce which I find hard to accept. The proposal to derive *w\_cing* from *w\_c* must in any case definitely be rejected on linguistic grounds because there are no established instances in Old English of words for persons derived from words for places or other concrete objects by *-ing* suffixation (Munske 1964: 66–68).

A second, more traditional, school of thought treats OE *w\_cing* as a borrowing of the marauders' self-designation *vikingr*, which appears to derive straightforwardly from *vík*, a Scandinavian word (i.e. North Germanic only) meaning 'bay (suitable for landing by ship)' (Collin 1941). The popular image which this view sustains is one of shiploads of armed men hiding up fjords and pouncing out on unwary sea-travellers, but a *vík* is not a fjord, and if there is a connection between *vikingar* and *vík* it is at the level of their preferred points of (dis)embarkation. Munske (1964: 124) dismisses this view scathingly, pointing out that any seafaring people worth their salt water will embark in bays, and that this will hardly distinguish viking from victim in the North Sea basin. However, there may be more substance in the view than he implies, as one might envisage the word not as a self-designation but as a label bestowed on the seagoers by the people they left behind on land whose business did not involve seagoing or even going to the sea; after all, it was not the stayathomes who were called *vikingar*. One might, on the other hand, wonder why they were called 'bay folk' as opposed to 'sea folk' and argue for this as a case of euphemism of some sort. There are no word-formational difficulties; the proposed formation has morphological and semantic parallels in Old Norse such as *strendingr* from *strand* 'beach'.

A variant on this second theory is that the prototypical vikings were associated with Viken, the great arm of the sea reaching from the Skagerrak up to Oslo (also Collin 1941; for discussion see Fell 1987a: 116); in fact a word *wykeng* is found in the Middle English calendar of patent rolls of Edward I (1281 × 1292) precisely in the sense 'man from Viken' (noted already by Björkman (1900: 258)). The name Viken embodies Scandinavian *vík* 'bay' with the medieval innovation of the definite inflection in its common-gender form. In the modern Scandinavian languages, the descendants of *vík* mean 'small bay, cove, inlet'. (Such a sense was also attributed by Renaissance scholarship to the English word; see Fell 1987a: 115.) If Viken does indeed embody this word, and if Schleswig (Old Danish *Sliaswig/-wich* in Latin sources from Bremen) means 'inlet called the Schlei' rather than 'inlet (or trading station) on the Schlei', it could once denote much bigger features. But the biggest problem with the idea that *w\_cing* is a Scandinavian borrowing, in either of its two variants, is, as we have seen, and as noted by those mentioned by Chambers (1912: 205 n.47), the fact that OE *w\_cing* antedates all known Scandinavian contacts, and is by no means restricted to referring to those whom we

presently call vikings.

A third view is due to Askeberg (1944: 182). He proposes derivation from *víkja* 'to move, travel'; a viking was therefore a traveller, as is also implied by the co-denotational ON *sumarliði* (lit. 'summer traveller'). Munske (1964: 124-25) approves of this; there are parallel formations in *-ing* whose meaning is the notional subject of the verb involved, such as *drettingr* 'slacker' from *dratta* 'to trudge along', and a further piece of support is the homophonous feminine abstract noun *viking* 'journey'. (On a seventeenth-century adducing of this word in the context of a discussion of Scandinavian pirates, see Fell (1987a: 113).) The word must have been borrowed into English early enough for /k/ to be sound-substituted by /tʃ/, i.e. before any processes occurred whose outcomes permitted sequences of /k + front vowel/ in Old English, for instance and principally the unrounding of vowels resulting from *i*-umlaut, whose beginnings are dated by Luick (1914-40: 261) to the tenth century. Given the date of the first known contacts, this is perfectly credible. Munske thinks that the borrowing must have been early enough for /k/ to participate in Old English palatalization (and the analogous change in Frisian), but that is unnecessarily constraining. This theory suffers from the same dating difficulties that we have noted in relation to the second.

I think there is a possible variant of the third theory that leaves no loose ends as we try to establish an etymology for the English word. We can accept that Scandinavian *vikingr* derives from *víkja* 'to move, travel', but this verb is itself a specialized application of the verb meaning 'to yield, withdraw, depart'. *Víkja* in this sense is paralleled by OE *w\_can*, *gew\_can*, *onw\_can* and Old High German (OHG) *wihhan* in similar senses. There is therefore no bar to seeing OE *w\_cing* as an ancient derivative of OE *w\_can* with the same meaning-specialization and shift as is seen in North Germanic: 'withdrawer' ⇒ 'leaver of the native shore' ⇒ 'traveller' ⇒ 'marauder'; in fact the derived word can be pushed back to Common Germanic with no loss of plausibility, and the palatalization or assibilation of /k/ before /i/ in Old English and Old Frisian then falls out as a consequence. In short, the Anglo-Saxons had an ancient word of their own which came to mean 'pirate, marauder'; they may even have been accurately so called themselves when they left the coasts of Jutland and Angeln in the fifth century heading for Britain. They found an urgent new use for it after 793. If this word is truly old enough to be Common Germanic, we can also explain the personal proper name *Wihhing* found in the eighth century as a

parallel derivative of OHG *wīhhan* 'to yield, etc.' We can therefore eliminate *w\_cing* as a form to consider whilst trying to shed light on *w\_c*.

Mention of *vík* 'bay' makes it desirable to emphasize that it has itself nothing to do with *w\_c*. It is an application of the root seen in *víkja*, and means 'bend or curve, specifically in a coastline'; this offers a close semantic parallel to English *bight* and Modern High German *Bucht* 'bay', which represent the zero-grade of the root seen in New High German *biegen* 'to bow, bend'. (This verb has no direct parallel *\*b\_ogan* in Old English, but the ablaut-related *b\_gan* exists.)

The relevance of the 'bay'-word to the theme of *w\_c* which we are pursuing is that some place-names may be hard to analyse, since there is a geographical area of overlap where a *w\_c/wík* might be established in a bay called (a) *vík*. Schleswig might derive from either source, since we do not know the source-language of the first element, as might Ralswiek on Rügen (Clarke and Ambrosiani 1995: 109–10). Ralswiek was a Scandinavian trading station, but the toponymy of Rügen island has instances of the Low German word *wiek* applied in the names of bays, e.g. Prorer Wiek and Tromper Wiek. Similar considerations affect what we choose to make of Wyk on the North Frisian island of Föhr or of Bardowiek, the entrepôt on the river Ilmen Au north of Lüneburg. It seems clear that *wiek* is a genuine Low German word and place-name element (Lübben 1888), and it figures as a word of dialect vocabulary in several current High German dictionaries. It seems possible that, like *holm* 'island, peninsula, dry land in marsh', it is a rare instance of a Scandinavian borrowing in Low German, although there is careful work by Beekman (1901: 1794) suggesting that place-names of the relevant form in extreme northern Dutch-speaking areas may testify to a general North Sea Germanic word which might have included 'bay' as part of its meaning-range (and also 'canal in fenland').

### Other Philological Preliminaries

Gothic has a word *weihs* /wi:xs/ 'village' which does not fit comfortably into the Germanic evidence. It is not generally believed to be a borrowing of Latin *vicus* but is held to be a native *-a*-stem development of an Indo-European neuter *-s*-stem (Krause 1953: §121 (1,b)) which is related to *vicus* and to Greek *oikos* 'house' by regular Germanic processes (Frings 1932: 87). The word which interests us, West Germanic *\*w\_k*, must be distinct from this Gothic word because it does not show the effects of the Germanic consonant shift. Our word, from *vicus*, as will be evident on both

phonological and semantic grounds, is preserved in the widespread compound whose earliest forms include Old Saxon *wikbilithi* (Holthausen 1954: *s.n.*), Middle High German *wichbilde* 'sign of a town with a market', hence 'jurisdiction of a town authority' (the latter found in Westphalia, c.1170). This gives rise to Middle Low German *wikbeld*, Middle Dutch *wijchbelt* and is continued as New High German *Weichbild*. The sense of *\*w\_k* here is 'place with market rights', and we shall need to discuss below (88) how this fits in. Further compounds of *\*w\_k* or its descendants include Middle High German *wichgrave* '(approx.) magistrate', *wichvride* '(approx.) public order' and *wichskepel*, a dry measure under town regulations in such places as Hamburg and Mecklenburg. The element certainly also appears in place-names such as Braunschweig (Brunswick); but whether it also appears as is sometimes claimed in Bardowiek and Osterwiek will need further evaluation, as *wiek* appears, as we have noted, in general dictionaries as a dialect word for 'bay, creek', implying as we have seen the probability that it has a common origin with Central Scandinavian *vík* or is a borrowing of it.

This German compound *wichbilde*, appearing as it does in the twelfth century, seems closely related to the status of *vicus* in Latin writings of the early medieval period. Köbler (1973) points out that Carolingian capitularies (collections of royal ordinances) contain references to *vici* in relation to ecclesiastical, but not legal, business. They are on the one hand unsuitable places to instal a bishop, and on the other hand the smallest units that can celebrate certain festivals. This appears compatible with the notion of dependent status, and with that of sufficient importance to be a community of a specialized sort. Other document-classes are largely barren of direct indications of the meaning of the term except where they give the impression that it simply means 'village'. Importantly, even places named with the *\*w\_k* word, such as *Baldrikeswich* near Rinteln on the river Weser near Hanover, may be described as a *villa* (1973: 64), implying an increasing loss of semantic specificity and obsolescence in the basic term.

