The Battle of Brunanburh: The Lanchester Hypothesis

Paul Cavill[1]

Abstract

The location of the battle of Brunanburh in 937 remains a source of disagreement among investigators. In recent years many places have been identified as Brunanburh. This article interrogates the claims of Andrew Breeze, in several works, to have securely located the battle at Lanchester in County Durham. The methods by which Breeze reaches his conclusion are analyzed, and the arguments he cites for it are examined. Breeze's main proposals are discussed: that Brunanburh refers to the River Browney in County Durham; that the name *We(o)ndun* recorded by Symeon of Durham refers to a wen-shaped hill; and that *dinges-* in the Old English poem on the battle should be emended to *dingles-*. Alternative interpretations of the material are given, some based on hitherto unexamined evidence, including a new suggestion for the etymology of Dingley in Northamptonshire. It is argued that the Lanchester hypothesis does not stand linguistic and critical analysis.

Keywords Battle of Brunanburh 937 · Lanchester · River Browney · *We(o)ndun* · Dingley

Introduction

The battle of Brunanburh was fought in 937. West Saxons and Mercians under King Athelstan and his brother Edmund decisively defeated the armies of King Constantine of Alba, King Anlaf of Dublin and Owain of Strathclyde. Some of the details of the battle are obscure and different writers add information to the tradition which may or may not be reliable, for example, from local memory or lost accounts. A text that has caused debate over the years is John of Worcester's record that the Scandinavian fleet from Dublin landed in the Humber (Darlington and McGurk, 1995: II, 392–3,

✉ Paul Cavill
     paul.cavill1@nottingham.ac.uk

1   School of English, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD Nottingham, UK

sub anno 959 [937]). John is the first to add a place of landing for the fleet, and is followed by several medieval writers. This added information has led to controversy, because some recent writers argue that the battle must therefore have taken place in Yorkshire or on the north-east coast of England, notably Wood (2013).[1] Others reject John's information and suggest that the battle might have taken place elsewhere (Downham, 2021; Livingston, 2021): suggested sites have been listed by Hill (2004: 135–60) and Cockburn (1931).

Sources and Method

The question of the site of the battle of Brunanburh continues to fascinate writers and investigators of all kinds. The battle itself has been of interest for centuries, and well over fifty medieval poets and historians mention, or narrate, or discuss it. Most of these medieval sources have been collected, edited, translated and discussed in Michael Livingston's *Casebook* (Livingston, 2011).[2] Some find the welter of sources daunting. Andrew Breeze, whose work is the focus of discussion in this article, makes no reference to the *Casebook*. A very positive review of Breeze's book *British battles* notes the omission as a 'mystery', but then rehearses Breeze's identification of Lanchester as the site of the battle and remarks, 'as a potential guide for archaeological exploration, and as proof of method, it beats the heck out of the sort of conclusion that Cavill and Harding can reach, which is roughly that a precise location near Bromborough remains, and is always likely to remain, undeterminable' (Morillo, 2021).

   Some impatience with the detail of the sources and lengthy discussion of them is understandable. But the reviewer has not picked up from Breeze that the Old English poem, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, the most reliable source for the battle, gives such significant and uncontroversial information as that the battle took place *ymbe brunanburh* 'around Brunanburh' (5a, naturally making a precise location difficult), that the English pursued the fleeing forces *ondlongne dæg* 'for the whole day' (21a, so it must have spread over a wide area), that Anlaf fled from the battle by sea in a ship (32a–6, so not from Lanchester or anywhere near it, as it is seventeen miles from the nearest coast; the Wear at Durham is over seven miles away), and much more (Campbell, 1938: cited by line-number of the edited text of the poem). These and similar details are crucial to the interpretation of the site of the battle.

   Breeze has made strong and repeated assertions about Brunanburh. Without qualification, he identifies the battle as having taken place at Lanchester in County Durham. The article which launched this identification most seriously was '*Brunanburh* located' (Breeze, 2018a), a title which leaves the reader in no doubt about the conclusion proposed. The assertions are repeated in other works (Breeze, 2016, 2018b:

---

[1] For further discussion of this theory, see Downham (2021: 15–32), and of this theory and the evidence of John of Worcester, Cavill (2022a).

[2] In what follows, where the edited and translated texts in the *Casebook* are referred to, the reference is to Livingston (2011); the 'Essays on the sources' which make up the second half of the *Casebook* are referred to the authors, e.g. Bollard & Haycock (2011).

89–90, under the River Went, 2021: 121–127). The article is a selective history of Brunanburh criticism with Breeze's pithy judgements added: a 'move in the wrong direction' (2018a: 63), 'We shall turn the argument upside down' (2018a: 66), 'misplaced enthusiasm', 'misplaced confidence' (2018a: 69), 'The interpretation is out of the question' (2018a: 70), 'This is false' (2018a: 72), 'far-fetched' (2018a: 74) and much more. The criterion of evaluation is whether or not the writers agree with Breeze's view about where Brunanburh took place: so, for example, Plummer's scholarship 'had an unfortunate influence on all later writers' (2018a: 62), because he thought John of Worcester was mistaken and a west-coast location was more plausible (Plummer, 1952: II, 139–140).[3]

The confidence of the assertions is not in doubt, but Breeze chooses largely to ignore the detail of the evidence. He discusses selected words of Latin, Welsh, Old or Middle English, and dismisses arguments contrary to his own rather than offer cogent criticism. Breeze picks out the names (*Brunanburh*, *dinges mere*) from the Old English poem on the battle, but does not discuss its evidence except to correct Longfellow's translation (2018a: 72). Below I will examine Breeze's arguments and explore the evidence which Breeze does not use. It will become evident that Breeze's arguments do not hold up under scrutiny. It will also become evident that scholars in the *Casebook* (Livingston, 2011) have articulated arguments and discussed the evidence relating to a case for Bromborough on the Wirral as the site of Brunanburh. The point of this article, however, is not to advance that specific case in a direct fashion, but simply to analyze the proposal advanced by Breeze for Lanchester.

Welsh and Latin

Breeze opens his article, '*Brunanburh* located' thus, with reference to an entry in the *Annales Cambriae*:

> We begin not with the English poem but a Welsh annal, which (for the year 938) has *Bellum Brune*, where *bellum* is 'battle'. This might seem bald and unhelpful. Yet it shows that the form is a toponym, not a personal name. We may compare Old Welsh *Gueit Conguoy* for the year 880, where *gueit* is also 'battle' and *Conguoy* is the River Conway of North Wales. So we can be certain that *Brune* and *Brunanburh* are not called after some Anglo-Saxon, as has been thought. (2018a: 61)

The initial puzzle as to who might have thought *Brune* was a personal name here, and how these Latin and Welsh words prove anything quite so certain about the Anglo-

---

[3] The passage is referred to in Breeze (2016: 139), with the comment 'one fears that Plummer's confidence here was unwarranted'.

Saxon name Brunanburh is partly explained a few pages later.[4] Breeze comments on the phrase *ymlad y Brune* in 'native chronicles' (2018a: 64),[5]

> The *y* before *Brune* shows the form was in later Welsh chronicles unrecognized as a hydronym, because Welsh river-names (unlike English ones) appear without the definite article. Even Welsh grammar thus supports a river-side location for the English victory.

