

Chapter 18

Early Plant Origins and the Peak

NW PLANT ORIGINS AND POSSIBLE LINKS ACROSS THE PEAK TO SHEFFIELD

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Meanings are considered for such ‘possibly related’ names as *Plunton*, *Plantan*, *Plente*, *Plantyn*, *Planteng*, *Plaunte*, and *Blount*. In particular, a progression of possible meanings is deliberated for the set of 4 names, *Plantebene*, *Plantefolie*, *Planterose*, and *Plantegenet*, in the light of an evident progression of spellings from *Plente* to *Plante* to *Plaint* for the Plant name itself.

The name *Plente* is known to have occurred by 1219 in Oxford and Kent and both it and its variant *Plaunte* coexist in Norfolk around 1270. The name *Plant* appears near Chester by 1301 with *Plonte* near Ashford by 1303. By the late 14th century, the dialect spelling *Plont* is known to have been well established in its main subsequent homeland, near royal Cheshire’s border with Lancastrian north Derbyshire. There was a deforcement of a Christopher Plant and other Plants from Leek land here by Sir Ralph Bagnall, who is associated with the fall of the old Catholicism around the times of Edward VI. About the same time, in the mid 16th century, there is evidence for a Christopher Plant near Great Longstone, midway across north Derbyshire, where a small knop of Plants occurs by the mid 17th century. Such events seemingly fore-shadow the arrival in mid 18th century Sheffield of the *Plant’s Yard* Plants.

18.1 Plantagenets and some early ‘Plant related’ names

England had suffered from Viking raids (and from the Norman conquest) before becoming, in the words of R.W.Southern, ‘a colony of the French intellectual empire, important in its way and quite productive, but still subordinate’¹. It was from western France, to Spain’s north, that the Plantagenets came to England at the time of the so-called 12th century renaissance of Latin west Europe², when learning was spreading northwards from Moorish Spain³.

By the times of the minority of the fourth Plantagenet king, Henry III, the name Ralph *Plente* appears in 1219, in records (Table 18.1) which can be translated⁴ as:-

For the burhbote (i.e. the upkeep, or the contributions levied for upkeep) of Oxford within that town £23.3s.4d by the brief of the king and by the inspection of Peter de Haliwell’ and Radulphus Plente. And for the repair of the royal household away from the town £3.5s.0d by the brief of the king and the inspection of the same.

¹G.J.Whitrow (1989) *Time in History: Views from prehistory to the present day*, Oxford University Press, pps 71-86.

²This term ‘12th century renaissance’ was originated by the American medievalist Charles Homer Haskins in 1927.

³Greek pre-eminence in science had declined with the closure, in 529 AD, of the Neoplatonic Academy at Athens. From Athens, scholars had been invited to Iran and, after the Muslim conquest of much of that region, a scientific Institute had been set up in Baghdad — this had reached its highest reputation in the early 9th century. Knowledge of Greek science, combined with Iranian and Indian traditions, had then spread from Baghdad to other parts of the Islamic world, including Sicily, southern Italy, and especially Moorish Spain.

⁴R.E.Latham (1965) *Revised Medieval Latin Word-list from British and Irish Sources*, OUP.

That same year, the name of William *Plente* appears in a record for Kent, which can be translated as:-

From William Plente, half a marc⁵ for cloth (or squared timber) sold contrary to the regulated size.

Two theorems were developed in Chapter 16 for the meaning of the Plant name. The former of the above two records lists *Radulphus Plente* with duties to the Plantagenet king — this fits with theorem 1 ‘royalist auxiliary’ for the Plant name’s primary meaning. It is known that the early Plantagenets practised nepotism, such that they placed relatives in positions of influence, and theorem 2 represents a more particular possibility that *Plant* might mean an illegitimate Plantagenet child. An introductory basis was laid in Chapter 17 for a third theorem. Theorem 3 is presented below as a series of possible *secondary* influences impacting on the development of the Plant name. *Not all* of the supposed influences that will be described below relate directly to the Plantagenet influence.

18.1.1 A Further Theorem for the Formation of the Plant name

It may be noted that the three current theorems for the meaning of *Plant* can be seen to be, in part, a development of earlier suppositions that have appeared in three different books. These books give apparently contradictory meanings but most of the meanings can be tied together within a general framework that is indicated in Table 18.2. In particular, Book I⁶ maintains that the Plantagenet nickname was the predominant influence on the formation of the name, though it does not indicate whether this may have been through a meaning ‘Plantagenet auxiliary’ (theorem 1), ‘Plantagenet child’ (theorem 2), or ‘from the Plantagenet colony’ (theorem 3(a)). This leaves scope for incorporating other meanings, from other books for example, and theorem 3 can accordingly be begun with:-

theorem 3: There may have been various possible influences on the formation of the Plant name (*cf.* Table 18.3), such that it may have developed with such meanings as those indicated by theorem 1 (royalist auxiliary) and theorem 2 (Plantagenet child) (?perhaps first in such localities as Oxford and SE England before becoming concentrated) in its main homeland (around Cheshire) . There may also have been secondary meanings, such as ‘trader and/or industrialist (*e.g.* lead trader) from the Plantagenet colony’ (*cf.* Chapter 17).

18.1.2 An early possible locative influence

There may have been an evolution of spellings and meanings relating to a series of names *de Plumton*’, *Plantan*’, *Plantyn*, *Planteng*’ and then *de la Plaunt*. The name William *Plantan*’ occurs in Suffolk in 1220 and it may have had locative connotations relating back to early spellings, such as *Pluntone*, of a place name that is evidently associated with (c1167) *Adam de Plumton*’. There may also however have been Plantagenet connotations, such as ‘royalist follower’, for a diminutive such as *Plantyn* or *Plantin* (*cf.* Hodkyn⁷) in Norfolk, circa 1254-68, which evidently evolved into *Planteng*’ with its likely connotations of Plantagenet colonisation (Chapter 17). This could then have led on to locative connotations, along the lines of ‘from the Plantagenet colony’, for the name *de la Plaunt* which appears at Rouen in 1273. Thus:-

⁵One *marca* was equivalent to 13s.4d (*i.e.* two thirds of £1).