Saints' lives of the early period use the word almost exclusively in fixed phrases from which a specific meaning is hard to extract, except where there is use of place-names that contain the element and discussion of known trading stations such as Dorestad (*Fulda Annals* (Kurze 1891), clearly distinguished from certain *civitates*) and Birka (*Vita Anskarii*, late ninth century (Waitz 1884)). Later, *vicus* often appears explicitly equated with *villa* (by now) 'village, town', both in chronicles and charters (Köbler 1973:



64–65). Insofar as any separate meaning can be given to the term, it appears to refer to, but not to denote, a mercantile place without walls. This was a very early application of the term; Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymologies* (XV, ii, 2; early seventh century (Lindsay 1911)), says that a *vicus* is so called because it has *vias* ('streets') without (town-)walls. Köbler notes (1973: 61) an Old Saxon gloss *vicus wik ubi mercatores morantur* '... where merchants stay'. However, the usual German translation of *vicus* at all periods is *dorf* 'village', occasionally *wîler* '(big) farm' (itself a borrowing from Latin *villare*), and occasionally *gasse* 'street'. *Vicus* is rendered by *wicha* in the Old High German Prudentius glosses. Köbler suspects that the apparently distinct use of *dorf* and *wicha* in these glosses is a reflection of the cultural conditions of the later Old High German period; the glossator has had to decide whether the *vicus* of the original means 'village' or whatever the then current *wicha* means. Alternatively, the two German words could at this period be viewed as true synonyms. Attempts to glean a sense for OHG *wîh* from literary sources almost all founder on the possibility that the word has been chosen to satisfy the demands of versification: alliteration or rhyme. It is frankly only in Old English among the older vernaculars that *w\_c* is widely, freely and regularly used, the sense, according to Köbler, being uniformly 'village' rather than 'trading station' (1973: 76), in Old English as in the Continental Germanic languages. This is not the sense that has been accepted in Old English place-name studies, and I am also deeply sceptical of its general applicability in England. Other scholars, in particular Hodges and Randsborg, have promoted the claim that 'trading station' is the dominant sense, not just in England (see the groundwork in Hodges 1982: 50–52, Randsborg 1991: 87–90). We shall see!

### ***W\_c* in Old English<sup>1</sup>**

OE *w\_c* has been the subject of a well-known major study by Ekwall (1964). Some of the word's applications and parts of its distribution have been treated by Tengstrand (1965), Nicolaisen (1967) and Sawyer (1986), and there is a linguistic classification of names containing it by Dornier (1987). I shall concentrate here on evaluating Ekwall's foundational work.

Unpropitiously, Ekwall opens his short monograph by stating: 'Its

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<sup>1</sup> Citations are given in manuscript spellings where available to me; citations from secondary sources may be normalized.

meaning in individual names is elusive and very difficult to determine. The wisest course will frequently be to leave the question of the exact meaning open[.]' (1964: 5), and that policy is implicit or explicit throughout his book. On p. 45, he says of some instances: 'But other meanings than "village" are possible. "Mansion" or "manor" would do just as well .... On the whole I believe that .... we need hardly reckon seriously with other meanings of *w\_c* in names in *-wick* than "dwelling, residence", and special variants of this, as "manor, homestead, cottage" and especially "temporary dwelling, dependent farm".' Tengstrand (1965: 111) settles for the overarching translation 'bostad etc.' ('dwelling'). I think we can arrive at something less inherently vague than this. Ekwall proceeds to give a useful catalogue of meanings ascribed to *w\_c* in earlier writings, which I reproduce here, together with the names of scholars who proposed them, using numerical flags to indicate earlier and later opinions of the same author; Ekwall-2 indicates those meanings which Ekwall came to regard as the most frequently applicable without necessarily abandoning altogether those marked Ekwall-1, whilst Ekwall-s indicates meanings which he believed to occur sporadically in place-names. All these opinions are derived from their use in place-names except, of course, those of Bosworth-Toller (Toller 1898), which are derived from the corpus of Old English literary writings in the main.

1. 'dwelling, abode' (Bosworth-Toller, Skeat-1, Moorman, Cornelius, Mawer, Ekwall-1)
2. 'village' (Bosworth-Toller (not applied to *English* villages; NB this contrasts with the view of Köbler), Duignan, Skeat-2, Moorman, Wyld, Cornelius, Mawer, Ekwall-1, Wallenberg)
3. 'farm (of some particular kind, esp. a dairy-farm)' (Bosworth-Toller, Moorman, Stenton, Ekwall-2)
4. 'dependent farm' (Stenton, Ekwall-2)
- 5a-d. 'homestead, mansion, manor, cottage' (Ekwall-s)
6. '(market-)town' (Bosworth-Toller, Liebermann, Ekwall-1)

- 7. `port' (Bosworth-Toller)
- 8. `saltworks' (Cornelius)
- 9. `marsh or meadow' (Cornelius)
- 10. `night-quarters, camp' (Bosworth-Toller)
- 11. `street' (Bosworth-Toller)
- 12. `message in a town' (Ekwall-s)

Many of these ascriptions are taken by Ekwall from dictionary-entries or similar piecemeal analyses, hence the apparent plethora of opinions held simultaneously by the same authors. The alleged application 9 (`marsh or meadow') cannot be supported, and I should guess it to be a misunderstanding of the pasturage required for 3. I shall ignore it in what follows. The volumes of the English Place-Name Survey produced under Allen Mawer's and Sir Frank Stenton's general editorship normally allow the meanings `farm' or `dairy farm', and more rarely `dwelling' or `village', and Ekwall (1964: 8–9) draws attention to somewhat inconsistent, or at least unsettled, interpretation of names including this word in EPNS usage before 1960.

How are these applications related to each other, if at all? What semantic nucleus is common to them, i.e. what is the essence of *w\_c*-hood? Ekwall is well aware that we are not dealing here with twelve different senses. He regards (my numbers) 3 and 10 as variants of 1 (better, perhaps, as specialized applications). I would go further and assert that 4 (dependency) is a consequence or concomitant of 3 (specialization), and that the notions are so intimately related as to be identical. In fact, the evidence appears to me to support a more radical reanalysis of this set of applications. Basic to several (3/4 (which I believe, as just noted, to be identical), 6 and 7 (which I believe to be ultimately identical), 8, and 10) is a notion of some complexity to the modern eye, involving the following fundamental notions (which I shall distinguish from Ekwall's by the label *RC*-):

*RC*-1 `place where specialized (i.e. non-subsistence) agriculture is carried out' (3/4)

RC-2`place where non-agricultural commercial activity is carried out' (6/7, 8)

RC-3`place of temporary occupation' (10; 3 if seasonal pasturage is a factor; 7 if seasonal trading is a factor)

These in turn have a common component, namely freedom from exclusive reliance on the place's own resources, entailing practical dependence and, in the absence of other considerations, also entailing administrative subordination; no place in any of categories RC-1/2/3 could be free of reliance on other settlements, for they require at very least the exchange of their own produce or products with the varied produce of basic agriculture, or manpower and supplies from a place producing surpluses of both manpower and primary general wares.

In principle, Ekwall's applications 1 and 2 appear incompatible with this viewpoint, and this is where a historical perspective needs to be introduced. Ekwall's general meaning 2, `village', might arise when whatever is done at some *w\_c* requires a permanent population, where part of its population comes to be engaged in basic agriculture, or where specialization is seen as no bar to administrative autonomy (the pursuit of which is arguably the direction in which all political culture tends to drift). His application 1 `dwelling, etc.' is problematic, and I shall defer consideration of this ultra-general meaning until later in the article (99–102), noting for now that I reject it as a sense found in place-names. As for 5, Ekwall (1964: 10 and 44) does not give enough substance to evaluate the validity of this heterogeneous collection, and describes his view as `really just a general impression'. That won't do. In fact each of the names on which his view is based (e.g. Prestwick, Smethwick) is susceptible of one of the more robust interpretations in his own battery: e.g. 4 and a variant of 8. 11, `street', appears to me to be a late development in Old English resulting from a conventionalized translation of *vicus* such as is regularly found in Latin dictionaries at the present day, and in any case the supporting evidence is completely inadequate, as I shall demonstrate below (95–96). There is no doubt, of course, that it meant `street' in the later Middle Ages, as witness its entry in Latham (1965), if a witness were necessary. 12, `messuage in a town', is also evidently quite wrong. The idea is derived from the archiepiscopal land-grant BCS 380 (S 1268), dating from around 830,

which deals with land *Æt Sceldes forda* in Kent (Cullen 1997: 369–70). In the bounds, mention is made of *ðeara wica on byrg* 'of the *w\_cs* in the town', i.e. Canterbury, and far from referring to individual identifiable messages this must be interpreted as referring to the area called by the lost name *Wyke* in St Martin's parish, which Cullen (1997: 568) documents fully and interprets as a trading-area, with the support of published archaeological work. This term, in this usage, is not to be equated with *haga* 'town message'. There is an issue of phonology, though. Anticipating what will be said later, and as Ekwall noted, the pronunciation of the word in its application 'trading station' normally has /t/. The Canterbury place, like Whyke in Chichester and Westwick in Norwich, has /k/ suggestive of derivation from the plural form of the word. A special application for places within a town, as opposed to outside its walls, seems to be indicated. Possibly we should reckon simply with 'commercial quarter', i.e. effectively RC–2.