This latter argument is repeated later (2018a: 70):

> In a later chronicle in Welsh it is 'The Battle of (the) *Brune*,' where the parenthesis reflects one version of the text. Because hydronyms in Welsh do not have the article, the article proves that *Brune* was no longer perceived as a river-name.

Breeze's overall argument is that these entries and the Old English name Brunanburh refer to the River Browney in County Durham. But a moment's reflection will reveal this argument from Welsh sources to be quite extraordinary and contradictory. The *Annales Cambriae* may be a Welsh chronicle, as its modern title suggests, but it is written in Latin.[6] Dumville lists eight or (if one counts the word *in* as Welsh) nine Welsh words apart from personal and place-names in the text from which *Bellum Brune* is taken (2002: 23).[7] The lack of the Welsh definite article in a Latin annal proves nothing, certainly not that *Brune* was a river name. In fact, the Welsh article *y* is not recorded at all in the A text of the *Annales Cambriae* 682–954, London, British Library, MS Harley 3859, fol. 190r–193r, the only text to include the entry for 937 *Bellum Brune*.

Two of the Welsh terms are the battle words *gueit* and *cat* and these occur frequently in the *Annales Cambriae* text, always without a definite article: *Gueith Gart Mailauc* 722, *Cat Pencon* 722, *Guei[th] Mocetauc* 750, *Gueith Hirford* 760, *Gueith Cetill* 844, *Gueit Finnant* 848, *Cat Brinonnen* 870, *Gueith Ban\n/guolu* 874, *Gueith diu Sul in Mon* 877, *Gueith Dinmeir* 906, *Gueith Dina\s/ Neguid* 921. Not all of these places have been identified, but several demonstrably are not references to rivers: *Hirford* 760 is probably Hereford and *Cat Brionnen* refers to the battle of Ashdown (Dumville, 2002); 'Sunday's battle in Anglesey' 877 similarly does not contain a river name. Elements such as *garth* 'ridge, hill', and *dinas* 'fort' likewise are obviously not river names (Owen & Morgan, 2007). Indeed, Dumville translates *Gueit Conguoy*,

---

[4] Though the puzzle remains about whether one can make any judgement at all about the form and meaning of the name Brunanburh on the basis of these two Latin words.

[5] Breeze does not name the source, *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*: see below for the *Casebook* (Livingston, 2011) discussion. The Welsh sources used here, *Brut y Tywysogion* and *Brenhinoedd y Saeson* are from Dumville (2005), respectively texts R and S.

[6] The relevant entry is edited and translated as Text 6 in the *Casebook* (Livingston, 2011: 48–49, and 182–183). The best manuscripts are edited and translated in Dumville (2002), and are cited by year from his edition.

[7] Four of these (three exclusively) are in a battle name *Gueith diu Sul in Mon* 877 '"Sunday's Battle" in Anglesey'.

Breeze's chosen comparandum for *Bellum Brune* as containing a river name, as 'The battle of Conwy', apparently the place rather than the river (2002: 12).[8]

The presence of the definite article in reference to the battle in the *Brenhinoedd y Saeson* is emphatically repeated by Breeze to demonstrate that *Brune* was not (then) perceived as a river name. But by some prestidigitation it therefore 'supports' the notion that *Brune* actually *was* a river name, because a correct construction of the element was in this case 'unrecognized'. The evidence taken at face value and sensibly interpreted shows the very opposite of what Breeze claims. Welsh grammar, insofar as it applies to the *Annales Cambriae* at all, shows that there is no specific reason to suppose that *Brune* was a river name; and where Welsh grammar clearly applies in the *Brenhineodd y Saeson*, it shows that *Brune* was emphatically not a river name.

Breeze puts a great deal of emphasis on these Welsh sources as determining the meaning of the Old English *Brunanburh*. The extant Welsh sources are presented, translated and discussed in the *Casebook* by John Bollard and Marged Haycock (Livingston, 2011: 88–89, 216–219, Bollard & Haycock 2011: 245–268). They include, in Bollard's and Haycock's texts and translations: *Ac y bu ryfel Brun* 'And there was the battle of Brun' in the late thirteenth-century *Brut y Tywysogion* (Livingston, 2011: 88–89);[9] and *y bu ymlad y Brune* 'There was the battle of Brune' in the early thirteenth-century *Brenhinoedd y Saeson* has already been discussed. Both of these texts are chronicles, and the manuscript dating anchors the references to the battle of Brunanburh.[10]

There are other possible examples that are rather obscure and may or may not refer to the battle. These are the references to **kattybrunawc* 'the battle for the settlement in Brun's region' in the late tenth-century Welsh *Glaswawt Taliessin* (Livingston, 2011: 48–49);[11] and *Cad Dybrunawc* 'the battle of Brunanburh(?)' of the late twelfth-century *Canu y Dewi* (Livingston, 2011: 66–67). The consensus here is that this *brun-* might have referred to the English *Brunanburh*; the element is not obviously a meaningful Celtic term. *Brun* and -*brun-* might have been toponymical in these non-chronicle texts, to be sure, as they appear to be in the Welsh chronicle texts. But they might also have been reflexes of a personal name. *Brun(e)* was not obviously a river name in the chronicle texts, and there is no particular reason to suppose it was a river name in the non-chronicle texts.

A question arises as to why there was any Welsh interest in this battle at all. Numerous battles are recorded in the text of *Annales Cambriae 682–954*, but the only ones that took place on English soil, apart from *Bellum Brune*, were the battle of Hereford in 760 between the English and the Welsh, not recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and the battle of *Brinnonen* or Ashdown in 870. In the one, the

---

[8] It is not disputed that the town is named from the River Conwy, but the distinction between place-name and river name is important.

[9] Breeze never gives the river name without the final -*e*, despite its absence in this text (and many others, as demonstrated below).

[10] The dating is a little astray: the *Brenhinoedd y Saeson* entry gives the date 'Anno. ix^c.xxxv.', that is, '935' (Dumville, 2005: 39).

[11] See the discussion and suggested emendations in Bollard & Haycock (2011: 265–6); Breeze glosses both this and the expression from *Canu y Dewi* as 'battle of the Browneian house' without comment other than 'a pedantic coinage' (2018a: 62–63).