⁶The book John Sleight (1862) *A History of the ancient parish of Leek* records ‘*This name (i.e. Plant) is said to be a corruption of Plantagenet.*

⁷P.H.Reaney (1958) lists that *Hochebyn* (1327 Subsidy Rolls, Staffordshire) and hence Hodgkin, Hodgkins, Hodgkiess, Hodgkiss, Hadgkiss, Hodgskin, Hodgskins, Hotchkin, Hotchkis, Hotchkiss are all diminutives of *Hodge* (or Hogge 1208, Feet of Fines, Lincolnshire) which is in turn a pet form of Roger. At least in Lancashire (English Surname Series) *Hodgkinson* is taken to mean an ‘illegitimate son of Roger’ and, more generally, the ending —son is found in the north of England whereas —s is found in the south (*cf.* Johnson, Johns, Phillipson, Phillips, etc.).

1199	Radulphus Plantebene (Norfolk) [1 John Pipe Rolls]
1200	Radulphus Planteben’ (Norfolk and Suffolk) [2 John Pipe Rolls]
1219	Radulphus Plente (Oxon) <i>Et in operatione castris de Oxon’ infra idem castrum xxiiij li. et iij s. et iij d. per breve R. et per visum Petri de Haliwell’ et Radulfi Plente. Et in reparatione domorum R. extra villam lxxv s. per breve R. et per visum eorundem.</i> [3 Henry III Pipe Rolls]
1219	William Plente (Kent) <i>Et de dim. m. de Willelmo Plente pro panno vendito contra assisam.</i> [3 Henry III Pipe Rolls]
1230	Simon Plente (York) <i>Et de dim. m. de Willelmo filio Ailredi et Simone Plente pro eodem.</i> (By reference back to the preceding records <i>eodem</i> equates to <i>dissaisina.</i>) [14 Henry III Pipe Rolls]
1230-1	Radulphus Plente [A cartulary of the Hospitals of St John the Baptist, ed H.E.Slater (1914) in Oxford Historical Society Publications 68 , 202]
1272	Symon Plente [Feet Fines Oxf. in Oxfordshire Record Society: Record Series (Oxford, 1919-) 12 , 200]
1272-84	William Plente (and then his widow Gerbergia) of Ormesby (Norfolk) — charter for piece of land at Hemesby [Norwich Cathedral Charters]
1301	Ricardo Plant [Pipe Rolls Cheshire in LCRS 92 , 205]
1303	Johannes Plonte [S.L.Thrupp and H.B.Johnson (1964) <i>The earliest Canterbury freeman’s rolls 1298-1363</i> in Kent Records (Ashford, 1912-) Kent Archaeological Society 18 181]
1310	Johannes Planterose [Two Bedfordshire subsidy listings ed S.H.A.Hervey (1925) Suffolk Green Books 18 87]

Table 18.1: Some early occurrences of ‘Plant related’ names (see also Table 17.1)

subtheorem 3(a): There may have been a progression of powerful influences on the development of the Plant name producing various secondary meanings, such that the name *de la Plaunt*⁸ for example could have attained, by the late 13th century, such an allusion as ‘from the Plantagenet Palatine⁹ of Chester’.

The pervasive influence of the royal name *Plantagenet* could *in itself* explain an apparent wide spread, from the late 12th to 14th centuries, of ‘Plant related’ names across England. Table 18.3 indicates however that, as well as this royal nickname, another possible *early* influence on the formation of the Plant name could have related to such a place name as *Plunton*. Though locative surnames are commonplace in the NW of England, there is no *known* local settlement in NW England called precisely Plont. The closest sounding names under *Pl* in the published¹⁰ 12th century Pipe Rolls for England are *de Plinton* (6 Henry II), *de Plunton* (9 Henry II), Adam *de Plumton*’ (13 Henry II), *de Plunton*’ (10 Richard I)¹¹. There could hence have been an early influence, in specific places, from for example the early place names *Plinton* in Devon, *Plunton* in Lancashire, *Plontone* in West Yorkshire, and *Pluntune* in Sussex¹². In Lancashire for example, Fieldplumpton and Woodplumpton are evidently

⁸The names *de la Plaunt* and *Plaunt* appear in 1273 as 3 Rouen merchants, who were granted licenses to export wool from England. Though such ‘affectations’ as *de la* should not necessarily be taken too literally, it can be noted that *de la Plaunt* can be interpreted to mean ‘from the Plantagenet colony’.

⁹Though the actual term *Palatine* is not known to have been used until the 1290s, the principles that underlay its concept had been largely in place since the 10th century.

¹⁰Pipe Rolls Society Vols 1-28,33: Publications (London 1884-1912), New Series 1-46 (1925-78/80).

¹¹The place name *Plouton*’ is associated, in the index of these rolls, with Poulton-le-Fylde in Lancashire (*cf.* Poulton in Cheshire).

¹²There are various places called Plumpton (Cumbria, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Sussex) and there is a Plympton in Devon (spelled *Plintone* in 1086 and *Plimton* c1135) as well as a Plumtree near Nottingham (spelled *Pluntre* in 1086 and *Plumtr* in 1206). The name Plympton is said to have originated with a meaning ‘estate containing plum trees’ with the river Plym then being a back formation such that the name Plymouth near its estuary was formed later.

	Theorem 1 Plantagenet auxiliary	Theorem 2 Plantagenet child	Theorem 3 from the Plantagenet colony
Book (I) corruption of Plantagenet	yes	yes	yes
Book (II) (a) from the plantation (b) offspring		yes ^b	yes ^a
Book (III) gardener	yes ^c		

^aIn Shakespear plantation = colonisation

^bThe surname Child means ‘young nobleman’ and so Plant, which has a meaning ‘child’, might mean ‘young Plantagenet’

^cMedieval gardeners worked for the nobility hence, for some, this would be for the Plantagenets

Book (I) John Sleight (1862) states that *Plant* is ‘a corruption of Plantagenet’

Book (II) Ernest Weekly (1916) suggests *de la Plaunte* means ‘from the plantation’ and *Plaunt* is a nickname meaning variously ‘sprig, cudgel, or young offspring’

Book (III) R.H.Reaney (1958) compares *Plant* with *Plantebene* and *Planterose* and contends that *Plant* means ‘gardener’

Table 18.2: The meaning of *Plant*. Book (I) complies with all three theorems whereas two of the suggestions made in Book (II) comply in turn with either Theorem 3 or Theorem 2. The contention of Book (III) is compatible with Theorem 1.

the same place as *Pluntun*, which is recorded with that spelling in 1086 though evidently as *Fildeplumpton* and *Wodeplumpton* by 1323 and 1327 respectively. In West Yorkshire, there is *Plontone* in 1086 and *Plumton* in 1190. In Sussex, there is the spelling *Pluntune* in the Domesday Book and later *Plumpton*. Ekwall¹³ presumes an interpretation for these place names along the lines of ‘Plum town’¹⁴.

