

1999 event augurs well for an ongoing sequence of symposia.

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Tom Schmidt

*Norske gårdsnavn på -by og -bø  
med personnavnforledd*

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This impressive work on Norwegian farm names in *-by* and *-bø* with personal name specifics is the doctoral thesis of Tom Schmidt, senior lecturer in the Department of Name Research at the University of Oslo. The writer states apologetically in his introduction that the gestation period has been lengthy but it could not have been otherwise. The study is so densely detailed that it clearly represents many years of research. It is an enormously valuable work of reference for all who are interested in the history of place-names in *-by* and *-bø* and it should appear in many university libraries and other academic bookshelves. The language of the two-volume study is Norwegian and, although it would certainly be enormously useful to have an English translation, the content of the Norwegian text repays the effort of translation. Volume I contains detailed commentary on the Norwegian *-by* and *-bø* names, whereas Volume II tabulates the occurrences of the names in Norway, with indications of the valuations of the settlements bearing the names, in an attempt to determine the period during which the names were coined.

It is impossible to do full justice

to this complex study in a short review and it, therefore, seems more appropriate to indicate how the volumes might be used by the reader in this country wishing to access comparative name material. The introduction to Volume I is particularly useful because it sets the scene against the background of earlier place-name studies by eminent Scandinavian scholars such as Olaf Rygh, Magnus Olsen and Lars Hellberg. Schmidt notes that the time has come for revision of the work of Olaf Rygh's *Norske Gaardnavne* in the light of more recent name research, and Schmidt's two-volume study makes a substantial contribution towards that revision. One expects that another hundred or so years will pass before a further revision takes place. The introduction is followed by a section which thoroughly analyses the meaning and application of the terms *-by* and *-bø*, using and making comment on a variety of dictionary sources from Old Norse to present-day Norwegian.

Volume I is probably likely to prove the more useful of the two volumes for people using the text for reference purposes outside Norway, because it contains detailed analysis of individual place-names and it is, therefore, possible to identify place-names which have parallels in this country, or which are similar in inspiration to names in this country, and to focus on the text relating to these names. For example, several instances of the name Grimsby are discussed at length, with comments on the work of other scholars in the field, such as Gillian Fellows-Jensen whose work on Scandinavian names in England and Scotland is well known to members of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies. Another well known English *-by* name is Whitby and, having

looked up Grimsby, it might seem appropriate to check on Whitby, where one finds an interesting discussion about when and where in the Scandinavian countries *\*Hvít* (*\*Hvíttr*) was actually in use as a personal name rather than an adjective meaning 'white'.

In addition to these two place-names which are very familiar in an English context, Norwegian place-names such as Isaksbø have their own story to tell about the religious affiliation of the parents of the named person and are very recognisable to the English-speaking reader. The Norwegian place-name Jørenby is recognisable to a Scottish readership as well, with a little help from Schmidt's text, as a parallel formation to *Europie* in the Hebridean island of Lewis. Norwegian *\*Saxabur* is also familiar as the surname Saxby, to all those who have admired the folklore studies of Jessie M.E. Saxby from the island of Unst in Shetland.

In other words, there are many different reasons why one might check the numerous Norwegian place-names in *-by* and *-bø* which are listed and discussed in detail by Tom Schmidt. Place-name elements can, of course, be just as significant by their absence as by their presence and that is also true of *-by* and *-bø* compounds. For example, Svensby and Åseby, and variants thereof with *-by* or *-bø* as a generic, are very common place-names in Norway and yet there are, to my knowledge, no parallel examples of place-names in the Northern Isles of Scotland in *-by* with the personal name *Sveinn* or *Ási* as specifics, although *Sveinn* does occur with other generics such as *garðr* 'an enclosure'. Schmidt does note that Gillian Fellows-Jensen lists examples from Yorkshire and Cumberland taking the form Easby.

In conclusion, there can be no doubt Tom Schmidt has an impressively deep knowledge of the *-by* and *-bø* place-names of Norway and that his knowledge extends to other examples of the same names occurring in the Norwegian and Danish Viking colonies. It is also evident, from reading these two volumes, that his encyclopaedic knowledge extends well beyond the generics which are the topic of his thesis. He squeezes every iota of onomastic information out of his *-by* and *-bø* material and then goes beyond his basic material to inform the reader of the wider toponymic picture. His book is an essential purchase for any serious student of Scandinavian linguistic influence abroad and, in the context of this reviewer's toponymic interests, particularly in the North Atlantic region.

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