Welsh fought the English in the engagement; after the other, Alfred became king, and Asser, his Welsh bishop from St David's and biographer, was very interested in the battle.[12] Neither of these battles is recorded in the C text of the *Annales*, London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A. i, fol. 138r–155r; and indeed *Bellum Brune* is not recorded in the C text, or the B text, London, National Archives, MS E.164/1, pp. 2–26 either. If, as Breeze believes, Brunanburh took place in County Durham, it seems extraordinary that the Welsh chroniclers should show any interest at all since the Welsh were neither involved, nor, on this account, anywhere near the place of engagement. A site for the battle close to Wales and within the orbit of Welsh influence and concern, such as the Wirral, is very much more plausible simply on the basis of proximity and immediacy.[13]

The Community of St Cuthbert

Medieval English sources relating to north-east England are available. Lanchester is about seven or eight miles distant from Chester-le-Street where the community of St Cuthbert was based in 937, and on the boundary of its enormous territories, the Roman road Dere Street. One of the community's histories, the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, gives lavish details of King Athelstan's visit to the monastery in 934, as he made his way north to ravage Scotland, including a record of a charter Athelstan granted the community (South, 2002: 64–67, ch. 26–27). The course of the River Browney runs from the west of modern Consett, through Lanchester, through the ancient lands of the community of St Cuthbert towards Durham, where it joins the Wear. If the battle of Brunanburh took place anywhere near the Browney it would have been of vital interest to the community. But no mention is made of Brunanburh in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*.[14] The *Cronica monasterii Dunelmensis* in the Red Book of Durham, a probably eleventh-century record surviving in a manuscript from the early fifteenth century, records Athelstan's visit in 935 (sic) on the way to Scotland, and his benefactions to the community and prayers to St Cuthbert, but nothing of a battle in 937 (Craster, 1925: 525–526).[15] Similarly, the *Annales Lindisfarnenses et Dunelmenses*, possibly from the early twelfth century, record Athelstan's

---

[12] As is noted in Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker (1965: 47, n. 1), 'Asser has a fuller account of this battle than he could have got from the Chronicle'. The relevant chapters are 37–40 in *Asser's Life of King Alfred* (Stevenson, 1959). Alongside information about Alfred's brother attending Mass before the battle, Asser also claimed to have seen the thorn tree around which the fighting centred with his own eyes, *spinosa … quam nos ipsi nostris propriis oculis vidimus* (ch. 39, Stevenson: 30).

[13] To be noted outside the years of Dumville's edition is also the famous battle of Chester, described by Bede: 613 *Gueith Caer Legion*; and the Mount Badon battles of 516 and 665, in which Welsh forces were involved (Williams ab Ithel, 1860).

[14] Breeze (2016: 139) gives the date of the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, formerly widely accepted, as 'before 946'. South discusses the possibilities, and thinks it likely that most of the text could have been produced in the tenth century, though reaching its final form in the eleventh (2002: 25–36). If the work, or the relevant parts of it, were composed within nine years of the climactic battle of Brunanburh, and Athelstan visited the community at that time, as Breeze supposes, the failure of any explicit record or mention is extraordinary.

[15] For the dating of the *Cronica*, see also Rollason (1998: 9).

expedition to Scotland in 924 (sic.), his acquisition of *totius Angliae monarchiam* 'rule over all England', and his death in 939, but again, no Brunanburh (Levison, 1961: 485).[16]

When we turn to the other indispensable source for the history of the community of St Cuthbert, Symeon of Durham's own work, we find that Symeon is reduced to adopting the rather implausible account of the 615 enemy ships that came to the battle also found in the *Historia regum* (Arnold, 1885: II, 93, § 83) into his history, the *Libellus de exordio* (Rollason, 2000: 138–139, ii. 18).[17] Symeon adds that Athelstan *sancti Cuthberti patrocino confisus* 'trusted in the protection of St Cuthbert' for the battle, and gives the name of the place as *Weondun* as in the *Historia regum*, but adds, *quod alio nomine Aet Brunnanwerc uel Brunnanbyrig appellatur* '*Weondun* which is called by another name *Æt Brunnanwerc* or *Brunnanbyrig*'. He gives no details either of the fighting, or of anything that would locate the battle in the community's territory (or anywhere else, beyond the idea that he *reges illos de regno suo propulit* 'drove those kings from his kingdom').[18]

Athelstan carefully cultivated relations with the community of St Cuthbert according to the local records. Symeon records that *ante illum nullus regum ecclesiam sancti Cuthberti tantum dilexit* 'no king before [Athelstan] held the church of St Cuthbert in so much affection' (Rollason, 2000: 134, ii. 17). Given the efforts made by Athelstan to maintain the friendship between the West Saxon kings and the monks, valuable to both parties, this is plausible. It is unimaginable that Athelstan would not have visited the community before or after the battle of Brunanburh if it took place seven or eight miles away from the community's base, but no visit in 937 is recorded. Breeze, aware of this difficulty, suggests that Athelstan really did visit, and that the *Life of St Cuthbert* in prose and verse mentioned in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, generally identified as Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 183, which the charter says he gave to the community, is the 'outward and visible sign' of the visit. The argument hangs on the fact that the episcopal lists in the manuscript include Ælfheah of Winchester and Æthelgar of Crediton, who did not accede to their sees until after Athelstan had departed on his Scottish expedition, so the book could not have been given to the community in 934, as has been supposed. Breeze's alternative view is that the book was given after the victory at Brunanburh 'when Athelstan will have been in the Chester-le-Street area', having been prepared as 'propaganda' in the summer of 937 (2016: 144–145).[19] Whatever one might make of Breeze's suggestions about the

---

[16] For the dating of the *Annales*, see also Rollason (1998: 10), and references there.

[17] The *Historia regum* is currently being re-edited: Michael Lapidge has published the 'Annals 888–957' as an appendix in *Byrhtferth of Ramsey Historia regum* (2022: 171–82), and David Rollason's edition of the rest of the manuscript following this will be published as *Historia de regibus Anglorum et Dacorum*, the title of the work in the manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 139, see Rollason (2016: 95–111).

[18] See further the discussion of the name *Weondun* below.

[19] The propaganda value might be thought to be diminished by the lack of explicit reference to Athelstan and the battle. Athelstan was not at all shy of proclaiming his glory, as the Old English poem and the Latin praise poetry of his reign demonstrate: see Cavill (2022b). Rollason (1995) raises interesting questions about the picture on fol. 1v of Corpus Christi MS 183, commonly accepted as Athelstan giving the book to Cuthbert. He points out that the king appears to be reading the book rather than giving it, and suggests that it might actually reflect the king's devotion to Cuthbert rather than being a record of a donation.

book, the silence of the narrative and annalistic sources about a triumphal royal visit in 937 is inexplicable if it actually happened.[20]

The above is sufficient to indicate that there are grounds to be cautious about accepting Breeze's interpretations of the context of Brunanburh, no matter how forcefully they are asserted. The Welsh sources give no support to the idea that *Brune*, *-brun-* or *Brun* was the river name Browney or necessarily a river name at all. The relative interest shown by the Welsh sources in the battle of Brunanburh, and the contrasting lack of interest and information about Brunanburh in the English sources local to Lanchester and the Browney, suggest very strongly that the battle did not take place in the north-east. The substantive elements of Breeze's argument will now be considered with a view to assessing their reliability.