18.1.3 Possible interpretations of some other ‘Plant related’ names

Such a locative theory, with both *Plumton* and *Plantagenet* associations, for the origins of the name *de la Plaunte* does not constitute the only likely influence on the development of the *Plant* name. By 1230, there had been various other ‘Plant(agenet) related’ names, such as *Plantebene* in Norfolk (1199), *Plantefolie* in Leicestershire (1209), and *Planterose at Warr’ Wigorn’* (sic) (1230). Moreover, by 1266, there is explicit extant mention of the ‘similar’ name *Plantegenet* at Oxford. Such names lead on to a further subtheorem:-

subtheorem 3(b): By presuming a ‘vegetable plant’ meaning for the 4 ‘Plant related’ names *Plantebene*, *Plantefolie*, *Planterose*, and *Plantegenet*, the gardener interpretation of Book III can be deduced for just 2, whereas more consistency can be obtained by adopting ‘establisher’ meanings relating to the itinerant royal court and its cortège.

It is known that the name *Plente* existed by 1219, before the name *Plaunte* is known to have existed by 1262 (Tables 17.1 and 18.1). The available literature suggests some overlap of meaning and spelling between the words *plente* and *plaunte* (cf. Tables 18.5 and 18.6) yielding a particular line of meanings that can be related to ‘foundation’, ‘growth’, and ‘abundance’. The names *Plente* and *Plaunte* may hence reasonably be taken to be variant spellings of the same name. Table 18.6 illustrates that the ‘spelling’ of *plente* is variously *plente* in Langland’s reference to the ‘*plante of pe(es)*’. A further medieval text mentions a ‘*well great plaunte*’ springing hugely from a little grain, indicating an evident interplay in medieval times between the now distinctly separate meanings of ‘a plant’ and ‘plenty’. It can be noted in connection with subtheorem 3(b), that the noun *plenté* (or *plantée*) has a recognised Anglo-Norman meaning ‘generosity’ and that the noun *plente* has a recognised

¹³Eilert Ekwall (1960) *The concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*.

¹⁴A hypothetical confusion with *Plente Tun* would give however ‘fertile, generous, or abundant enclosure’.

Date	Throughout England		Main homeland
c1150	de Plunton ^a (place name)	PLANTAGENET ^b (royal nickname)	
c1200	PLANTEBENE fine establisher or curer of souls ^d	PLANTEFOLIE itinerant justice or absolver of wickedness ^e	Blundeville Earl of Chester
c1250	PLANTEGENET ?horse breeder ^f	PLANTYN <i>cf.</i> diminutive of Plantagenet ^g	Plantagenet Earl of Chester
c1300		PLONTE	BLOUNT ^h , PLANT and royal stud
c1350		Langland: Lord's love child	PLONT well established

^asubtheorem 3(a)

^btheorems 1 and 2

^csubtheorem 3(b)

^dsubtheorem 3(b)

^esubtheorem 3(b)

^fsubtheorem 3(b)

^g*cf.* theorem 2

^hsubtheorem 3(c)

Table 18.3: Some possible influences (circa 1150-1350) on the formation of the Plant name

<p>planto to plant 1239, 1538; to set up (a sheep fold) 1325; to implant, settle 12c., 1624; to found c1200, 1471; to settle, colonize (a district with cities) c1362</p> <p>geneta (1) jennet, foal 1309</p> <p>genetes (1 plural) light horsemen (Spanish) 1362</p> <p>geneta (2) (fur of) genet, civet cat</p> <p>rosarius rosary, base coin 1297, c1422</p>
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Table 18.4: Some dated known usage of Latin vocabulary, from R.E.Latham *Revised Latin Word-list from British and Irish Sources*

Middle English meaning ‘wealth’ and this appears to form a basis for comparing the surname Plant (or *Plente*) with a supposed meaning ‘rich’ for the surname Rich — the name *le Riche* occurs in Lincolnshire in 1177 and 1185¹⁵.

In connection with Langland’s reference to the ‘*plante of pe(e)s*’ it may be noted that a meaning ‘peace’ for *pe(e)s* is supported by the text ‘*When pees is plente, than deeds of werre be in no deynte*’, which evidently compares *pees* and war (Table 18.6). As was discussed more fully in connection with theorem 2 in Chapter 16, other literary and historical evidence is compatible with a supposition that Plant might have carried an almost ‘messianic’ connotation, as is embodied in such a concept as ‘the providence (generosity or abundance) of a (spiritual or earthly) Prince of Peace’ (*cf.* Langland’s *plante of pees*). Such evidence leads on to a possible ‘princely’ interpretation, such that an ‘establisher’ meaning for *Plant* can be regarded to be compatible with a meaning ‘generosity’ for the name *Plente* (*cf.* subtheorem 3(b)) with both meanings being ascribable to Plantagenet desiderata for their authority. Such meanings as ‘generous’ and ‘establisher’ also appear to remain consistent with later evidence, such that there is an ‘establisher’ connotation suggested for *Plant* by the 17th century Wincle Chapel inscription ‘HERE DOE O LORD SVRE PLANT THY WORD’, which is in the main Plant homeland and which seems to couple a meaning ‘establish’ with the congregation’s aspirations for a spiritual and earthly well being.

18.1.4 A possible chronology of various influences on the Plant name

In ascribing a possible chronological order to various influences and secondary meanings that may have impinged on the development of the *Plant* name, the evidence so far (Table 18.3) suggests that any influence in subtheorem 3(a) from the name Adam de Plumton’ 1166/7¹⁶ may have been roughly contemporary with the supposed influences of the royal nickname *Plantagenet* (?dating from c1150). The possibility of subsequent reinforcements between the meanings of the medieval words *plente* and *plaunte* has been mooted above and this may be deliberated further, with particular reference to a set of 4 ‘Plante(genet) related’ names, as follows.

The first 2 of the set of 4 ‘Plant related’ names in Table 18.7, *Plantebene* and *Plantefolie*, can be interpreted best, it seems, in the context of the Plantagenet king John’s preoccupation with replenishing funds, following on from the crusades of his brother, Richard I. In this context of the ‘age of faith’ it can be noted that the Anglo-Norman *plenté* can mean ‘plenarity’ or a fund of benefice when filled, which relates to remuneration for the office of ‘curing souls’. This yields connotations of benefaction (*cf.* bene=hallowed) and payment (*cf.* bene=prosperous, rose=coin) for religious services rendered (*cf.* folie, rose=prayers, genet¹⁷). A spelling *plente* accordingly suggests (Table 18.7) allusions to ‘benefaction plenarity’ (*Plantebene*), ‘absolution plenarity’ (*Plantefolie*), and ‘prayers plenarity’ (*Planterose*).