Ekwall elects to concentrate on just two category-sets, namely place-names in which *w\_c* means 'town' or 'harbour', 'salt-works' and 'street' (Ekwall 6, 7, 8 and 11) (1964: 14–29), and place-names in which it means 'dwelling' or 'dependent farm' or the like (Ekwall 2, 3 and 4) (1964: 30–61). Some of his evidence is seriously in need of reappraisal, and we shall examine it closely now.

Recent archaeological discoveries have made it certain that *vicus* had an application 'extramural place for trading', as suggested by the work of Hodges and Randsborg, and place-name evidence reflects this precisely. This is the link to the sense of *\*w\_k* in continental languages 'place with market rights', noted above. The Frisian entrepôt known to history as Dorestad is actually at a place presently called by the Dutch name *Wijk-bij-Duurstede*. This is reasonably interpreted as being a *vicus* of the now-destroyed Roman fort of *Levefanum*, which was deserted before 300 but resettled in early Merovingian times (Verwers 1988). Another major trading station of the eighth century or earlier may be found at the significantly-named *Quentovic* on the river Canche near Étapes; *H\_mw\_c* is the *w\_c* outside Southampton (perhaps to be interpreted as 'outside' Winchester, but that might be going too far); Fordwich is outside the walls of Canterbury and Sandwich outside *Rutupiae*, the Roman fort at Richborough (Tatton-Brown 1988); not to mention Schleswig (on which see above for a cautionary note; this is not extramural to any central place and could be named from an inlet of the sea).

In the light of this, it cannot be assumed that *Lundenwic* in a Kentish law of 673 × 685 (Liebermann 1903–16, I, 11) means 'London' in the sense of the Roman walled city, as Ekwall appears to have assumed (1964: 14–15). The archaeological discoveries reported by Vince (1984) and Biddle (1984) make it absolutely clear that London's post-Roman trading was done at the former waterfront which is still called The Strand and that the entire trading establishment, or rather its site, was later called *Aldwych*, i.e. 'the old *w\_c* or *vicus*'. It became 'old' or 'former' when trading was moved inside the walls to East- and Westcheap during the Danish troubles of the ninth century, and a field on the site was still called *Oldwich* or *Old Witch Close* in 1629. The form (*The*) *Aldwych* was revived in 1903 by the London City Council for its new street, using a spelling taken from the Curia Regis Rolls of the thirteenth century (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1942: 166).

An apparent, and not negligible, problem with the view that *Lundenw\_c* was not the Roman city as such is the fact that Mellitus was appointed to the newly-founded see of *Lundenw\_c* in 604; but this information derives from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the relevant annal could have been drafted in its transmitted form at any time up to 891. It therefore does not necessarily tell us anything about early Old English usage. Bede calls Roman London *Lundonia civitas* and his translator *Lundenceaster*. Mellitus' church, if on the site of the later St Paul's Cathedral, may have been separated from the *vicus* by little more than the thickness of the Roman city wall and the width of the stream called The Fleet. A mistake by a later drafter working perhaps at a time when the Roman city area was still largely deserted and The Strand active (i.e. before the Danish wars) is pardonable. Alternatively, we can take the annal at face value and use it as *prima facie* evidence that the first church was extramural, though that does not sit squarely with the tendency for the earliest churches or hermitages to be placed within the walls of Roman towns (Canterbury, Lincoln, Bradwell, Burgh Castle, and so on).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> There is room to speculate that the evolution in the application of *w\_c* found in English and continental names of trading-stations reflects Hodges' typology of trading-places (1982: 50–52). The earlier type A is a seasonal fair, and the later type B an established urban trading-station. As such, type A is evidently economically secondary or dependent, and the earliest *w\_c* names may denote this type. Otherwise-uninterpreted *w\_c*-names next to coastal towns or convenient for inland towns offer a particular temptation to view them in this light, among those

Ekwall's other evidence for *w\_c* meaning 'town' may be disposed of likewise. Dunwich (Suffolk) was, he claims, the *w\_c* at *Domnoc*; we have on record the form *Domnocceaster* (*Old English Bede* c.890) for the walled place itself, now presumably lost to the sea, outside whose walls no doubt, if Ekwall was right, was the *w\_c* called \**Domnocw\_c*. (In fact, I think it can be shown with considerable confidence that there is no connection between *Domnoc* and *Dunwich* (Coates, forthcoming).) *Eoferw\_c*, whilst apparently denoting York, was specifically the Anglian commercial settlement beyond the walls (Hall 1988: 235–39), the *w\_c* at *Eof(e)r* (truncated form of a surmisable \**Eofroc* from Primitive Welsh \**Eβrg* from Romano-British *Eburacum*); see Fellows-Jensen (1987: 141–47) for an extended exposition of this view). Ekwall's view that there is a sense-development 'street' ⇒ 'market-place' ⇒ 'market-town' ⇒ 'town' cannot be sustained, nor can his view that *w\_c* had a dual meaning 'town' and 'port'. *W\_c* never, ever, meant 'town'. It meant 'dependent place' and was applied to trading stations amongst other places. The prototypes were those outside walled or other central places, most typically Roman fortified towns.

Ekwall presents what he believes to be textual and lexical evidence to suggest that *w\_c* could mean 'town'. In the Kentish law of 673 × 685 that I referred to earlier, *w\_c* is used of London in two passages. One of them, however, is quite clearly a reference to London's mercantile dependency: .... *he þæt feoh ... in wic gebohte* 'he bought the cattle in a/the *w\_c*'. With our present new knowledge, we must revert to the view of Professor Sedgefield, rejected by Ekwall, that this applies to London's 'trading-place, market'. At the period in question, there was no mercantile development in the walled city. According to Ekwall, the *Wicstræt* at Kingsbury in BCS 994 (S 645; 957) means the road to *Lundenw\_c*. He is correct in this, but *Lundenw\_c* is again not London but its trading station. He equates *w\_cgerefa* with *portgerefa* 'portreeve'. A portreeve is a *thelonearius* or toll-gatherer; where would one need to gather tolls if not in a trading-place? Lastly, he notes that *w\_c-herewæþ* is found in boundary-clauses of four Anglo-Saxon charters, and equates the word with *port-weg* 'road from town to town', suggesting the further equation of *w\_c* and *port*. The roads identified run between Winchester and Southampton, between Dorchester and Salisbury, to Salisbury and to Winchester. The evidence is equivocal. Clearly Roman

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mentioned in this article perhaps especially *Wicor* at Portchester (Ha) (111) and *Wyke Regis* near Dorchester (Do) (90).

towns could be intended, but Southampton is a primary *w\_c* in the application 'trading station' and Salisbury a medieval mercantile town, and Dorchester may have been the mother settlement of Wyke Regis eight miles away on the coast and the latter the true designation of the highway; in any case the existence of a general sense 'town' for *w\_c* cannot securely be inferred.

Ekwall further suggests that *w\_c* may have meant 'port'. This claim, I submit, is not distinct from the claim that it could mean 'town', since all the instances he discusses are focal points in essentially seaborne trade. *W\_c* did not apply to ports as such but to trading stations, and was applied to trading stations which happened to be ports because of the island nature of Britain and of the nature of international trade in areas speaking West Germanic languages at the relevant period. If *w\_c* applied to ports, it did so accidentally, and not because of any maritime sense of the word.

Ekwall's examples (some tentative) of the 'port' application are all those mentioned above, plus: Greenwich and Woolwich (K), the lost Harwich near Seasalter (K; preserved in a street-name in Whitstable), Harwich (Ess), the lost Bromwich in Titchfield (Ha), Swanage (Do), Ipswich (Sf), Norwich (Nf) and Alnwick (Nb). Not all of these stand in an obvious relation with a pre-existing major settlement. But if one were intent on viewing them in this light it would not be hard to view the second Harwich as related to Colchester and the first as an alternative entry to Canterbury. Norwich is probably onomastically unrelated to the Romano-British town and erstwhile Icenian capital *Venta Icenorum* which is not certain to have been still occupied and functioning at the time of the arrival of the English; Sandred and Lindström (1989: 2) suggest, no doubt rightly, that the name of Norwich, 'the north *w\_c*', is an application of the name of one of the four settlements represented by the later city quarters; presumably it derives from its position in the great bend of the river Wensum, and therefore from its position relative to the other settlements. That it was a trading settlement is perfectly clear from its riverside position near the tidal limit of the Wensum. Ipswich evidently earned its crust from trade from the earliest times, as presumably did Greenwich and Woolwich from somewhat later, presumably at some time when the toll privileges of London were less jealously guarded.<sup>3</sup> The status of the places on the south coast is unclear to

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<sup>3</sup> What was the significance of Edgar's grant of land at these places to St Peter's in Ghent in 944 (S 728)?



me; their first elements do not compel a trading interpretation. Alnwick is unconvincing as an ancient trading station name since there are other *-wick* names in the vicinity on or near the river Aln (Denwick, Prendwick), and at present I have no compelling theory about these names. My inclination is to treat them as originally dependent farms, despite the administrative significance of Alnwick in historic times. The phonology would seem consistent with this interpretation; on which see below (103). As Ekwall notes (1964: 45): 'We know too little about the early history of the names in *-w\_c* north of the Humber.'