Brunanburh

Breeze repeatedly identifies the River Browney in County Durham as the referent of the first element of Brunanburh. He quotes Bosworth's suggestion (Bosworth, 1898: 129) of 'a plain between the Rivers Wear and Browney [*Brunan ea*]', without acknowledging that Bosworth's Old English gloss of the name Browney, **Brunan ea*, does not exist in any extant text (2018a: 61). It is not an extant spelling, but a linguistic justification for the identification Bosworth makes. Breeze only quotes a form *Brune* for the river name, and never gives a direct source for that: '[t]he Browney near Durham was once called *Brune*, and there may have been others', he remarks (2018a: 63), attributing this idea to Campbell. *Brune* 'reproduces an Old English weak declension nominative', he informs the reader at a later stage (2018a: 70). He gives no reference for the spelling of the name, and only gives a secondary source in 'Names of Yorkshire's rivers' (Breeze, 2018b: 70), where he cites as support for the name *Brune* Ekwall's *Concise Oxford dictionary of English place-names* (Ekwall, 1960).[21]

The implication of this kind of assertion is that it is an obvious and settled fact that the Browney always appears as *Brune* in the sources and that this form represents a weak nominative Old English noun. This would in turn give the inflected genitive form *Brunan-* in Brunanburh and related names. Standard onomastic sources indicate, however, that the name of the Browney was more frequently *Brun*, with a second element, deriving from OE *ēa* 'river', later added. Ekwall in his *Dictionary*, quoting forms '*Brune* c 1190, *Brun* c 1195 Finchale', gives 'OE *Brūn* or *Brūne* "the brown one" with later addition of *-ey*, which may be OE *ēa* "river"' (1960: 70).

---

[20] Keynes (1985: 183) observes that the list of donations in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* was very likely a conflation of an inscription in one of the gospel-books given by Athelstan, referred to in *hunc textum euangeliorum* 'this gospel-book', and a 'general list of Athelstan's gifts to the community' and thus 'falsely linked to the supposed events of 934'. See also South (2002: 65 n. 15 and 108–9). As Keynes remarks, 'a gift to a religious house would certainly not require a visit to that house, so the options [as to when it was given] remain wide open' (1985: 184).

[21] Breeze gives references in his article to Ekwall, p. 70 (spellings for the River Browney as above), 135 (no relevant entry), and 285 (spellings for Lanchester), but gives no supporting evidence or discussion of the forms.

Ekwall's standard work on river names gives a range of forms, and glosses 'OE *Brūn* or *Brūne* (fem) "the brown one"' (1928: 55). Victor Watts glosses Browney as '"The brown one". OE **brūn** + **ēa** "river"' (Watts, 2002: 19).

There is no known source in the Old English vernacular containing the name. This means we are dependent on Latin sources, mainly post-Conquest charters, for spellings of the river name, in some of which it appears as *Brune*. Medieval writers had some difficulties with rendering the names of rivers in England in Latin and took different approaches. Bede, for example, tended to give Latin inflections to his river names: so the Thames has various forms *ad flumen Tamensim* (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969: 22, (i) 2), *Tamense fluuio* (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969: 142, (ii) 3), *Tamensis* (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969: 254, iv. 5); the Humber has forms *Humbri fluminis* (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969: 50, (i) 15), *Humbrae fluuio* (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969: 148, (ii) 5); and the Wear has *fluminis Uiuri* (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969: 388, iv. 18).[22] Twelfth-century writers vary in their practice. William of Malmesbury writes of *Wirae amnis* (Winterbottom and Thomson, 2007: 494, I, iv. 186.7).[23] For the Wear and the nearby Tyne, Symeon of Durham gives *inter Weor et Tine* (Rollason, 2000: 124, ii. 13). John of Worcester regularized river names with the exception of the Thames, giving the *-e* ending without inflectional variation, *iuxta flumen ... Tine* (Darlington and McGurk, 1995: 304, II, 875), *Tine fluminis* (Darlington and McGurk, 1995: 602, II, 1066).[24]

It is difficult to be sure what the significance of the inflection on the river name might be. Ekwall in *English River-Names* and elsewhere posited that *Brune* might be an Old English feminine (weak) noun, and Breeze follows this interpretation without question and without reference to the predominant strong (and probably masculine) forms recorded as *Brun*.[25] To arrive at any reliable conclusion about this name, we have to assess the early evidence, presented below. The main sources are charters of Finchale Priory (Raine, 1838, cited as Finchale, by date and page number), the survey of Durham estates, the *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis* (Greenwell, 1872, cited as FPD, by date and page number), and the *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (Maxwell Lyte et al., 1906, 1912, cited as CCR, by volume and page number). There is an interesting pattern of usage in the early sources to be noted.

(a) *ultra aquam de Wer usque ad aquam de Brun* (12th century, FPD lv)
[The religious house of *Sancta Maria*] *de Novo Loco super Brun* (c.1195 and frequently, Finchale 9, 10, 11, 12, 15)
usque in Brun, et ita ascendendo de Brun (1268 FPD 187)
ab aqua de Brun; *usque in aquam de Brun* (1268 FPD 188)

---

[22] Cited from Colgave and Mynors by page number, book and chapter number.

[23] Cited from Winterbottom and Thomson, by page number, volume, book, chapter, and section.

[24] Cited from Darlington and McGurk, by page number, volume and year. For a list of invading armies landing in the mouths of rivers in John's pre-Conquest history, all (except the Thames) with names of rivers with the generic *-e* whatever the grammatical environment, see now Cavill (2022a).

[25] For example, though he quotes Bosworth (1898), as noted above, he does not include the spelling *Brun* also noted by the dictionary.

ex australi parte aquæ de Brun ... usque in aquam de Brun (1270 CCR II: 141,
1300 FPD 187)
ultra aquam de Wer' usque ad aquam de Brun (1195 (1335) CCR IV: 323)

(b) *ex occidentali parte Brune fluminis ... in ipsum fluvium Brune*; *ex altera parte
predicti fluminis Bruni* (c.1190 Finchale 8–9)

(c) *ab aqua de Were ... iterum in aquam de Brune* (c.1300 FPD 192)
*ab aqua de Were usque ad aquam de Brune; ultra aquam de Brune ... ultra
aquam de Brune* (14th century, FPD 193–194).

The first group of spellings, (a), clearly indicates that the river name was *Brun*, as
Watts (and Ekwall less decisively) proposed. The second group (b) shows how some
Latin writers instinctively Latinized the morphology of the name, without necessarily
being sure which class of noun (or adjective) it might have belonged to. Alternatively,
these forms in (b) are examples of *Brun* with a Latinized or reduced English form of
ēa 'river'. The third and later group, (c), gives the name in the form *Brune*, possibly
here an ablative of the third declension, following the prepositions *de* and *in*, but
possibly a generalized ending of no grammatical significance. In the first group of
spellings, *Wer* 'the River Wear', like *Brun*, does not show a Latin inflection; but the
same writers who add the *-e* to *Brune* also add it to the Wear, as in *Were*, when it is
syntactically appropriate in (c).[26]

What these groups of spellings indicate, rationally interpreted, is categorically not
the presence of a weak Old English noun in the nominative case. It is entirely to be
doubted that twelfth-, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century charter scribes in County
Durham could have reconstructed the morphology of such an Old English noun or
adjective if they had wanted to. The spellings of the River Browney in the early
sources indicate that the river name was *Brun*, occasionally Latinized and given a
Latin or generalized inflection. In Old English, which is understood to be the language
in which the river was named, *Brun* as a noun is a strong masculine with a genitive
singular in *-es*, appearing in such names as Brownsall Hundred, Dorset (*Bruneselle*
c.1086, *Brūn* in the genitive *Brunes+hyll* 'hill', Mills 1989: 275–276),[27] and *Brune-
shurst*, Wybunbury Cheshire (*Bruneshurst* 1275, *Brūn* in the genitive *Brunes+hyrst*
'wooded hill', Dodgson 1971: 53–54).[28] It cannot therefore have given the weak
oblique form *Brunan-* even if a *burh* were to be associated with it. This evidence in
itself is sufficient to discredit Breeze's claim that Brunanburh refers to the Browney:
Breeze's whole case rests on the supposition that the name of the Browney was a
weak feminine Old English *Brune*, with an oblique inflection *Brunan*, and on the
evidence presented above, the claim cannot be substantiated.