By the times of the epic love poem *Roman de la Rose* (c1237), a more secular allusion to ‘courtly generosity’¹⁸ can be discerned for *Planterose* (plantee=generosity, rose~courtly)¹⁹. The historical context then moves on to the times of the Provisions of Oxford (1258), the Barons War (1264-6), and Henry III’s need to re-establish his Plantagenet authority. In 1264, the validity of the Provisions of Oxford was declared void at the Mise of Amiens and,

¹⁵Reaney (1958) *Dictionary of British Surnames*.

¹⁶Henry II ascended the throne on 19th December 1154 and this entry is dated to his 13th year.

¹⁷It may be noted that from times of Blundeville’s religious foundations in the Plant homeland, Wincle Grange was an outpost of Combermere Abbey with livestock duties including horses.

¹⁸The interpretation of *Planterose* could be considered in terms of the hypothetical variants *plente of roses* or *rose plente*, which could be interpreted along the lines of ‘much allegiance to the crown’ or ‘much ardour’ or ‘many Lancastrian rights’, though such interpretations are evidently grammatically improved with a reversal of word order, yielding ‘courtly abundance’.

¹⁹In the cited examples of the adjective *plente* that appear in Kurath and Kahn’s Middle English Dictionary, this adjective follows its associated noun, though the word *plente* commonly precedes another noun with the phrase *plente of*

<p>Oxford English Dictionary:-</p> <p>plente, plentee Obsolete form of plenty</p>
<p>La-Curne de Sainte-Palaye:-</p> <p>planté (I) plénitude; (II) abondance, quantité plenté grande quantité, abondance</p>
<p>Rothwell et al, Anglo-Norman Dictionary:-</p> <p>plenté, plentee, plentet, plentee, plantee, etc.; pleinté, pleintee; plenité (1) abundance, plenty; (2) (great) number, multitude; (3) generosity, bounty; (4) (law) plenary plente see pleinte pleinte, plainte, plaint, pleint (playente) lament, complaint</p>
<p>Kurath and Kahn, Middle English Dictionary:-</p> <p>plente — also plenti(e), pleinte noun, 1(a) abundance, prosperity, wealth; also, the goddess of abundance; 1(b) <i>p... of</i>, abundance of; 1(c) an ample supply of food, drink, etc; plenty, sumptuousness; 1(d) <i>corn p...</i> abundance of grain; etc.; 1(e) a large amount, great deal; much; 1(f) a great number, multitude, many; 1(g) in apposition with a preceding noun, the appositional construction being equivalent in sense to <i>of p...</i> phrases; 1(h) fertility, productivity, fruitfulness; abundant production of crops, profusion of flowers; 1(i) generosity, bounty; 2(a) fullness, completeness, perfection; 2(b) full measure or number, totality; 2(c) satiety, satisfaction; 3 a projection of the extremity of a bone structure</p> <p>plente adjective, abundant, plentiful; <i>p... of</i> full of</p> <p>plente alternative spelling of (noun) plaunt(e)</p> <p>plaunt(e) — also plant(e), plante and (planet, planete, playnt, plente) noun, 1(a) something planted; a shrub, an herb, a plant; also figuratively; also by analogy to a plant, a tooth; 1(b) a sapling, tree; also, a sapling used as a staff or cudgel; 1(c) a young plant; a sprout, sprig, or shoot; 1(d) a cutting, slip, scion, or graft of a tree, vegetable, or other plant; 2 the sole of the foot</p> <p>plaunten — also planten, plaunt(e), plant(e), plante (and in Cornish, plontye, planse, blanse) verb, 1(a) to plant or set (a tree, an herb, a vine, etc); also transplant (a tree, etc.); 1(b) to plant (a vineyard, garden); 1(c) to plant or sow a crop; also figuratively; 2(a) to insert (a scion) into (a stock), engraft; also figuratively; 2(b) <i>planted</i> of a branch: joined to the trunk of a tree; 2(c) to instill (a virtue, a quality), infuse (grace), implant (the natural law, contrition, etc.); instill (ones will); impart (truth, the word of God); 3(a) to establish (a colony), settle (a people); found (a religious house); institute (a religion); form (a part of a body), create (the world); establish (peace); 3(b) to set (something in a place); 3(c) to set (something) down in writing, insert (something) in a treatise; 3(d) <i>plaunte bataille</i>, to engage in combat, enter battle; <i>plaunte (in) seige</i>, lay a seige; 4 to insert (something) in a food dish as decoration, decorate (a dish)</p>

Table 18.5: Some Definitions of possible relevance to the name *Plente*

The Cambridge manuscript^a of Langland's *Piers Plowman* text (c1362) is dated to c1400 (perhaps a1376 — *i.e.* before 1376) and includes:-

*Loue is the leues thing that oure lord askith
And ek the plante [or plaunte or plonte or plente; playnte] of pes*

This epic poem has been mentioned earlier, in Chapter 16, where it was noted that there is apparently a 'Prince of Peace' aspect (*cf.* theorem 2) to the phrase *plaunte of pees*. In the above version there is the variant spelling *plente*. Moreover, there is evidence that the word *plaunte* was associated with the creation of plenty, in the following text (a1398)^b:-

Of oon litel greyne cometh a wel gret plaunte and springeth and spredith hugeliche.

With the spelling *plente*, this concept is extended explicitly to livestock and also to riches in (a1420)^c:-

*The lond .. was plenteuouse bothe of corne & greene...
Of best and foules passingly plente
...
Philemoun .. had infinit richesse, Of tresour, gold passingly plente.*

Further evidence of a connection between *plente* and the benefits (or vices) of peace appears in (a1425)^d:-

Pees maketh plente; Plente maketh pride

which can be compared with Langland's *plaunte of pees*. The words *pees* and *plente* also appear in the following comparison between *peace* and *war*, in a text dated a1450 (1408)^e:-

When pees is plente, than deeds of werre be in no deynte.

^ac1400 (a1376) *P.Pl.A(1)(Trin-C)1.137* :: *Piers Plowman: The A version, Wills visions of Piers Plowman and Do-Well*, ed. G.Kane (1960) 175-426 [W4.51; BR 1459], cited in Kurath and Kahn *Middle English Dictionary*.

^ba1398 *Trev.Barth (Add)* :: John de Trevisa, tr. Bartholomew de Glanville's *De Proprietatibus Rerum*: Photostat of MS Add.27944; in poss. of MED [W3.9;10.35;BR33].