Ekwall's reasons for selecting these places as a group are (1) that they are all 'old ports or towns, or they are (or were) situated on the sea or on navigable rivers' (1964: 20), and (2) that they share the characteristics of singular number and palatalization of Germanic /k/ (except Alnwick).

He appears to regard a meaning 'port' as distinct from 'harbour', and it is not clear at all points in his discussion whether *port* is to be taken in one of its Old English senses 'town' or as 'harbour'. He suggests the further possibility that *w\_c* in the sense 'harbour' is to be associated with the verb *w\_cian* 'to camp overnight onshore', and in that case a specialization of *w\_c* in the sense 'temporary dwelling-place' (RC-3; see Lendinara 1993: 319–20). We shall return to this below (105–06).

The second major meaning of *w\_c* suggested by Ekwall is 'salt-town, salt-works', seen in Droitwich (Wo) and the names of its components Nether-, Middle- and Upwich (and other local names there), a lost *Lootwic* (Wo), Chadwich (Bromsgrove, Wo), Nantwich, Middlewich and Northwich (Chs) and probably other place-names of the north-west Midlands. It was presumably the salty connection that led Duignan (1905) to propose that this was an application of ON *vík* 'bay', following older writings including those of Skeat, no less (1897). This is indefensible on semantic grounds; we cannot get from 'bay' to 'saltworks' by the tenuous link of salt water, and we have explored the true position of *vík* in this argument above when discussing *vikings*. Ekwall (1964: 22) chides the English Place-Name Society editors for taking *w\_c* in the relevant names to denote the buildings at a saltworks rather than the brine-pits; he observes that *OED-I* gives 'a salt-works, salt-pit, or brine-spring' as the meaning of *wich*, *wych*, but his own discussion (1964: 9) gives prominence to a 'buildings' sense. The evidence is not as straightforward as it might appear. In Wulfric Spott's will (1002; Whitelock 1930), Newton (Middlewich, Chs) is referred to as *Niwantun æt þære wic* 'Newton at the *w\_c*', and in

Wulfgeat's will (c.1007, Whitelock 1930), we find *þeo wellinc at þære wic* 'the boiling at the *w\_c*' (probably Droitwich), both of which Ekwall apparently takes to include *w\_c* in a common-noun sense '(salt-)town'. He may be right, but we cannot rule out the possibility that Droitwich at least was known at some time by the proper name *s\_o/p\_ W\_c* 'The Wich', as further and later evidence which he presents (1964: 23) also suggests. In *Domesday Book* (1964: 22), there is a mention of Northwich (Chs) in the words *erat terciū Wich quod uocatur Noruwich* 'there was a third wich (or "place called Wich") that is called Northwich', which is equally equivocal between a lexical and an onomastic sense: as is *in alijs Wiches*, also in *Domesday*.

We cannot ignore the other applications of the term *w\_c* that we have already encountered or shall encounter, and we should move if possible towards an integrated solution. It seems to be true that in the long term *w\_c* or its descendant came to mean 'salt-town' or '-works', but originally it must have been an application of the sense 'dependent place with a specialized commercial function' (i.e. RC-2). The mention concerning Droitwich in BCS 138 (S 97, 716 × 717 (twelfth century)) seems to me to be not perfectly clear about the status of the word or name: *in Wico emptorio salis quem nos Saltwich vocamus*, i.e. 'in (the) Wich the salt-trading place which is called Saltwich in English'; but BCS 134 (S 83, 716 (twelfth century)), although taken to be a spurious document, is interestingly clear in a way which would not be predictable from a purely twelfth-century invention: *juxta Wiccium . emptorium* 'near Wich the trading-place'. Whichever way this is read, it suggests that the town's name, or its economic function, was that of a trading-place, and its association with salt was a matter of everyday common knowledge rather than semantics. Ekwall asserts: 'It cannot be due to chance that all these [salt-towns] had names in -*w\_c*, and *w\_c* must have had a definite technical meaning, not the general one of "a group of buildings" or "a building associated with a trade ..."' (1964: 23). The first claim is right, and the second was, in a sense, right in the long term, but it has not been shown that *w\_c* must have MEANT 'salt-town' as early as Old English times. Droitwich was after all known as *Saltwich* into the eleventh century, and conscious tautology was not an Anglo-Saxon onomastic trait. The earliest uses of the simplex name suggest a meaning 'trading-place', and the earliest simplex mentions allow the inference that *salt* as a place-name element became redundant and was dropped from the eleventh century onwards. It came to have the 'salt-town' meaning because of the

fame of the towns engaged in the trade, and the meaning is likely to have been inferred from the place-name element in the names of all of them with greater specificity than in the original etymology, much as the borrowing of the name of Lido di Jesolo in modern times has resulted in a word, *lido* 'open-air swimming-pool', referring to one of Lido di Jesolo's striking features and of much more specific application than the original Italian dialect word meaning 'shore'.

None of the uses recorded in *OED-1* before 1610 actually requires the interpretation 'salt-works'; they could all be read as place-names rather than lexical expressions, or as extrapolations from place-names, as in 'This is the order of salt with us in our Wiches here in England' (Philemon Holland's Pliny, marginalia (1601)). It is possible that this sense is due to Holland, whose English version of Camden's *Britannia* (1610) gives *Salt-wiches* for the original *salinae*. Holland also translates 'British' *Hellath wen* as 'the white Wich or Salt pitte', and this is the first unequivocal equation of *wich* with salt installations. On the other hand, the compounds *wich-work* or *wich-house* 'evaporation house' are recorded from 1298 and 1534 respectively. These, along with *wich-waller* 'salt-boiler', will have aided the emergence of the new sense. My view is that Ekwall is wrong when he declares that this meaning develops from 'town'; the starting-point is rather 'dependent place with a specialized commercial function' (RC-2). These must be originally local applications of this sense where a special lexical sense has been extracted from the place-names, and this new sense has eventually found its way into the vocabulary of a national writer (notice he feels the need to append a gloss). (Holland no doubt acquired this Midland regionalism when he lived in Coventry, as he did for most of his life from c.1595; he was born and educated in Chelmsford. I have never seen *wich* used of Essex coastal salterns.)

There is continental evidence that parallels the English evidence. From 777 comes a mention of [*p*]atellas ad salo faciendum in vico Badatio seu Marsallo (*Marsal, Moselle*) 'saltpans in the vicus B. or M.' and from 820 [*i*]n Aquitanico litore ... vico quodam qui vocatur Buyn (*Bouin, Vendée*) 'a certain vicus on the shore of A. called B.'; here and in several other instances in *MLLM* we find uses of *vicus* which may have been considered to mean 'salt-works' on the grounds that there were salt-works at the place, or that the place is called by a related name, as with *Vico qui est in Salnise* (*Vic-sur-Seille, Moselle*). As in England, we need to discover at what point the meaning of the relevant word passed from 'place with a special

economic function' to `salt-works'.

Ekwall (1964: 24, note) notes a name *Wicford* (BCS 361 (S 1597), 817 (??)), which he interprets with great plausibility as a ford on the road to Droitwich from Ombersley. Even if the road is definitely one of those medieval highways known as saltways, it would not follow that the name contains an element which MEANS `salt', and it is perfectly compatible with a reference to Droitwich in its earlier sense of `dependent place with a specialized economic function', perhaps trading on its fame and treating it as the *w\_c* par excellence, or with *W\_c* used as a proper name. A parallel for use of a common noun is the frequent *port-weg* and for a proper one *Lunden weg* (BCS 1076 (S 695)). There is further discussion of names deriving from *w\_c-ford* in the last section of this article (111).

Before leaving the question of the connection between *w\_c* and saltworking, we should note that the Romans extracted salt at both Droitwich and Middlewich, and that they called both these places *Salinae* `saltworks' (Rivet and Smith (1979: 451); whether that is to be interpreted as a true place-name or as a descriptive expression is in our current state of knowledge a matter of the analyst's taste). It cannot be ruled out that *vicus* was applied to these places for some purposes as early as Roman times, but this was not necessarily the case.

Ekwall's third interpretation of *w\_c* is `street' (1964: 28–29). He offers only two place-name instances, both from London. One is *Aldwych*; as we have argued above, this is rather the name for the archaeologically validated Anglo-Saxon-period trading-station outside the city walls at Westminster, rather than merely the `close' that it had become in the seventeenth century (Prideaux 1905: 410–11). This leaves only the *Outwich* in the parish-name St Martin Outwich. Ekwall (1954: 202–03) discusses this name fully, and surmises that the parish-name encapsulates an old street-name. Since not a shred of actual evidence for a street bearing this name is provided, there is no case for us to answer. OE *w\_c* does not mean `street', despite Ekwall's very surprising assertion to the contrary (203). He correctly says that *vicus* is common in latinized street-names (1964: 28), but this shows only that *vicus* was in use by clerks when they found it necessary to render in Latin some such English word as the ancestor of *street*; it tells us nothing about *w\_c*. He notes two instances (1964: 11) where *w\_c* translates *vicus* in the sense `street', both in Old English versions of the New Testament (Acts 12:10, Luke 14:21), both evidently suggested by the form of the Latin word to be translated, and therefore telling us nothing about words for places

which were current in Old English.