---

[26] See Ekwall (1928: 441), for the various spellings of the name Wear.

[27] Mills notes that the first element here could be either the personal name *Brūn* or the adjective *brūn*
'brown' used as a hill-name.

[28] Briggs (2021: 69) lists the many English place-names thought to have the personal name *Brūn* as the
specific.

Lanchester

Breeze's argument, based on the supposition that *Brunan-* refers to the River Browney, then identifies the *burh* as Lanchester. Breeze gives little by way of argument for the identification:

> The Anglo-Saxons often called a Roman fort a *burh. …* The stronghold being situated directly north of the Browney, there is no objection to taking it as *Brunanburh* or *Brunanwerc* [sic.] 'fort of the Browney, fortification of the Browney', and the hill on which it crouches as *Brunandune* 'hill of the Browney.' If it is objected that the form is nowhere elsewhere recorded, we may remember that study of County Durham's early place-names is problematic. There are few early charters, and the region is absent from Domesday Book. (2018a: 73)

Breeze's identification of the Roman fort at Lanchester with that *burh* depends on a complete lack of supporting evidence, as he acknowledges. The same documents that identify the Browney also identify *Langcestre* 1248 FPD 186, *Langchestre* c.1300 FPD 192, and we might have expected some nod in the direction of the Brunanburh name if it derived from the river name and was current here. It is true, as Breeze claims, that the Anglo-Saxons sometimes 'called a Roman fort a *burh*', but it is doubtful that this one was ever so called. The Roman fort was *Longovicium*, and the earliest references in vernacular sources are from the middle of the twelfth century, *Langescestre*, *Langchestre*. The second element of the name is OE *cæster* 'Roman fort', and the first element is likely to be a borrowing of British *longo-* 'ship' assimilated to Old English *lang* 'long' (Watts, 2004: 357–358).

Despite the late forms, it seems probable that there is here a tradition of naming that dates to Anglo-Saxon times. Parallel processes of borrowing of British elements occur in the names Winchester (which borrows *Venta*), Wroxeter (which borrows *Virico*), Leicester (which borrows *Legore*) and others (Parsons & Styles, 2000: 158–162). There are examples where a *cæster* name from Bede is replaced by a *burh* name: *Tiouuulfingacæstir* which became Littleborough, Nottinghamshire; and *Reptacæstir* which became Richborough, Kent (Parsons & Styles, 2000: 159). In both these cases, however, it was the *burh* name that survived, not the *ceaster* one. It is unwise to be dogmatic, but the Anglo-Saxons most likely called the Roman fort on the Browney something like 'Lanchester', and no evidence exists to suggest that they called it *Brunanburh*.

We(o)ndun

Mention has already been made of the information borrowed by Symeon of Durham from the source of the *Historia regum* (Arnold, 1885: 93, II, § 83), which gives alternative names for the battle:

> Ethelstanus rex apud Wendune pugnavit, regemque Onlafum cum dc. et xv. navibus, Constantinum quoque regem Scottorum et regem Cumbrorum, cum

omni eorum multitudine in fugam vertit. (King Athelstan fought at *Wendun* and put to flight King Onlaf with 615 ships, and Constantine, king of the Scots, and the king of the Cumbrians and all their host.)[29]

Symeon writes:

apud Weondune, quod alio nomine Aet Brunnanwerc uel Brunnanbyrig appellatur, pugnauit contra Onlaf Guthredi quondam regis filium, qui sexcenti et quindecim nauibus aduenerat, secum habens contra Aethelstanum auxilia regum prefatorum scilicet Scottorum et Cumbrorum. (at *Weondun* which is called by another name *Æt Brunnanwerc* or *Brunnanbyrig*, he fought against Olaf, son of the former king Guthred, who had come against Æthelstan with 615 ships and had with him the help of the aforesaid kings, that is of the Scots and the Cumbrians. (Rollason, 2000: 138–139))

Wendun is the form found in the *Historia regum*; Symeon adjusts the spelling to *Weondun*. The names share the element *dūn* 'low rounded hill' with a name given in Æthelweard's chronicle (Campbell, 1962) as *Brunandun*. Breeze identifies Æthelweard's hill name as that in the northern texts, and goes on to explain the difference in spelling of the first element between the *Historia regum* and Symeon as follows:

[In] Symeon of Durham's *Weondune* or *Wendun*, … the first element will be Old English *wenn* 'tumour,' used as a hill-name … Mutation of *e* to *-eo-*, which in Old Mercian and Old Northumbrian is general before *u* in a following syllable (if here with intervocalic grouping of consonants), will be due to the back vowel of *dun*. (2018a: 73)

Breeze gives a reference to Campbell's *Grammar* to explain the process of vowel mutation (Campbell, 1959: § 639). Mutation of this kind is 'general' in the sense that it can occur with most single consonants, not in the sense that it occurs in every syllable with a back vowel following. Both Campbell (1959: § 639) and Hogg (1992a: §§ 103–112, at §§ 5. 105 (1)) note that back-mutation is rare with a geminate (double consonant, here *-nn-*) or a consonant cluster, and there is no apparent example of this umlaut or back-mutation with a geminate and a further consonant (here *-nn-d-*) such as Breeze posits.[30] Moreover, back-mutation is triggered by back-vowels in multisyllabic simplex or affixed words, and by morphological markers: so we have *woruld > weoruld* 'world', *cweðað > cweoðað* 'they say'. That is to say, it occurs through regular, repeated conjunction of sounds in speech, or as Hogg puts it, 'breaking and back mutation comprise an instance of the repetitive character over time of many

---

[29] Translation mine.