^ca1420 *Lydg.TB (Aug)*; a1450-a1475 (*Bergen*) :: *Lydgate's Troy Book*, ed. H.Bergen, Early English Texts Society, Extra Series (London, 1867-) 97 (1906); 103 (1908); 106 (1910) [BR 2516].

^da1425 *Pees maketh (Trin-C)* :: M.R.James, *The western MSS. in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge 2* (1901) 95 [W 7.22; BR 2742].

^ea1450 (1408) *Vergetius(1) 72b (Dc)* :: *Prose translation of Vergetius De Re Militari*: Photostat of transcript of MS Dc.291, prepared by K.G.Gordon, in poss of MED.

Table 18.6: Some texts relating to some Middle English usages of the words *plaunte* and *plente*

	Plantebene	Plantefolie	Planterose	Plantegenet
vegetable plants	gardener	? <i>folius</i> = leaf	gardener	? <i>planta genista</i> = sprig of broom
<i>plaint</i>		lamerter of wickedness	lamerter of love	
to establish or to found	fine establisher or prosperous founder	establisher (or recorder) of wickedness ^a	establisher of the royal badge or Lancastrian rights ^b	establisher of small Spanish horses or horse breeder ^c
	----- (itinerant) royalist auxiliary ----- ----- curer of souls ^d -----			
<i>plente</i>	hallowed plenitude ^e	? absolution plenitude ^f	courtly abundance	horse (?borne) abundance

^aThe name *Plantefolie* may have related to the Plantagenet’s introduction of itinerant justices such that it may have had a meaning along the lines of a ‘recorder of wickedness’. The meaning ‘to record’ for plant appears in the Anglo-Norman Dictionary of Rothwell et al as well as in the Middle English Dictionary of Kurath and Kahn (Table 18.5).

^bMore generally, the name Planterose may have acquired a meaning along the lines of a ‘romantic or courtly colonist’ (cf. the French surname Plantamour and the French epic love poem ‘Roman de la Rose’).

^cThe word *genet* had a widespread meaning ‘jennet’ or ‘small Spanish horse’ (cf. Table 18.4) and it may be relevant that the ‘Plantagenets’ came from Anjou and held lands extending southwards to Spain.

^dIn Anglo-Norman, the noun *plenté* (sometimes spelled *plantee*) can mean ‘plenarity’, which is the state of benefice when filled. The word benefice was popularly associated with the ecclesiastical office itself though it was more formally the remuneration paid to that office. The names *Planteben* and *Plantefolie* could accordingly refer to that medieval office, which was associated with the ‘curing of souls’ and ‘absolution for sins’. A loose association of a similar nature could also be made for the name *Planterose*. The medieval Latin word *rosarius* (Table 18.4) had connotations of payment as well the meaning ‘a series of prayers and a string of beads by which they are counted’. The ‘base coin’ meaning of *rosarius* could also be considered in conjunction with, for example, the old French expression *monnoye de plont* which could evidently mean ‘money of a base coin (or formed from a lead templet)’. Such concepts, if taken together, might perhaps then be connected *loosely* with payment for the office of benefice.

^eThe old French words *planté* and *béne* yield a meaning ‘hallowed plenitude’, hence evidently sanctifying a concept of ‘abundance’ or ‘full remuneration’ with religious service.

^fThe meaning, *plenti fulli* = abundantly, which is known to have been in use by c1400, can be compared with other surnames, such as *Bytheway*, which apparently related to everyday sayings (perhaps favourite expressions of the original bearers of the name) — in this case, a saying *plenti fulli* might relate to ‘absolution granted (and paid for) *plentifully*’. There is less reason, however, to suppose that *Planterose* might have received some influence from *plentevous* (meaning abundant, rich, generous, or fertile).


Table 18.7: Possible interpretations of 4 similar ‘Plant related’ names

in 1265, the rebuttal was affirmed with the death of Simon de Montfort at the battle of Evesham. This is followed (1266) by extant mention of Galfrido Plantagenet at Oxford, with duties to the king, at the time when the Plantagenet authority was being re-established. With a hypothetical earlier spelling *plente* for *Pl(a/e)nt(a/e)genet*, there may have been such a conception as ‘livestock breeding plenarity’, as could be ascribed to the duties of the monks or novices of Wincle Grange for example, and this could have led on to visions of the royal cortège through an interpretation ‘horse (?supplied) abundance’ for the ‘*Plente*genet name’. By around 1270, the spelling *Plente* is known to coexist with the spelling *Plaunte* in Norfolk, at a time when it seems apposite to be considering an ‘establish’ meaning for *plaunte* in the stead of a perhaps earlier ‘abundance’ meaning for the ‘variant spelling’ *plente*. This then yields such meanings as ‘prosperous founder’ (*Plantebene*), ‘establisher of wickedness or madness’ (*Plantefolie*), ‘establisher of courtly rights’ (*Planterose*), and ‘establisher of horse (?borne abundance)’ (*Plantegenet*²⁰).

Such a supposed progression of emphasis in meanings, with an evident progression of spelling from *Plente* (1219) to *Plaunte* (1262), can be compared (Table 18.6) with examples of surviving texts, on which the Middle English definitions of *plente* and *plaunte* are based. Such texts become comprehensively available, however, only by around the late 14th century. By that time there is also the variant spelling *Plaint* for the Plant name and, in Table 18.7, this produces meanings of lament²¹ which are understandable in the context of the sentiments that no doubt followed on from the ravages of the Black Death. The pervasive natural catastrophe of the plague may have done much to undermine any remaining aura of divine or lordly generosity which Plantagenet supporters may thereto have wished to foster to bolster the Plantagenet authority. The faltering credibility of such an image of ‘divine generosity’ can accordingly be expected to have mitigated further, by this time, against a spelling *Plente* for Plant.

By the end of the plague era (1349-75) the spelling *Plont* is known to have been well established in the east Cheshire homeland of the Plants and this spelling can be taken to be the expectable one in this West Midlands Dialect District (Figure 18.1). A further, possible influence on the development of the Plant name (subtheorem 3(c)) will be considered below in connection with some of the known circumstances that lead on to the times of late 14th century east Cheshire.

18.2 Possible Genesis of the Plant name around Cheshire

 The Plant name itself may have originated near Cheshire, perhaps with some connotation of ‘occupation’ or ‘office’, or it might for example have arrived in a ‘Plante(genet) related’ guise through such forms as *Planterose*, *Plantyn*, and *Planteng*’.