Ekwall's chapter 1, then, contends that OE *w\_c* could mean 'town' ('port'), 'harbour', 'salt-works' or 'street'. I contend rather that it meant 'dependent place with a specialized commercial function' and could be applied to a trading station (in the conditions of the age, in practice usually a harbour) or to a salt-works. At least in earlier Old English, it did not MEAN these things, but could come to have these specialized senses later in the history of English. It never, in Old English nor in Old English place-names, meant 'town' or 'street'. Ekwall's view on the latter point is due to a misunderstanding of the place-name evidence which can now be resolved archaeologically.

Chapter 2 of Ekwall's book contends that *w\_c* may mean "dwelling", "dependent farm" or the like'. Vast numbers of place-names exist which testify to the lesser status of the place so named: very often one finds a farm or hamlet named by the simplex, indicating only local significance, and sometimes a name of the form *X Wick* where *X* is the parish-name, as in the very familiar Hackney Wick and Hampton Wick (Mx) and Bathwick (So), indicating much the same as the use of the simplex: 'the [sole] wick associated with place *X*'. The sense of 'dependence' can be taken as established beyond all doubt, and it is clearly inherited from the Latin ancestor, as seen in the discussion above. The application to farms can also be taken as established. Such names as Butterwick (Do, Du, Li x2, We, YER, YNR), Cheswick (Nb, Wa), Chiswick (C, Ess, Mx), Keswick (Cu, Nf x2, YWR) obviously allude to dairying, and it is not out of the question that one or other of the Winwick names contains OE \**wynne* 'pasture', with allusion to dairying, if this is genuinely a place-name element. Other animal products are mentioned in Honeywick (Sx) (but less likely Hunwick (Du)), Spitchwick (D; 'bacon wick') and Woolwich (K; on which as a trading-place, however, see above, 91). Domesticated animals themselves, mainly quadrupeds, appear in Bewick (Nb, YER), Cowick (D, YWR), Cowix (Sr), Fuge and Fuidge (D), Gatwick (Sr x3), Gotwick (Sx), Goswick (Nb), Hinwick (Bd), Oxwich (Glam), Oxwick (Nf), Rotherwick (Ha), Shapwick (Do, So), Shopwyke (Sx), Skipwith (YER) and *Swynwik'* (Ru; lost), and in a more generalized way in Hardwick (*passim*; on which see in passing Hough 1995: 265), which may be regarded as a generic place-name element in its own right. Harvestable wildlife is referred to in Fishwick (La) and arguably alluded to in Fisherwick (St; 'w\_c of fishers'), and Baswick (YER) if this contains the Old English word for 'perch'. (It is unclear

whether artificial fishponds may be in question.) Agricultural produce appears in some place-names with *w\_c*: Benwick (C), Barwick/Berwick (*passim*), perhaps Outwich (ME *Ot(t)e(s)wich*; Mx); Berwick is so frequent, and \**Wheatwick* or the like so conspicuously absent, that *berew\_c* >> *berewick* is usually taken as a generic place-name element in its own right: not just 'barley-farm', in other words, but 'farm devoted to arable agriculture'. (This word later developed the sense 'demesne farm' or 'outlying farm whose produce was retained to the lord's own use'.) Harvestable wild plants, including fruit-trees, are seen in Bromwich (Ha (lost), St, Wa, Wo), Broomage (D), Redwick (Gl) 'reed wick', Rushwick (Wo) and Sedgewick (Sx), *Seg(e)wyk(e)* (C; lost); Hazelwick (Sx) and Crabbet (Sx; 'crab-apple wick').

In each of these cases we see the meaning 'farm specializing in some product' or 'in animals yielding produce'; in other words, not a subsistence farm, which requires some minimal diversification. How far this indicates early movements towards monoculture is debatable. The theme of specialization can be confirmed by those names having industrial connections (in the loosest sense). Woodland products are enshrined in (Wood)bastwick (Nf, YER), Colwich (St), Colwick (Nt, Wo), and perhaps implicitly in place-names including words for managed trees, e.g. Appletreewick (YWR), Hazelwick (Sx), *hnuttwíc* and *þornwíc* (Ha, lost; BCS 707 (S 430)), but that is less certain. A very striking group alludes to the various stages of ironworking: Hammerwich (St), Smethwick (Chs, St), *Smithwick* (Sx; lost). Potting is presumably referred to in *Kilnesvic* (C; lost), but an application of kiln technology in ironworking is also possible.

Specialization, if taken literally, entails dependence; the specialized unit will not generate its own subsistence requirements. The meanings 'dependent farming or industrial unit' and 'specialized farming or industrial unit' are so interrelated that we must doubt whether they were separate lexical senses either in Late Latin or in Old English. Where necessary from now on, I shall assume that the central root historical meaning of *w\_c* is 'dependent economic unit'. The fact that the name appears so frequently as a simplex (though varying in grammatical number) suggests one of two things: (a) that a typical parish would have just one *w\_c*, and/or (b) that *w\_c* actually came to mean 'dependent unit of a particular, and therefore locally striking, sort'. Evidence for (b) is provided by the explicit statements of later writers. We noted above that Philemon Holland may have introduced into written English the notion that *wich* could mean 'salt-works'. Compounds of

*w\_c* such as Middle English (ME) *wychwerke* and Early Modern English *wich-house* testify to this development in the technical local spoken usage of the West Midlands at an earlier date. Modern English *wick* is often said to mean 'dairy-farm'; the first unambiguous usage is in the Parliament Rolls of 1467/8 (*OED-2*): 'A dayery, otherwise called a Wyk, called Dangebrigge'. Properly, this is a usage of East Anglia and Essex. *OED-2* misrepresents *Domesday Book* (Berks., fo. 58b) by implying that the following is about a dairy-farm rather than merely a dependent farm: *Wica de .x. pensis caseorum ualentes .xxxii. sol. & .iii. den.* 'w\_cs of 10 weys of cheese worth 32 shillings and 3 pence'. It may well be that the dependent economic unit referred to was a dairy-farm, but we cannot assume from this that the older, more general, meaning had been lost or specialized. *OED-2* also misrepresents the Wiltshire writer Richard Jefferies by implying the following remark to be about dairying: 'Wick Farm—almost every village has its outlying wick—stands alone in the fields' (1879), for the most that this implies is that a wick is an outlier (if indeed it is any more than a comment about place-NAMES). *OED-2* also gives rare and very localized evidence for a meaning 'enclosed ground' restricted to Masworth parish (i.e. Marsworth (Bk)). This usage, apparently genuine, may have been due to the inference of such a meaning from local place-names such as *the Parsonage Wick*. *OED-2*'s other, earlier, forms are not clear instances of such a sense; they are names, rather than words, for enclosures.

For the main later usages, the semantic development is clear, but the absolute chronology is not. A *w\_c* was a dependent economic unit, and that is what the word meant. Certain sorts of dependent economic unit were prime instances of *w\_cs* because of their cultural and economic importance or their frequency in the landscape: saltworks and dairy-farms (and 'berwicks', but this word may be considered as separate and distinct); these came to be seen as prototypes for the concept. An adjustment in the balance between sense and prototype then occurred. This was clearly not a single datable event, but its outcome was the abandonment of the older more inclusive sense and its replacement by disjoint and more specialized senses. This was no doubt assisted by the phonological processes which had produced the stem-alternants *wich* and *wick*. The sense 'saltworks' only ever has the first of these forms, whilst the sense 'dairy-farm' has overwhelmingly the second in place-names and always in the lexical word. The best conclusion we can draw from the written record is that this change in sense was happening during the sixteenth century and probably began

earlier; not necessarily in all parts of the country, and not necessarily in all registers of English. The process of sense-change was overwhelmed by the abandonment of the word(s) in question in favour of others such as *works*, *farm* and *dairy*.

The account I have just given of the second set of applications of *w\_c*, an exposition of RC-1, is largely compatible with Ekwall's account (1964) and that given by Smith (1956: II, 259-61), but re-expressed in a way more in tune with current thinking in lexical semantics about the relation between sense, denotation and application. *W\_c* had the sense of 'dependency' and could be applied to denotata falling into characteristic groups, for which, later, independent senses could evolve. We cannot, however, leave the element without discussing the problem of whether it had different generalized senses, namely 'dwelling' or 'village', the first two senses offered by *OED-2*. Smith (1956: II, 257-58) discusses both these possibilities briefly, and Köbler (1973) in great detail.