[30] Hogg (1992a) is cited by section number. Hogg comments, § 5.105 (1): 'In W[est] S[axon] the back umlaut of */e/ > /ĕo/ is relatively infrequent even with an intervening labial or liquid'; if *Weondun* should be considered the reflex of a Northumbrian or Mercian name, such umlaut is also rare, see Hogg (1992a) § 5.44, § 5.105 (3).

sound change types' (Hogg, 1992b: 116). It has yet to be demonstrated that back-mutation can be triggered by the vowels in nonce-compounds such as *wenn-dūn (of which no known example survives even unmutated), and neither published grammar has an example of this postulated process.[31]

The meaning of *We(o)ndun* is difficult to pin down. Neither Breeze's intriguing suggestion, nor Wood's view that it refers to Went Hill in south Yorkshire (2013: 155–158) carry conviction with regard to the phonology and spellings of the forms.[32] Smith's proposal that the specific is the weak oblique adjective *wēon* 'holy' (1956: II, 254) was adopted by Cavill in the *Casebook* (Cavill, 2011: 348) and the existence of a minor name apparently containing the element in the vicinity of Bromborough may give support to the general thrust of the *Casebook* that Brunanburh may be identified with Bromborough on the Wirral. Richard Coates observed that Rice Wood, the *Welondrys* (1357 'scrubland of the shrine', OE *wēoh*, *land* and *hrīs*) near Bromborough Court House, could be a reference to land associated with an earlier shrine (Coates, 1998: 288–289).

Breeze identifies 'the hill on which [the fort at Lanchester] crouches' with *Brunandun* 'hill of the Browney', and thence with the *We(o)ndun* of the *Historia regum* and Symeon of Durham. He then interprets *We(o)ndun* as *wenn-dūn* 'hill shaped like a tumour'. However, the river name *Brun* cannot give a form *Brunandun*; and back mutation almost certainly did not occur in the posited form *wenn-dūn and cannot therefore explain a spelling *Weondun*. There is, besides, no evidence given to support the existence of a name *We(o)ndun* or the like, or *Brunandun* or the like, in the vicinity of Lanchester.

Dingesmere

The interpretation of *dingesmere* offered in Cavill et al. (2004) as 'mere or wetland of the Thing', Old English or Old Norse *þing* 'assembly' with OE *mere* 'wetland', relating probably to an area on the English side of the Dee estuary, is dismissed by Breeze. He writes 'An attempt has been made to relate *Dinges mere* to the Wirral village of Thingwall …, with the Irish Sea or Mersey estuary being taken as the "sea of the thing or legal gathering," despite the difficulties of phonology and sense' (2018a: 70). He later calls the argument 'far-fetched' (2018a: 74). He does not specify in what particulars these supposed difficulties of phonology and sense may reside, or why even the garbled account he gives of the proposal is 'far-fetched'.

The conundrum of the meaning of *dinges mere* can be solved, he suggests, by emending *dinge-* to *dingle*, as in the once-attested Middle English compound *sea-dingle*.

---

[31] Breeze's examples do not include a place-name deriving from *wenn-dun 'tumour-shaped hill': Wendens Ambo in Essex is a *denu* 'valley' name. Moreover, Watts (2004), under the respective names, indicates uncertainty whether *wenn* is the specific in all three of the suggested names. Wembury Devon may be from OE *wægn* 'wagon'; Wendens Ambo may be from *wende* 'a bend'; and Wenham Suffolk may be from *wynne* 'pasture'.

[32] An article on Wood's hypotheses on Burghwallis and Went Hill is in preparation by the present writer.

There is a far simpler etymology, suggested by the poem's 'over deep water' immediately after [the phrase *on dinges mere*]. *The Battle of Brunanburh* is notorious for tautology, and so here. We can therefore emend to *on dingles mere* 'into the sea of the dingle, onto the sea of the abyss.' It will be a unique Old English attestation of the noun giving Middle and Modern English *dingle*. The thirteenth-century prose text *Sawles Warde* … thus says that God's judge-ments are 'secret, and deeper than any abyss of the sea (*then eni sea-dingle*).' It echoes Psalm 36:6 ('thy judgements are like a great deep') … English *dingle*, now archaic and dialectal, is cited to explain Dingley in Northamptonshire … (also The Dingle, on Liverpool's waterfront). (2018a: 74)

There are many possible objections to Breeze's procedure here. A significant one is that no Anglo-Saxon or later scribe thought to make this emendation, even when the place-name element *dingle* was common from the thirteenth century. The variant spellings of the word in the Old English poem manuscripts are as follows:

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 'A', Cambridge, Corpus Christ College, MS 173, fol. 26v: *dinges mere*
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 'B', London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. vi, fol. 32r: *dyngesmere*
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 'C', London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. i, fol. 141v: *dinges mere*
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 'D', London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. iv, fol. 49v: *dynigesmere*

The spelling *dinnesmere* was reconstructed by Laurence Nowell from a now-lost copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle *O, London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B. xi, in the sixteenth century. Nowell's collated spellings from the other manuscripts in the margin of London, British Library, MS Add. 43,703, fol. 229r, are *Dyngesmere alias ~~Dinnesmere~~. dyniges mere al*. It is possible, as Campbell suggested, that the spelling in *O was 'an alteration by the scribe' (Campbell, 1938: 115), but searching for sense as he may have been, he did not light upon *dingle* as a possible emendation. *Dingle*, from the thirteenth century onwards, is a common place-name element. This evidence from the spellings in the poem manuscripts strongly suggests that the pre-Conquest scribes did not know the word *dingle* and the post-Conquest scribes did not think it was relevant.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson et al., 2000–) reports *dingle* to be of uncertain etymology, with the earliest attestation from *Sawles Warde*, c.1240, as Breeze notes. In his edition of *Sawles Warde*, Wilson has the following to say about the term (*sea*) *dingle*:

Translating Latin *abyssus*, the meaning evidently being 'depth, hollow;' cf. the modern dialectal meaning 'deep narrow cleft between hills.' This is the first recorded occurrence of the word, which does not appear again in literature until used by Drayton who, perhaps significantly, was born in Warwickshire. There are rare examples of the word in place-names; it is known for example as a

field name in Worcestershire; see *la Dingle* (1275), *la Dyngle* (1299) … It is also known as the name of a district in Liverpool, *de Dingyll* (1296) … Professor Mawer also suggests that the word may be the first element of *Dingley* in Northants … It is worth noting that with the possible exception of the Northants example the word seems to be definitely West Midland and may be another example of a specifically West Midland word. (Wilson, 1938: 74–75)

The suggestion here about the distribution of the element is confirmed by the range of field-names listed in *A new dictionary of English field-names*, in counties north–south from Cheshire to Gloucestershire, and as far east as Derbyshire (Cavill, 2018: 112). Leaving difficulties of chronology aside, this distribution of the element *dingle* would raise questions over its use by a West-Saxon poet, or as a name or description of a place existing in the far north-east.

The anomaly among the names noted by Wilson is Dingley in Northamptonshire, where the chronological difficulty (it is earlier than any other record, occurring in Domesday Book) and the normal West Midland distribution of the element coincide (Northamptonshire is further east than any other example). The uncertainty of the etymology given by Gover et al. (1933: 164, 'this name may be a compound of *dingle* and **leah**') is noted in recent scholarship: the *Oxford English Dictionary* refers to the identification as 'uncertain and disputed' (Simpson et al., 2000–). Watts prefers an alternative: 'Possibly 'Dynni's clearing', OE pers.n. *Dynni*+**ing**[4]+**lēah** with the same loss of syllable as in *king* < OE *cyning*' (Watts, 2004: 187). Mills gives 'Possibly "woodland clearing with hollows". OE *lēah* with ME *dingle*' (Mills, 2003: 155, cited by Breeze, 2018a: 74, n. 81).