The royal Plantagenets had directed significant attention to Chester from the times of their first king, Henry II (1133-89), who was a legitimate son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou²². The Plant name may have been nurtured, in particular from the times

²⁰‘Horse related’ interpretations of *Plantegenet* might at first seem at odds with the more commonly supposed interpretation of the similarly spelled royal nickname *Plantagenet*, which is usually associated with the Latin words *planta genista* meaning ‘sprig of broom’. An interpretation ‘establisher of small Spanish horses’ or ‘horse breeder’ seems to correspond more closely however with the extant spelling *Plantegenet* (Oxford 1266) whilst a similarly slight modification of spelling, to a perhaps earlier *plente*, can be conceived to evoke such meanings as ‘many small horses’ and ‘many light horsemen’ (cf. Table 18.4), which could be seen to reinforce a mid 13th century ‘establisher’ interpretation for this name, though a grammatically better translation should likely take account of a reversal of word order giving a meaning ‘horse (?supplied) abundance’ with its conceivable allusions to such prosperity as may have been seen in a royal cortège.

²¹Though an interpretive scheme involving a meaning ‘lament’ seems to work well for only 2 or 3 of the set of 4 ‘Plante(genet) related’ names, it may be noted that this equals the success rate of Reaney’s assertion that *Plant* means a ‘gardener’ (Book III). The ‘gardener’ assertion is based on only the pair, *Plantebene* and *Planterose*, and it does not seem to work well for the other 2, *Plantefolie* and *Plantegenet*.

²²Henry II identified Chester as a prime base from which to subdue the Welsh, as well as an important trading port with Ireland and elsewhere. Gaining control of the Irish sea offered the prospect of trading routes from the north west

of king John, by a *local* Plantagenet affinity.

18.2.1 Blundeville and John

By the times of the third Plantagenet king, John, Chester was under the rule of reputedly the most powerful magnate in England, Ranulph Blundeville, who was of Norman descent but who succeeded in maintaining close links with the Plantagenets. By tradition, it has been maintained²³ that the earl of Chester, Ranulph de Blondeville (d 1232) had been so named for having been born at *'the white monastery of Powis-land'*²⁴, though the credentials for this old story have been questioned²⁵. Blundeville's first wife, Lady Constance, whom he married in 1187, had been the widow of John's elder brother Geoffrey (a 'Plantagenet') and, indeed, Blundeville had thereby married the mother of a potential heir to the throne²⁶. In 1207 Ranulph de Blundeville founded the white monastery called Dieulacress Abbey in Leek parish at the western edge of The Peak. Though Blundeville's 1232 death was at Wallingford (near Oxford), it is maintained that his heart was buried at Dieulacress²⁷.

In 1230, Simon de Segrave²⁸ held charge of the royal seal as an itinerant justice, as he had been left with the bishop of Chichester in charge of England during Henry III's expedition to Poitou. That year, the name Simon *Plente* appears under residual affairs for York through the auspices of this *S. de Segraue et Socios Suos*:-

From William son of Ailred and from Simon Plente, half a marc for disseisin (i.e. for wrongful dispossession of an estate of freehold).

In 1232, Simon de Segrave became the justiciar of England, being very much the client of Blundeville of Chester²⁹, who however died that year — Segrave's tenure as justiciar was brief.

In these times of the fourth Plantagenet king, Henry III, Chester came under the direct control of the Plantagenet crown. The last earl of Chester of Norman descent was a nephew of Ranulph Blundeville, John the Scot, and, following his 1237 death, the Palatine

of England, including routes southwards towards the Plantagenets' homeland of western France, as well as ensuring the curtailment of the Irish Norse practice of taking English slaves (Kate Norgate (1887) *England under the Angevin Kings*, Vol I, p 36 and Vol II p 87).

²³John Sleigh (1862) *The History of the Ancient Parish of Leek*, p 47.

²⁴The name *de Blondeville* is accordingly said by John Sleigh (1862) to mean 'from Oswestry' though there is a Blonville-sur-Mer in Calvados with which Ranulph had associations. It may also be noted that the name Blundeville can be related, for example, to connotations of 'metal forging settlement' — the name of Thomas Blundeville, bishop of Norwich (1226-36) and nephew of Hubert de Burgh, is sometimes written *Blomville* and the Old English word *bloma* means 'mass of puddled iron, hammered or squeezed into a thick bar'. A Middle English word from the Old Norse *blanda* means inhomogenous mix (*cf.* metal scintering) though the word *blond* is more often considered, yielding a commonly supposed meaning 'fair' or 'white'. The old French word *ville* means the tendril of a vine, a walled enclosure, or ignoble.

²⁵James W Alexander (1983) *ibid.*

²⁶The son, Arthur, of Geoffrey (Plantagenet) and Lady Constance was murdered by John to eliminate him as a possible rival to the throne. Even so, after Blundeville's victory at the siege of Lincoln in 1217, Blundeville showed little hesitation in proclaiming for John. It appears that relations between Blundeville and his prestigious wife, Constance, were poor and it has even been contended that king John had adulterous relations with her. James W Alexander (1983) *ibid.*, pps 3, 8, 10, 12-14, 49, 97.

²⁷John Sleigh (1862) *ibid.*, pps 47-9. James W Alexander (1983) *ibid.*, pps 37, 39-41, 44-46, 49.

²⁸In 1231, a writ was issued to assemble the county court of York before the itinerant justices, which comprised S. de Segraue and 6 others. In 1232, Peter de Roches, bishop of Winchester, in order to obtain the king's favour more freely, drew into his fellowship Stephen de Segrave and Robert Passelaw, whereafter all the affairs of the realm were carried out by the advice and wish of these three persons, with Stephen de Segrave briefly succeeding Hubert de Burgh as justiciar of England. In 1233, insurgent barons ravaged the lands of Stephen de Segrave, the justiciar. Margaret A Hennings (1924) *England under Henry III*, pps 39, 41, 158, 159, 185.

²⁹Blundeville held various fees throughout the country including ones in Oxfordshire, Norfolk, and at Seagrave in Leicestershire, as well as such castles as Bolingbroke in south Lincolnshire, just north of the Wash. James W. Alexander (1983) *Ranulph of Chester: a relic of the Conquest*, Appendix pps 103-115.