Ekwall (1964: 30) believes that the 'frequency of this meaning ["village"] has been at least somewhat overrated', and that most villages whose names contain this element will have started out as dependencies, as discussed above. I agree with this; Ekwall judiciously (or perhaps undermining his own case—see above, 84) goes on to say: 'there are hardly any safe criteria for meanings such as "dwelling-place" or "village"'. Sometimes, even where there is no indication in its name of what a *w\_c* was for, its dependency will be explicit; cf. *Wivarawic* (K; lost), whose first element means 'of the dwellers at Wye' (Cullen 1997: 38-39), the name of a royal estate. The Anglo-Saxons were not short of words for primary settlements, and it is hard to imagine that they needed to borrow for this purpose a word of Latin which they were in the process of borrowing anyway to encode more specialized and culturally interesting meanings. Nevertheless, *w\_c* is often used in literary texts as a translation-equivalent of Latin words for 'village', and we should address the problem.

Ekwall notes (1964: 11) that *w\_c* apparently meaning 'village' in Old English literature occurs principally in Bible translations and in homilies, and is never used in reference to an English village. This should be sufficient to confirm that this sense is absent in *w\_c* as a place-name element, and in all probability the word never had this sense in everyday spoken Old English. We have already noted that a parallel usage is found in continental writings, where the word is used in fixed phrases from which it is hard to extract more than the most general kind of meaning, suggesting



that the vernacular word is being used as a surrogate for a Latin term rather than in its own right with its full vernacular semantic weight. Ælfric, in his glossary, used *wíc* as half of a paired gloss on *castellum*, the other half of the pairing being *litel port* (Zupitza 1880: 318). This fact is presumably related to the continental usage of *castellum* for 'smaller inhabited place' that we noted earlier when we observed that *castella* of certain types could be called *vici*. I suggested there that the fundamental notion underlying this usage was that of '(economically) dependent place', and I suggest here that that is the way Ælfric's *castellum* is to be taken. This is not evidence for the usage of *w\_c* in the general sense of 'town' in the earliest Old English, but it is not inconceivable that the word could have been so used by a learned writer at the end of the first millennium as a semantic calque on its translation-equivalent *castellum* (used in England of Richborough and Wareham (Ekwall 1964: 11)). This would loosely parallel the use of the word to mean 'village' in non-English contexts and specifically in Biblical writings, possibly equated conventionally with some such term as *villare* used in exegetical categorization of places referred to in the Bible. The evidence for a sense 'dwelling-place' in literary texts and charters is harder to evaluate. According to Ekwall, in the *Old English Bede* the word usually translates *mansio*; but this claim is misleading. *Mansio* is in fact usually rendered with conjoined nouns, e.g. *nearo wíc and wununesse* (IV: 28), *wunnesse & wíc* (IV: 26), *wunnesse & stowe* (I: 25). (*W\_c and st\_w* also translates *monasterium*, IV, 28.) Where *w\_c* is used, it does not bear the sense of 'dwelling-place' alone, and it is under suspicion of being there to contribute to an alliterative formula. The same applies in the case of the formula *w\_c wynna l\_as* 'joyless places' in *The Wife's Complaint* (Leslie 1961; line 32), *wynl\_as w\_c* in *Beowulf* (Klaeber 1950; line 821) and elsewhere, paralleled in *Beowulf* by *wynl\_asne wudu* (1416). Ekwall's selective quoting of *Beowulf* (123–25) obscures the fact that this *w\_c* (125) also participates in alliteration. Even Ælfric's injunction to bishops to avoid the preconditions for fleshly pleasures is couched in a way which suggests that phonology or orthography are helping to determine choice of vocabulary: *nan biscop .... næbbe on his wican .... wifman* 'let no bishop have a woman in his *w\_cs*' (Ælfric, *Pastoral Epistle*, 31, quoted in Toller 1898), though we shall identify what a *w\_c* within an aristocratic or ecclesiastical estate might be below. Fully fifteen of the citations of *w\_c* in the Bosworth-Toller dictionary alliterate, six of these with *wunian* 'to live'; that is one-third of ALL citations, which include amongst their number the

most prosaic charter boundaries. This does not look like the behaviour of an everyday lexical word.

*W\_c* renders *tabernacula* in *Psalms* (cf. Lendinara 1993). Where Bede describes the *mansio* that Chad built himself at or near Lichfield (*HE* IV: 3; on this see Coates 1997a), the *Old English Bede* calls it a *sundorwíc*; *he wæs in þæm forespreceanan wicum* [NB plural] *wuniende* 'he was dwelling in the aforementioned wicks'.<sup>4</sup> It is a place apart, an oratory (and therefore a dependency) of the great church at Lichfield.

It is interesting to establish who may possess a *w\_c*. The list that I have been able to draw up includes God, kings, ealdormen, saints, bishops and Grendel; I think this serves to establish that *w\_c* does not simply mean 'dwelling' in a physical sense, nor 'dwelling' of ordinary people. Equally interesting is that *w\_c* is not to be equated with *h\_s* or *h\_m*. The partial quotation from Ælfric given above reads in full: [*ne*] *on his w\_can ne on his h\_se wunigende* 'dwelling neither in his *w\_cs* nor in his house'; and in the *Metrical Genesis* (line 1721, quoted in Toller 1898), we find: *H\_br\_hte w\_f t\_h\_me ðr h\_w\_c\_hte* 'he brought a wife to the estate where he owned a *w\_c*'. If we add to this *Beoð him ... wic gestapelad in wuldres byrig* (*The Phoenix* (Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 107), line 474) 'let there be *w\_cs* established for him in the city of glory', we can infer that a *w\_c* could be within a physical place, yet itself be physical enough to be described as *gestapolad* 'established, founded'.<sup>5</sup> Most revealing of all, perhaps, is *his wic ðær on byrig [beon mæhte] on his life* (BCS 308 (S 1260)) 'his *w\_c* might be there in the town for his whole life' and *ðeara wica on byrg* (BCS 380 (S 1268)) 'of the *w\_cs* in the town'. It is hard to know where this apparent sense 'home, indwelling, right of abode' comes from and how it fits in with other senses, from which it is at first blush clearly distinct. The actual sense might not be to do with permanent abode,<sup>6</sup> but rather with mercantile

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<sup>4</sup> The plural form is also used to translate *mansio* in *HE* V, 2 (*Sindon sumu deagol wiic* ...).

<sup>5</sup> A more abstract sense is possible in such contexts as the following from *Pastoral Care* (Sweet 1871: 407, lines 34–36): *ic him selle on minum huse, & binnan minum wealle, wic & beteran naman* ... 'I give him in my house and within my wall a dwelling and a better name ...' Greater abstraction is possible such that in a poetic context *on þam wicum* can simply mean 'in heaven' (*The Phoenix* (Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 111), line 611).

<sup>6</sup> In this connection I shall note below (106) the possible translation-equivalence of *w\_c* for words meaning 'tent(s)', but I shall decline to accept it as a feature of

development and ostentation. Was a town *w\_c* a place of potential resort for its owner, who would be based normally in his country estate(s), but which might be used for commercial purposes and developed as a symbol of his rank and wealth? Were the celebrated Anglo-Saxon halls of Northampton *w\_cs* in the sense we are seeking? Was a *w\_c* on a country estate something analogous, a place physically set aside for the display of the owner's worth—a collection-point for dues like a *villa regia* and imitating or emulating this royal institution?

Ekwall devotes a considerable portion of his monograph (1964: 10–13, 31–41) to the question of the grammatical gender and number of *w\_c* in its many attestations, which have phonological and lexical consequences. It may be feminine or neuter, whilst some instances do not definitely reveal which. Its form is usually *w\_c*; this may be nominative or accusative singular or plural feminine or neuter, or genitive or dative singular feminine if inflected as a consonant-stem of the *burh*- type. The genitive singular neuter would have been *\*w\_ces* if it had been attested. There is no evidence of a form *\*w\_ce* appropriate to the genitive or dative singular of a feminine vowel-stem noun. These attested forms would all have been pronounced /wi:t/, i.e. with palatalized and assibilated final Germanic *\*/k/*. *W\_ca*, genitive plural of either gender, is found, as is *w\_cum* and its phonologically regular descendants *w\_cun* and *w\_can*, dative plural of either gender; any of these are (or would be) pronounced /wi:k/, with unmodified stem-final *\*/k/*. The later record reveals that both forms persisted in place-names, and Ekwall is at pains to discover whether any semantic difference attaches to the palatalized and unpalatalized forms (which I shall refer to distinctly as *wich* and *wick* from now on, partly for typographical simplicity). What he shows is a strong, though not quite perfect, correlation between *wich* and the applications 'town' or 'harbour' (which I have reinterpreted as 'trading-station') and 'saltworks' (RC–2), and between *wick* and the application 'dependent or dairy farm' (RC–1), and possibly, as noted in passing above, 'mercantile quarter or depôt within a town', though more work is desirable to establish this beyond doubt.<sup>7</sup> It may be that this is the sort of operation that Wulfheard was aiming for when he wanted 'his *wic ðære in byrig*' at Inkberrow minster, for a connection between minsters,

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normal spoken Old English.