In previous work it has been shown that a wide range of undoubted *þing* names appear in spellings with initial *D-*, *T-* and *F-* as well as *Th-* (Pantos, 2004: 194; Cavill, 2018: 140 under Fingerfield, and 428 under Tinkfield). The initial consonant evolved to be pronounced differently by different communities, and French-trained scribes, and indeed some earlier and many later ones, struggled to hear and represent the sound /θ/. The evidence for this does not need to be repeated fully here. The *D-* spelling occurs particularly in Scandinavian-influenced areas. Scandinavian *þing-völlr* 'place where the Thing met' becomes Dingwall in Inverness and Dingbell in Northumberland; and in minor names we find *Dingil gate* Somerby, Leicestershire (1247, 'road to the Thing hill', *hyll* 'hill', *gata* 'road', Cox, 2002: 229); Dings, Hoby, Leicestershire (*Abovedingesti*, *Underdingesti* 1322, 'upper/lower steep path to the Thing', *the Dinges* 1601, *stīg* 'steep path', Cox, 2004: 115).

It seems at least possible that Dingley in Northamptonshire could be added to this list of *þing* names. As recorded by Gover et al. (1933: 164) the principal early spellings are:[33]

Dinglei 1086, *-leg* 1241, *Dyngle* 1428
Tinglea 1086
Dingele, *-y-*, *-leye*, *-lea* 1166 *et passim*, *Dinggele* c. 1214, *Dyngyle* 1274

---

[33] In the list of spellings the document references have been removed for clarity, but can be retrieved from the volume.

Dynelay 1348

Gover, Mawer and Stenton comment, '[t]he ground here is much broken, and this name may be a compound of *dingle* and **leah**… Hence, "**leah** marked by one or more valleys"' (1933: 164). Though there are several pools in the parish and a gentle valley of the River Welland, there is nothing remotely like the Latin *abyssus*, or 'deep narrow cleft between hills', that the element *dingle* refers to in the welter of field-names such as we find in Shropshire: the land in Northamptonshire is partially wooded and undulating. Like the above-mentioned names which in Old English or Scandinavian begin with /θ/, English <Ð, Þ, Th>, Dingley appears with alternating forms *D-* or *T-* in Domesday Book 1086, here *Dinglei* and *Tinglea*. The early spellings do not readily indicate a **dingle-lēah*. One might note the similarity of spellings for Thingley in Wiltshire, *Thingele* 1275, *Tyngle* 1289, *Thyngele* 1289 (Gover et al., 1939: 97) and the spellings for Dingley, *Dingele* and *Dyngle*. The etymology, 'open woodland of the assembly', Old English *þing*, *lēah*, is not in doubt for Thingley, and Old English or Scandinavian *þing* with Old English *lēah* seems plausible as an etymology for Dingley.

A related piece of supporting evidence is that Thing meeting-places tended to be on land near boundaries (Pantos, 2003). Dingley lies at the boundary of four administrative districts: it is on the boundary with Leicestershire and has lands in three different Northamptonshire districts, Stoke Hundred, Rothwell Hundred and Witchley Wapentake, in Domesday Book 1086 (Ryland et al., 1902: 322b, 335a, 386a, land in Stoke Hundred; 334a, land in Rothwelll Hundred; 350a, land in Witchley Wapentake). The boundary of English districts and the Scandinavian wapentake here may be particularly significant. Dingley is a very plausible location for a Thing meeting-place.

Breeze proposes that emendation of the Old English *dinges mere* to **dingles mere* will solve the problem and at a stroke make redundant the argument constructed for the interpretation 'wetland of the Thing'. But it would mean inserting a Middle English word into the Old English poem and ignoring that word's dialectal distribution. The supporting evidence for the proposed **dingles mere* from place-names, and in particular the etymology of Dingley, is much less secure than Breeze implies. The discussion has shown that the 'difficulties of phonology and sense' that Breeze mentions in relation to the Wirral interpretation of *dinges mere*, and which he appears only to have partially understood, are much more significant in relation to the proposed **dingles mere*.

Conclusion

The only way properly to evaluate a hypothesis is to test it against the evidence. No detailed evidence has been presented here for the localizing of Brunanburh in a place other than Lanchester; other sites, such as Bromborough on the Wirral, have been suggested, but there is still vigorous debate on this issue. The main purpose here has been to examine the case Breeze makes. In this regard, Breeze's Lanchester hypothesis cannot stand for three reasons. First, the Welsh evidence does not support the view that the references to *Brune*, *Brun* and *-brun-* must be to the river name

Browney; the Browney was in fact called *Brun* and would not have taken an Old English weak oblique inflection, so could not be the *Brunan-* in Brunanburh. Second, the linguistic process by which Breeze posits *Weondun* to derive from **wenn-dūn* is not plausibly shown to be possible in this orthographical or phonological environment. Finally, Breeze's proposed emendation of the *dinges mere* expression in the Old English poem on the battle imports a Middle English word while necessitating change in four manuscripts. His speculations depend on superficial similarities of words, and they lack detailed investigation of the sources and cogent argumentation.

Statements and Declarations The author has no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

References

Arnold, T. (Ed.). (1885). *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, 2 vols. Rolls Series.

Bosworth, J. (1898). *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary*. Oxford University Press.

Bollard, J. K., & Haycock, M. (2011). The Welsh sources pertaining to the battle. In M. Livingston (Ed.), *The battle of Brunanburh: a casebook* (pp. 245–268). University of Exeter Press.

Breeze, A. (2016). The battle of Brunanburh and Cambridge, CCC, MS 183. *Northern History*, *53*, 138–145.

Breeze, A. (2018a). *Brunanburh* located: the battle and the poem. In M. Ogura & H. Sauer (Eds.), *Aspects of Medieval English language and literature* (pp. 61–80). Peter Lang.

Breeze, A. (2018b). The names of Yorkshire's rivers. *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, *23*, 79–92.

Breeze, A. (2021). *British battles 494–937: Mount Badon to Brunanburh*. Anthem Press.

Briggs, K. (2021). *An index to the personal names in English place-names*. English Place-Name Society.

Campbell, A. (Ed.). (1938). *The battle of Brunanburh*. Heinemann.

Campbell, A. (1959). *Old English grammar*. Clarendon Press.

Campbell, A. (Ed. and trans.). (1962). *The Chronicle of Æthelweard* Nelson.

Cavill, P., Harding, S., & Jesch, J. (2004). Revisiting *Dingesmere*. *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, *36*, 25–38.

Cavill, P. (2011). The place-name debate. In M. Livingston (Ed.), *The battle of Brunanburh: a casebook* (pp. 327–349). University of Exeter Press.

Cavill, P. (2018). *A new dictionary of English field-names*. English Place-Name Society.

Cavill, P. (2022a). Escaping from Brunanburh and John of Worcester. *English Studies*, *103*, 899–919. https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838X.2022.2067708.