1256	Prince Edward paid a brief visit to Chester in July 1256
1257	Both the prince and king Henry III passed through Chester with an army for a campaign in Wales
1265	After the battle of Evesham, the prince took Beeston Castle and came to Chester
1275	Traveling by way of Macclesfield and Tarvin, Edward I reached Cheshire on 1st September 1275 and waited 10 days in vain for a meeting with prince Llewellyn
1277	Edward I in Cheshire and north Wales from mid-July to late November, laying the foundation stone of Vale Royal Abbey in August
1278	Edward I spent 3 weeks in Flint, Chester and the Wirral
1282	Edward I came northwards through Nantwich and, after a month at Chester, passed into north Wales where he remained until August
1283	Edward I spent most of September in Cheshire visiting Bromborough, Stanlow, Vale Royal and Macclesfield
1284	Edward I came via Nantwich in March 1284 and passed into north Wales. Returning in September, he visited Shotwich, Rushton, Peckforton, and Malpas
1290	Edward I crossed The Peak from Chesterfield via Tideswell and Chapel-en-le-Frith to Macclesfield returning via Tideswell and Ashford prior to Queen Eleanor's death at Harby near Lincoln
1294	Edward I spent 4 days at Chester in December 1294, en route from Nantwich to Wales
1309	Edward II came to Chester in June 1309 to welcome his unpopular favourite, Piers Gaveston, on his return from exile. Edward arrived and returned via Nantwich
1323	Edward II journeyed from Liverpool and spent a few days at Ince and at Halton
1353	In preparation for a visit of the Black Prince, defects in Chester Castle and in the manor of Macclesfield were to be repaired, houses at Shotwick were to be cleaned, etc. After his arrival, orders were sent for 6 roses to be brought from Macclesfield Forest for a banquet to which guests were invited
1358	The Black Prince spent a few days at Chester, at Vale Royal, and at Macclesfield in September 1358
1399	Richard II crossed the Dee in the company of his cousin Henry (who had been born at Bolingbroke in south Lincolnshire and who became Henry IV). Richard was imprisoned at Chester Castle overnight before being taken to London

Table 18.8: Some Cheshire visits of the Plantagenet earls of Chester (taken mostly from H.J.Hewitt (1967) *Cheshire under the Three Edwards*, pps 3-5)

of Chester³⁰ was annexed by Henry III himself. An initial justification for direct Plantagenet rule of Cheshire was that it was strategic to subduing the Welsh³¹ though, by the mid-14th century, it has been supposed that it had become little more than a source of royal revenue³² (*cf.* Table 18.8).

18.2.2 A possible *Plaunt* link between Cheshire and SE England

An *illustration* of a possible 'family route' by which the Plant name *could have* arrived in Cheshire, with a meaning 'Plantagenet child or auxiliary' (theorems 1 and 2), can be outlined briefly as follows.

The nickname *Plantagenet* is widely reputed to have belonged to Geoffrey³³ (1113-51), Count of Anjou. His illegitimate son, Hamelin, was father to William de Warenne (d 1240), 5th earl of Surrey who married the widowed mother of Roger le Bigod, earl of Norfolk. This Bigod's butler was called Roger *Plantyn*³⁴. The name Plantyn might accordingly be thought to have perhaps been a diminutive of Plantagenet, which perhaps reflected Bigod's ability almost to mock the illegitimate descent of Hamelin from Geoffrey Plantagenet³⁵.

³⁰Though the term 'county Palatine' is not known to have been adopted for Chester before the 1290s, it had maintained a tradition of considerable 'self government' from the times of Edwin of Mercia, through Norman and Plantagenet times. Alan Cosby (1996) *A History of Cheshire*, pps 34-5.

³¹The Palatine had its own characteristic form of government such that it was almost a semi-autonomous 'colony' and, in 1247, Henry III formally notified his barons that he intended to keep it.

³²H.J.Hewitt (1967) *Cheshire under the Three Edwards*.

³³This Geoffrey Plantagenet passed to his heirs their claim to the English throne by marrying Henry I's daughter Maud.

³⁴There are records for Plantyn, dating 1254-8, as outlined in Chapter 17.

³⁵An alternative possibility, involving an early possible influence from the place name *Plunton*, was outlined as sub-theorem 3(a).

By 1258, John de Warenne, earl of Surrey was a royal nominee in the body of 24 who passed the Provisions of Oxford and Hugh Bigod became justiciar, though Warenne opposed those imposed limitations on the authority of Henry III. Following Warenne's rescue of the king at Evesham (1265) and the Plantagenets' crushing of the Barons War, the name Roger *Planteng'* occurs in Norfolk (1268) and this can reasonably be viewed, in its historic context, to be a more respectful variant of the name Roger *Plant(i/y)n*. The name *Planteng'* can be thought to have alluded to establishing royal land rights, such as in Englefeld which was the region (essentially Flintshire) on the Welsh side of the Dee estuary and the lower valley of Clwyd³⁶. Such a contention is not unsubstantiated, since Bigod's nephew and successor was evidently in chief command of Flint (near Chester) in the Welsh War of 1277³⁷. Amongst much rallying of the nobility around Chester in the late 13th century, John de Warenne, 7th earl of Surrey, was sent ahead of the king to Chester in 1294³⁸. The *Plant* name is found in Flintshire (*i.e.* Englefeld) by 1301.

Warenne descent from Geoffrey Plantagenet continued with Sir Edward de Warren, who was the illegitimate son of the last earl Warenne of Surrey (d 1347), and from around those times his heirs remained lords of Poynton and Stockport until recent times. Poynton is in the north of Prestbury parish and Stockport is just to its north, both in east Cheshire. By 1370, there is extant evidence for the *Plont* family in these relatively remote pennine foothills of east Cheshire. This was towards the end of the plague years of 1349, 1361, 1369, and 1375, which saw many of the rich close their houses and leave for what they thought was the relative safety of the country³⁹.

Such clues suggest how early 'Plant(agenet) related' names around Warenne and Bigod lands in East Anglia *may have been* associated with the Bigod and Warenne families, who may then have helped to nurture the development of the Plant name in 13th century Flintshire (near Chester) and subsequently in east Cheshire. The resettlement of the Warenne line at Poynton followed their expulsion from East Anglian lands by the 1st duke of Lancaster around 1347-80⁴⁰.

18.2.3 Cheshire Dialect and some possible confusions of names

The spelling *Plont(e)* can be associated with the 'north west midlands dialect district' in medieval times and it can accordingly be compared with local modern pronunciations in that region. This dialect district (Figure 18.1) comprises Cheshire, south Lancashire, west Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and central and north Shropshire⁴¹.

Likely pronunciations of *Plont*, *Plaunte*, and the old French word *plaunte* can perhaps be compared with an influx of French nobility into England and, in particular, with Norman rule in the Welsh Marches which was followed for example by the royalist affinity of perhaps the most famous surviving Norman earl under the rule of the Plantagenets, Blundeville of Chester. This may help to explain why, in 13th and 14th century records for the 'north west midlands dialect district', there are spellings, *Plont(e)*, *mon*, *mony*, and *bonk* (for *Plant(e)*, *man*, *many*, and *bank*) with, for example, the place name *Monyash* in

³⁶H.J.Hewitt (1967) *ibid*, p 2.