<sup>7</sup> The plural form is also normal, but not invariable, in the abstract sense 'place or right to dwell; heaven'.

urbanization and mercantilization has been suggested with increasing power in recent work by John Blair (e.g. 1997). The simplest interpretation of these facts, though possibly an oversimplification, is that a specialization of the plural form in the application 'dependent or dairy farm' took place, and that this was normally expressed in names fossilized in the dative case. Support for this view might be found in the true dative names found in the record, e.g. Wycomb (Lei). Instances of Wicken (e.g. C, Ess, Nth) are not so easy to evaluate. They could be phonologically regular descendants of *w\_cum*, but several relevant names show clearly plural but non-dative spellings: Wicken Bonhunt (Ess) is found as *Wykes* in the thirteenth century, as is Wicken (C); *Wix* (Ess) shows the consistent new plural form and Ekwall, surprisingly, identifies it for what it is in his *Dictionary* (1960) but in his monograph (1964: 40) simply says that *-s* has replaced *-um*, as if unwilling to abandon his favoured hypothesis explicitly. This leads me to conclude that Ekwall is wrong in stating that such names are simply reflexes of the dative plural, as he consistently says in entries in the *Dictionary* (1960). Rather, he is right to derive such names from *w\_c*, but they are applications of a pair of new Middle English analogical plural-forms, strong *-es* and weak *-en*. This point is properly understood by Smith (1956: II, 261) and Wrander (1983: 14, 108–10, 127).

Where the same name shows inconsistency as regards Middle English declension-class, the weak form wins out, in accordance with southern Middle English tendencies existing before the spread of northern *-(e)s* plural forms which accelerated during the thirteenth century. They therefore fossilized at this time, i.e. they were no longer thought of or treated as semantically plural, and *Wicken* remains where it has become established. It is impossible to say for certain whether these developments are in any way associated with the variable gender of *w\_c* in Old English, i.e. *-es* forms representing old strong neuter usage and *-en* forms representing old feminine usage with the word transferred to the weak class; but I doubt whether these facts are connected in any way. ME *Wiken* would be homophonous with any fossilized Old English dative plural names of either gender, and in principle indistinguishable from them where only Middle English records of the name exist.

If *wick* might be specialized and evolve its own inflectional peculiarities, so might *wich* as a lexical word go about its own grammatical business and form a new plural where required; indeed, *wiches* is found plentifully in the record for the plural of 'saltworks' after 1600.

We can give a broad-brush account of the grammatical and lexical development of *w\_c* as follows: it was apparently even in Old English times evolving preferred applications of the singular and plural forms, and the stem-alternation arising for phonological reasons in Old English is likely to have been reinterpreted morphologically as a number-marker in Middle English, thereby reinforcing the incipient lexical split. In this, it is comparable with the emergence of the separate lexical words *dyke* and *ditch* from OE *d\_c* and *mead* and *meadow* from the Old English stem *md(w)-*. The suffixless plural form was replaced by a form appropriate to a member of one of the suffixing classes, either strong or weak apparently on a geographical basis; fossilization of one or the other form in place-names took place in or around the thirteenth century.

The phonology of the vowel of *w\_c* is problematic in its development as regards its quantity and quality, the lexical incidence of the variants and their dialectal distribution; but that is beyond the scope of the present paper.

One final suggested application of *w\_c* is 'camp, temporary encampment', a sub-type of RC-3. Ekwall (1960) proposed that Harwich (Ess) was from *here-w\_c* meaning simply '(army-)camp'. Drawing attention to a further instance of the name, Harwich Street in Whitstable (K), he rejects this interpretation in favour of 'port where the fyrd met' (1964: 17, 19), and not 'the Danish host', *pace* Reaney (1935: 339, following Bruce Dickins). That cannot be the end of the matter, because we have seen above that a sense 'port' is not to be reckoned with, and if one were, it would be specifically 'mercantile port'. I have argued elsewhere that the name of Herriard (Ha) is from OE *heregeard* 'army encampment', and may refer to a Danish installation of the ninth-century wars (Coates 1989, more fully 1997). From that perspective, I do not find it out of court to suggest, with Reaney, that the two names Harwich do indeed name Danish encampment-sites. The *Chronicle* is silent for 863, the year of the mention of Harwich (Street) in a charter (BCS 507 (S 332)) which is also militarily unrevealing, but the host was in Sheppey and Thanet in 855 and 865 respectively. However, as we note below, a late Old English gloss equates *herew\_c* with *fyrdw\_c*, and too much should therefore not be made of the special use of *here* to refer to the Danes. The history of Harwich in Essex is more obscure; it is not recorded before 1238, but there is hardly room for doubt that it is an instance of the same linguistic object as the Kentish name.

The literary evidence cannot be overlooked. *W\_c* clearly appears with the meaning 'camp', in a plural form: *wron ða w\_c on lengo .l. furlanga*

*long* (in Cockayne's *Narratiunculae*, quoted in Toller 1898) 'the camp was fifty furlongs long', and in a singular form: *P\_wæs f\_orðe w\_c/ randwigena ræst* .... 'then was a fourth camp, the resting-place of warriors' (*Exodus* (Irving 1953), lines 133–34), though the singular may be there to respect metrical conventions. Lendinara (1993: 319) draws attention to four uses of the plural form to translate *tabernaculum* 'tent' 'when more than one tent is meant', and she regards the word as evidence for a 'set equivalent' of the Latin term in poetic discourse, specifically in renderings of Biblical material; when she declares that *w\_c* 'commonly means "village"', we must understand that she must mean 'in non-English contexts', as we have noted above. Further, these instances are the only uses of the simplex term to mean 'camp'; otherwise a compound form of which *w\_c* is merely the second element is used. *Herew\_c* itself actually appears in a gloss in the singular and twice in the literary record, both times in the plural. The gloss equates *herewic* (*uel gefylco*, usually = 'troop') with *castra* and, especially interestingly, with *fyrðwic* (Wright/Wülcker 1884: I, 201, 6; 375, 5; 531, 34). Of the literary usages, one instance is a formally clear dative plural: .... *of Alexandres herew\_cum* (source not seen; quoted in Toller 1898), and the other inferred from NP-internal and verb agreement: .... *mine herew\_c syndon gebrosnode & gemolsnode* (*Blickling Homilies* (Morris 1874: 113), line 26). The place-names, on the other hand, have the 'singular' palatalized form *wich*. The form in *Genesis* appears literally to mean 'army-camp', whilst the form in *Blickling* is metaphorical—the bones of the dead rich man speak of the decay of what he had once had, and the translator, R. Morris, conjecturally renders the crucial word as 'dwellings', i.e. physical places; *brosnian* 'to crumble' at least can be used of buildings, even if the applicability of *molsnian* 'to moulder' is less clear. There is sufficient reason here to suspect that *w\_c* itself only meant 'camp' when pressed into service by the discipline of poetical form.

What is the crucial point of connection between this use of *w\_c*, namely 'camp' (even if it is just secondary), and the others discussed in detail above? A possibility is the temporary nature of a camp (which does not preclude its leaving a permanent mark on the landscape (a *w\_cst\_w*? cf. Lendinara (1993: 320)) or its regular if discontinuous occupation). It shares this feature with farms specializing in summer pasturage. A further possibility is the specialization of occupation; a camp, whilst a possibly indelible landscape feature, or place known to be set aside for a special purpose, shares with several of the other usages we have identified above

the feature of being set apart for some particular purpose from the lands of subsistence agriculture, as I characterized it earlier.

In the final pages of this article, I shall discuss compounds of *w\_c* and the possible Roman credentials of the element *w\_c* itself. Johnson (1975) claimed that *vicus* may have been sufficiently bleached of import to mean as little as 'village' in fourth-century Britain.<sup>8</sup> Evidently, we cannot express unqualified agreement with this because we have moved towards claiming a much more specific original sense for its derivative *w\_c*. Moreover Balkwill (1993) argues that numerous Old English compounds in place-names with *w\_c* as the first element, some of which I shall deal with directly below, testify to continuity between Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon administration. We can bridge the position of Johnson and the one developed here by regarding the sense of *w\_c* in place-names as having been created in Continental times at the moment of the borrowing of the word, and shared with other Germanic- and Romance-speaking peoples; from this perspective, the sense must have been introduced by the invading Anglo-Saxons and applied to what must have been called *vici* by Latin-using Romano-Britons. That would mean, of course, that there was no *semantic* continuity between the word used by Latin- and Brittonic-speakers in Britain and the English term but that there was continuity of *word-form*. If Johnson's view turns out to be indefensible, we may view the stricter sense of *w\_c* as rooted in Britain; if it proves sustainable, we have no option but to adopt the more complicated view of the word's history. At present, in my view, the balance tilts towards the more difficult 'continental' account, involving importation of the 'continental' sense.

### *W\_c-h\_m*

This compound word is one of the spectacular success stories of modern onomastics in Britain. It was suggested by Gelling (1967; in a wider context see also 1977) that it denoted significant Roman features visible in the early Anglo-Saxon landscape; she acknowledges that the amount and quality of the archaeological evidence available at the different *w\_c-h\_m* sites is variable, but it appears to be certain that the term was used by the earliest

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<sup>8</sup> The descendants Old Breton *guic* 'town part of a parish' and Welsh *gwig* 'forest' certainly suggest such a bleaching, though Cornish *guicgur* 'trader' conveys something closer to one application of the original Latin (Padel 1985: 119).