Cavill, P. (2022b). Kings, people, and lands: The rhetoric of *The Battle of Brunanburh*. In M. Atherton, K. Karasawa, & F. Leneghan (Eds.), *Ideas of the world in Early Medieval English literature* (pp. 385–402) Brepols. https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SOEL.5.130569

Coates, R. (1998). A further snippet of evidence for Brunanburh = Bromborough. *Notes and Queries*, *243*, 288–289.

Cockburn, J. H. (1931). *The battle of Brunanburh and its period elucidated by place-names*. Sir C. W. Leng & Co.

Colgrave, B., & Mynors, R. A. B. (Eds. and trans.). (1969). *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English people*. Clarendon Press.

Cox, B. (2002). *The place-names of Leicestershire, Part 2*. English Place-Name Society.

Cox, B. (2004). *The place-names of Leicestershire*, *Part 3.* English Place-Name Society.

Craster, H. H. E. (1925). The Red Book of Durham. *English Historical Review*, *40*, 504–532.

Darlington, R. R., McGurk, P., & Bray, J. (Eds. and trans.). (1995). *John of Worcester, The Chronicle*, 3 vols. Clarendon Press.

Dodgson, J. McN. (1971). *The place-names of Cheshire, Part 3*. English Place-Name Society.

Downham, C. (2021). A Wirral location for the battle of Brunanburh. *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, *170*, 15–32.

Dumville, D. N. (Ed.). (2002). *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: texts A–C in parallel*. Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge.

Dumville, D. N. (Ed.). (2005). *Brenhinoedd y Saeson, 'The kings of the English', A.D. 682–954: texts P, R, S in parallel*. Department of History, University of Aberdeen.

Ekwall, E. (1928). *English river-names*. Clarendon Press.

Ekwall, E. (1960). *Concise Oxford dictionary of English place-names* (4th ed.). Clarendon Press.

Gover, J. E. B., Mawer, A., & Stenton, F. M. (1933). *The place-names of Northamptonshire*. English Place-Name Society.

Gover, J. E. B., Mawer, A., & Stenton, F. M. (1939). *The place-names of Wiltshire*. English Place-Name Society.

Greenwell, W. (Ed.). (1872). *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis: a survey of the estates of the Prior and Convent of Durham*. Surtees Society.

Hill, P. (2004). *The age of Athelstan: Britain's forgotten history.* Tempus.

Hogg, R. M. (1992a). *A grammar of Old English: I, Phonology*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Hogg, R. M. (1992b). Phonology and morphology. In R. M. Hogg (Ed.), *The Cambridge history of the English language, I*. Cambridge University Press.

Keynes, S. (1985). King Athelstan's books. In M. Lapidge & H. Gneuss (Eds.), *Learning and literature in Anglo-Saxon England: studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday* (pp. 143–201). Cambridge University Press.

Levison, W. (1961). Die 'Annales Lindisfarnenses et Dunelmenses' kritisch untersucht und neu herausgegeben. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, *17*, 447–506.

Lapidge, M. (Ed. and trans.). (2022). *Byrhtferth of Ramsey Historia Regum*. Clarendon Press.

Livingston, M. (Ed.). (2011). *The battle of Brunanburh: a casebook*. University of Exeter Press.

Livingston, M. (2021). *Never greater slaughter: Brunanburh and the birth of England*. Osprey.

Maxwell Lyte, Sir H. C., et al. (Eds.). (1906). *Calendar of the Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office* (II vol.). Rolls Series.

Maxwell Lyte, Sir H. C., et al. (Eds.). (1912). *Calendar of the Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office* (IV vol.). Rolls Series.

Mills, A. D. (1989). *The place-names of Dorset, Part 3*. English Place-Name Society.

Morillo, S. (2021). Review of Breeze, A., *British battles 494–937: Mount Badon to Brunanburh* (New York, 2020), *The Medieval Review*, retrieved January 2022 from https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/32325/36155

Plummer, C. (Ed.). (1952). *Two of the Saxon chronicles parallel ... revised*, 2 vols. Clarendon Press.

Owen, H. W., & Morgan, R. (2007). *Dictionary of the place-names of Wales*. Gomer Press.

Pantos, A. (2003). On the edge of things: the boundary location of Anglo-Saxon assembly sites. *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, *12*, 38–49.

Pantos, A. (2004). 'In medle oððe an þinge': the Old English vocabulary of assembly. In A. Pantos & S. Semple (Eds.), *Assembly places and practices in medieval Europe* (pp. 181–201). Four Courts Press.

Parsons, D. N., & Styles, T. (2000). *The vocabulary of English place-names, 2, Brace–Cæster*. Centre for English Name-Studies.

Raine, J. (Ed.). (1838). *The charters of endowment, inventories, and account rolls, of the Priory of Finchale in the County of Durham*. Surtees Society.

Rollason, D. (1995). St Cuth[b]ert and Wessex: The evidence of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183. In G. Bonner, D. Rollason, & C. Stancliffe (Eds.), *St Cuthbert, his cult and his community to A.D. 1200* (pp. 413–424). Boydell.

Rollason, D. (1998). Symeon's contribution to historical writing in northern England. In D. Rollason (Ed.), *Symeon of Durham: historian of Durham and the North* (pp. 1–13). Shaun Tyas.

Rollason, D. (Ed. and trans.). (2000). *Symeon of Durham, Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie*. Clarendon Press.

Rollason, D. (2016). Symeon of Durham's *Historia de regibus Anglorum et Dacorum* as a product of twelfth-century historical workshops. In M. Brett & D. A. Woodman (Eds.), *The long twelfth-century view of the Anglo-Saxon past* (pp. 95–111). Taylor and Francis.

Ryland, W., Atkins, D., & Serjeantson, R. M. (Eds.). (1902). *Victoria County History Northamptonshire*. Part I. Victoria County History.

Simpson, J. A., et al. (Eds.). (2000–). *The Oxford English dictionary* (3rd ed.). Retrieved March 2022 from www.oed.com

South, T. J. (Ed. and trans.). (2002). *Historia de sancto Cuthberto: a history of Saint Cuthbert and a record of his patrimony*. D. S. Brewer.

Stevenson, W. H., repr. with an introduction by Whitelock, D. (Eds.). (1959). *Asser's Life of King Alfred, together with the Annals of Saint Neot's erroneously ascribed to Asser.* Clarendon Press.

Watts, V. (2002). *A dictionary of County Durham place-names*. English Place-Name Society.

Watts, V. (2004). *The Cambridge dictionary of English place-names*. Cambridge University Press.

Whitelock, D., Douglas, D. C., & Tucker, S. I. (1961, rev. 1965). *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a revised translation*. Eyre and Spottiswoode.

Williams ab Ithel, J. (Ed.). (1860). *Annales Cambriae*. Rolls Series.

Wilson, R. M. (Ed.). (1938). *Sawles Warde: an early Middle English homily*. Leeds School of English Language.

Winterbottom, M. & Thomson, R. M. (Eds. and trans.). (2007). *William of Malmesbury, Gesta pontificum Anglorum: the history of the English bishops*, 2 vols. Clarendon Press.

Wood, M. (2013). Searching for Brunanburh: the Yorkshire context of the 'Great war' of 937. *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, *85*, 138–159.