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The place-name *Hindrelac*

Victor Watts (pp. 3–4)

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ABBREVIATIONS OF COUNTIES AND EPNS COUNTY SURVEYS

Co	Cornwall
Ha	Hampshire
He	Herefordshire
K	Kent
La	Lancashire
Nb	Northumberland
Sf	Suffolk
So	Somerset
Wt	Isle of Wight
CPNE	<i>Cornish Place-Name Elements.</i>
EPNE	<i>English Place-Name Elements, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN BdHu	<i>The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire.</i>
PN Brk	<i>The Place-Names of Berkshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Bu	<i>The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire.</i>
PN Ca	<i>The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.</i>
PN Ch	<i>The Place-Names of Cheshire, Parts 1–5.</i>
PN Cu	<i>The Place-Names of Cumberland, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN D	<i>The Place-Names of Devon, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Db	<i>The Place-Names of Derbyshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Do	<i>The Place-Names of Dorset, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Du	<i>The Place-Names of County Durham, Part 1.</i>
PN Ess	<i>The Place-Names of Essex.</i>
PN ERY	<i>The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York.</i>
PN Gl	<i>The Place-Names of Gloucestershire, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Hrt	<i>The Place-Names of Hertfordshire.</i>
PN Le	<i>The Place-Names of Leicestershire, Parts 1–7.</i>
PN Li	<i>The Place-Names of Lincolnshire, Parts 1–7.</i>
PN Mx	<i>The Place-Names of Middlesex (apart from the City of London).</i>
PN Nf	<i>The Place-Names of Norfolk, Parts 1–3.</i>
PN Nt	<i>The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire.</i>
PN NRY	<i>The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire.</i>
PN Nth	<i>The Place-Names of Northamptonshire.</i>
PN O	<i>The Place-Names of Oxfordshire, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN R	<i>The Place-Names of Rutland.</i>
PN Sa	<i>The Place-Names of Shropshire, Parts 1–9.</i>
PN Sr	<i>The Place-Names of Surrey.</i>
PN St	<i>The Place-Names of Staffordshire, Part 1.</i>
PN Sx	<i>The Place-Names of Sussex, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN W	<i>The Place-Names of Wiltshire.</i>
PN Wa	<i>The Place-Names of Warwickshire.</i>
PN We	<i>The Place-Names of Westmorland, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Wo	<i>The Place-Names of Worcestershire.</i>
PN WRY	<i>The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Parts 1–8.</i>

The place-name *Hindrelac*

In the Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire, Cambridge 1928, p.287, because of the paucity of forms, A.H. Smith properly offered no explanation of *Hindrelac*, the earlier name for the site of Richmond. Comparative material, however, does suggest a probable etymology. The forms to be explained are *Hindrelac*, *-lache* 1086 Domesday Book, *Hindeslak* 1184. *-re-* looks like a reflex of the genitive singular inflexional ending *-ar* of certain Old Norse nouns, and the *-es-* of the 1184 form looks like a Middle English substitution for it. Old Norse *hind* 'a hind, a female deer' has as genitive singular *hindar* 'of the hind'. *-lac* is an occasional variant Domesday Book spelling for Old English *lāah* 'a wood, a clearing in a wood, a forest glade' in Northern place-names. One of the DB spellings for Helmsley in North Yorkshire is *Elmeslac* (beside *Almeslai*) 'Helm's forest clearing', and one of the DB forms for Pockley, also in YN, is *Pochelac* 'Poca's forest clearing'. Further examples of this spelling in YN place-names include Dunsley (*Dunes-*, *Doneslac* 1100-c.1115, 1136, 1314, 1333), Everley (*Everlac* 1314) and Kirkless (*Kirkelac*, *-lak* 1109-14, *et freq.* to 1314, *-lache* 1108-14, 1204, 1308) and in Westmorland occurs Bradleyfield (*Bradlake* 1301, 1349 Place-Names of Westmorland 1, 101). The form is best explained as an Anglo-Norman pronunciation of late Northumbrian *lāh*, shortened in the final syllable (Place-Names of the North Riding p.71). *Hindrelac* is thus 'the hind's clearing, the hind's glade', or 'the hind's wood'. Formally the second element could, of course, be OE *lacu* 'a stream' as in Eislack, *Eleslac* 1086 'Elli's stream' (PN of the West Riding of Yorkshire VI, 44) but there exists an exact parallel for the compound *hindar-lāah* in the first part of the lost Cheshire name *Hinderleklow* (early 13th cent.) where it is compounded with OE *clōh* 'a ravine' to produce the complex name 'ravine or valley at the hind's glade' (J. McN. Dodgson, The Place-Names of Cheshire I, 283 under Marple Wood).

Such a name, with its combination of Old Norse and Old English elements, could, like the similar example Osmotherley, YN, *Asmundrelac* 1086 'Asmundr's clearing', again with ON gen.sg. inflexional ending *-ar* and Anglo-Norman *lak* for *lāah*, scarcely have arisen before late in the pre-conquest period, implying as it does a very close association between Old Norse and Old English speakers. The element *lāah* further suggests that the site where Alan the Red, son of Eudes, Count of Penthièvre, the first Norman holder of the Honour of Richmond, was to lay the foundations of his great castle in 1071, although well enough known to have received a name, was not the location of an important or ancient habitation or settlement. The name Richmond itself is, of course, purely French; it is first recorded c.1110 in

the form *Richemunde* meaning 'strong hill' with reference to the castle site. Similar names are instanced in France from where the Yorkshire example was no doubt borrowed as an onomastic type, e.g. Richemont Charente, Manche, Seine-Maritime etc.

Victor Watts