Anglo-Saxons to mean a small town, minor settlement or other place which 'stood roughly in the midst of fields and pastures assigned for its support' (Gelling 1978: 73–74), and which persisted as non-English communities into the early Anglo-Saxon period. It did not denote the same type of places as were called by the grander word *ceaster* ('walled town', surviving in place-names as *-c(h)ester* or *-caster*), and, in general, instances of *w\_c-h\_m* are not even found in the vicinity of Roman cities. (Two close to Gloucester are anomalous in this respect.) Gelling's suggestion has been fully vindicated, and the progress made with the task of filling in the details is recorded in Gelling (1988: 67–74, 245–49). There are several newly-noted instances of *Wickham* and the like, and the coincidence of these with known Roman settlement sites proves to be as striking as those established in the first years of the hypothesis.

Why did speakers of Old English find *w\_c-h\_m* to be the appropriate term to denote this kind of settlement? Latin *vicus* had an administrative meaning, as we have seen; the term was applied to places having some administrative autonomy whilst being dependent for certain purposes on a *civitas* or a fort or an imperial estate (Rivet and Smith 1979: xviii). *Vici* were thus the smallest partly self-governing places in the provinces of the Empire. In practice, some quite significant places could be so called, including the *civitates* of Wroxeter and Leicester, but the larger ones had the status of multiple *vici*. *Vicus* could also mean 'ward of a city', the common factor with other applications being administrative dependency. In colloquial later Latin it is commonly believed that it could mean simply 'village or small town'. Which of these senses is the relevant one for the term as borrowed by the Anglo-Saxons for use in *w\_c-h\_m*?

From our perspective, the most important application of the term was to non-military settlements which grew up outside the walls of forts; some of these were suburbs for ex-soldiers whilst others were trading-stations. The term seems likely to have been used also for small towns which had no direct connection with forts. As we saw in our earlier discussion of *vicus* (75–77), being extramural and being dependent were the key elements in continental *vici*. It is widely accepted that *h\_m* was one of the earliest Old English terms used in names of major economic (and hence administrative) units (Cameron 1995: 68–69, 141–43). Roman small towns and their analogues were evidently seen as a sub-type of these, and they were specified by the Latin word borrowed *in situ* or by the Germanic word already borrowed from *vicus* and imported during the mercenary or



settlement phases of Anglo-Saxon involvement with Britain. If Johnson (1975) is correct that *vicus* had by the end of the Roman empire in Britain been semantically bleached, then we must assume that the *w\_c* in the apparently significant lexical compound *w\_c-h\_m* is the word borrowed into general West Germanic and imported by the Anglo-Saxons. The element, to put it differently, does not indicate *linguistic* continuity, even though it undoubtedly indicates cultural and material continuity.

What is of greatest interest is that in this compound *w\_c* certainly exclusively denoted visible remains of Roman material culture. Is it possible that it could do so in other compounds or when used as a simplex term?

### *W\_c-st\_w*

This compound is found in place-names in Huntingdonshire and Yorkshire (West Riding). It is found as a lexical expression in Old English writings, most often as a translation-equivalent of *castra*, as may be easily verified from the entries in Bosworth-Toller. It is not yet known whether this meaning is found in place-names. The expression, like *w\_c* itself (see above, 101 and 106), is also found as a translation-equivalent of *tabernaculum* (*ða w\_cst\_wa ðara ryhtw\_sena Israh\_la`the tabernacula of the righteous of Israel*' in *Pastoral Care* (Sweet 1871: 423), line 13), though this may not be a sense distinguishable from 'encampment' if its essence is 'place of temporary dwelling', and in application to the nesting places of birds (in *The Phoenix*, line 468). The precise application of the term in place-names, and its Roman connections if any, remain unknown, but *st\_w* generally means 'place of periodic resort' in Old English, e.g. as of a saint's burial-place or a place where games were held (Gelling 1982).

*W\_c-stede* is also found but only in poetic contexts requiring an alliterating word, and it is left out of account here, the more so since it is absent from major place-names too; the rare *w\_c-steall* is also disregarded. The former appears to mean 'dwelling-place' and the latter 'encampment', but my analysis has not extended to making a critical assessment of these claims.

### *W\_c-t\_n*

Smith (1956: II, 263–64) speculated on the possibility that this compound was used of a Roman *vicus* in the case of Market Weighton (YER). He added that several of the other instances of the term might be associated

with salt-workings, and, following a suggestion by Mawer, Stenton and Houghton (1927: 289) in association with one by James Tait, speculated on a connection between Witton (and Wychbold) in Worcestershire and Droitwich, and between Witton in Cheshire and Northwich. This speculation would explain the term in relation to English industrial history; these would be *t\_ns* associated with the *w\_cs* at these places. Since saltworks were active at Droitwich and Middlewich in Roman times, as witness the place-name *Salinae* used of the small towns at both these places (Rivet and Smith 1979: 451), it is not out of the question that *vicus* was used of such installations in those earliest days. The use of *w\_c-t\_n* must be later, because of the relatively late English interest in the relevant areas, and as witness the very fact that the element *t\_n* is used, now widely accepted as being relatively late in English place-naming. Any Roman credentials of Wighton (Norfolk), Witton (Warwickshire) and Wyton (Huntingdonshire) are unknown to me at the time of writing. Mills (1993: *s.n.*) grasps the nettle for the second of these, and hazards a possible meaning 'farmstead by an earlier Romano-British settlement'. *W\_c-t\_n* is found as a lexical expression glossing *atria* in the *Paris Psalter*; Bosworth-Toller interprets this as 'courts'; Smith (1956: II, 263) inclines to a sense 'porch, vestibule'. Either of these views appears defensible, but the expression is clearly literary, and it is open to discussion how such a sense might relate to that found in place-name creation. It is found further as *wicke-tunes* in the Middle English poem *The Owl and the Nightingale* (line 730), where its precise meaning in an unhelpful context is a matter of speculation.

### ***W\_c* itself as a possible indicator of Roman sites**

The discussion in the greater part of this article will have made it clear that the majority, and probably the overwhelming majority, of *w\_c* names have no Roman archaeological significance. However, Gelling (1988: 247–48) raises the possibility that some further names with *w\_c* as first element might be so interpreted. In particular, she mentions three instances of *w\_c-ford*, namely Wickford (Essex), Whitford (Mitcham, Surrey) and Wigford (Lincoln, Lincolnshire), whose Roman-period credentials are compelling in the first and third cases and suggestive in the second. She cites archaeological references (and see now also Cameron 1985: 46 and Bassett 1989: 15–17). (She does not allude to the instance of *w\_c-ford* near Droitwich, identified by Ekwall and discussed above (95); this may imply that she accepts Ekwall's reasoning in identifying it as meaning 'ford on the

way to (Droit)Wich', as would be entirely reasonable.) The nature of the original administrative territory represented by the Wicklaw Hundreds in Suffolk has been much debated (see especially Warner 1988: 14–21), and Warner makes a very plausible case for their having been a Romano-British unit. The significance of the name Wicor `w\_c bank or shore' (mistranslated by Gover (1961: 22) as `dairy farm by the shore') adjacent to the Roman fort at Portchester (Ha) has yet to be established. Caroline Wells informs me of as yet unpublished work in which it is noted that Wickford Bridge, on the boundary of Pulborough and Parham (earlier Wiggonholt) in West Sussex, is close to `a field stuffed full of Roman remains, partially excavated at various times this century', which include a bath-house (cf. Evans 1974, and Barton 1963 for finds at Wickford Bridge itself). The name of Wiggonholt close by is in earliest medieval mentions recorded in the suggestive form *Wikeholt*, and the medial *-n-* appears for the first time thereafter. These places give substance to the view that *w\_c* as the first element in a compound word is an indicator to be taken seriously of Roman connections, even if not one of absolute reliability. Gelling mentions one further place, Wighill some two miles from Tadcaster (Yorkshire WR), a Roman small town, which has *halh* as its second element in one or other of its established senses. We have also noted Mills' suggestion (1993) that Witton in Warwickshire might be so interpreted. Balkwill (1993) notes a few other such names, and develops a sketch of a promising theory of links between *w\_c* (including its appearance in *w\_c-h\_m*) and early hundredal arrangements which this is not the place to evaluate.

**Acknowledgement:** A version of this paper was read at the SNSBI conference held at St Patrick's College, Maynooth (Co. Kildare) in April 1998, and I am grateful for helpful comments received from participants.

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'New light from old wicks: the progeny of Latin uicus', *Nomina*, 22, pp. 75-116. Exploratory excavations of Roman buildings at Cherhill and Manningford Bruce. Jan 1988. In recent years an attempt has been made at a re-appraisal of the value of the place-name from OE -ingas, -inga-, including the numerous -ingaham type, as evidence of the progress of the English settlements, while other recent work has seen the beginning of an examination of the place-names containing OE -ham and the compounds wac-ham, ham-tan, ham-stede and ham-st(e)all: the distribution of the compound wac-ham has been shown to be related very particularly to Roman roads and Roman archaeology, and it has been recognized that in Cheshire (see fig.