³⁷John E Morris (1901) *The Welsh Wars and Edward I*, p 133.

³⁸John E Morris (1901) *ibid*, pps 245, 247, 253-4.

³⁹Roy Strong (1996) *The Story of Britain*, p 105.

⁴⁰Warenne family lands in Norfolk had mainly been acquired by Thomas, 2nd earl of Lancaster, from his enemy, the earl Warenne, in a highly advantageous settlement of outstanding disputes in 1318 which brought the house of Lancaster much of its richest property in East Anglia. The tenure of these estates was however disturbed as, on Thomas of Lancaster's execution for treason in 1322, they reverted to the Warenne family. It was not until the last earl of Warenne's death in 1347 that Henry of Grosmont, 4th earl and 1st duke of Lancaster, was able to make good his reversionary claim and, even so, the former Warenne lands had a separate administration from the rest of the duke's possessions in Norfolk as late as the 1380s. Simon Walker (1990) *The Lancastrian Affinity 1361-1399*, pps 184-5.

⁴¹Ernest Edgar Tooth (1997) *Local dialect and its relevance to Staffordshire surnames and place names in Staffordshire Studies*, Vol.9, pps 81-94.

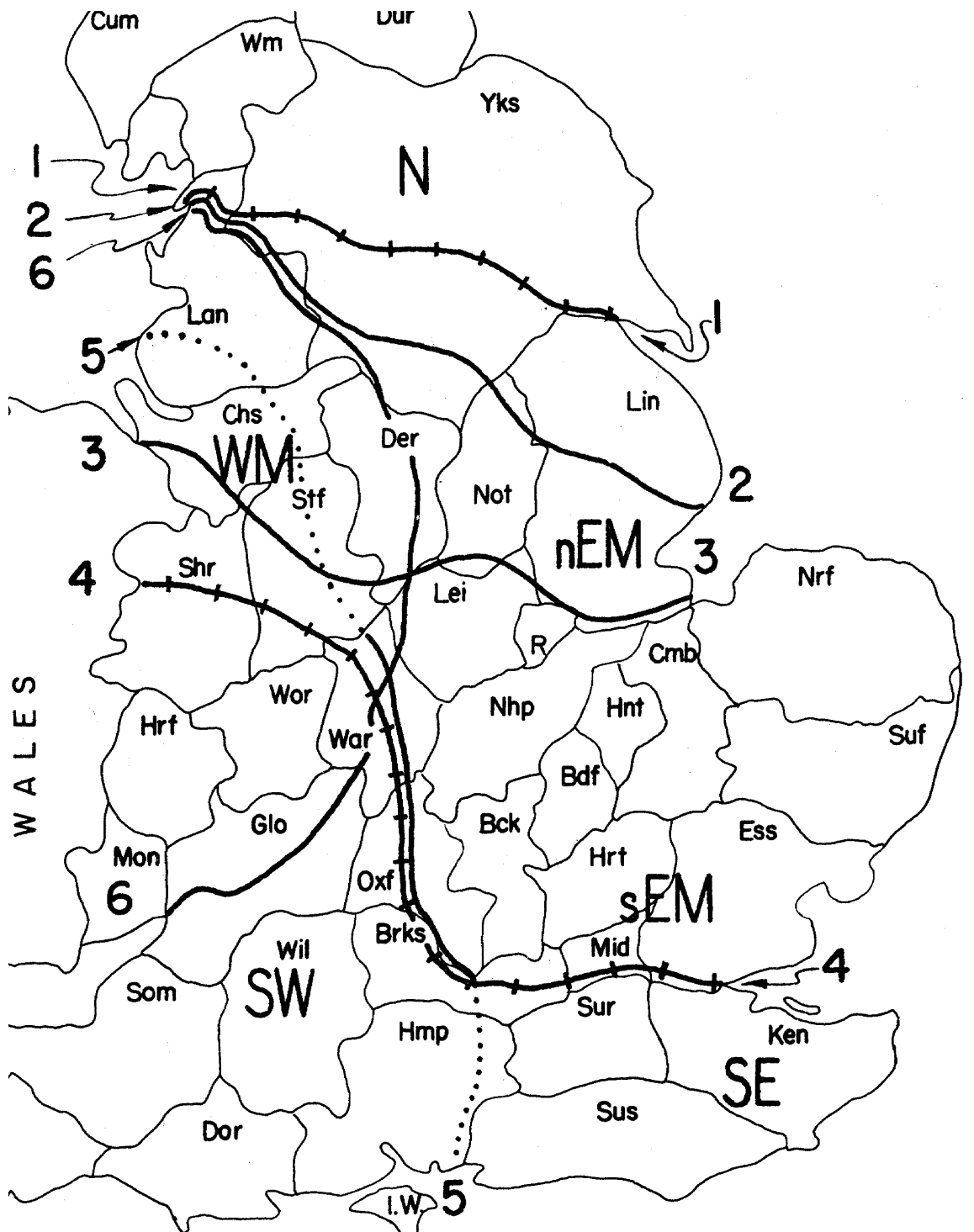


Figure 18.1: Dialect districts in England become discernible by around 1400-50, when there is sufficient literary material. The spelling *man* in the East Midlands becomes *mon* in the West Midlands, to the west of line 6. To the north of line 3, present tense endings of verbs are spelled *-es* whereas they are spelled *-eth* between lines 3 and 4: to the south and west of line 4 they are spelled *-en*. This loosely identifies a NW Midlands dialect district, lying between lines 3 and 6 (Kurath and Kahn (1983) *Middle English Dictionary*) where Plant in its main homeland was generally spelled *Plonte*, though there were also early spellings *Plente* and *Plaunte(s)* to the east and south of line 6

<p>late 12th century Ranulph de Blundeville, earl of Chester, grants land at Wincle (in Prestbury, east Cheshire) to the monks of Combermere Abbey</p> <p>1207 Ranulph de Blundeville grants a borough charter to Leek and, in 1214, founds Dieulacress Abbey near Leek town</p> <p>1219 The name <i>Plente</i> appears in Oxfordshire with duties for the king</p> <p>1232 Death of Ranulph de Blundeville, earl of Chester, who had also been earl of Lincoln since 1217</p> <p>1233 John Blund, servant to the king and distinguished scholar of Paris and Oxford, fails to become Archbishop of Canterbury</p> <p>1254 Prince Edward (later Edward I) becomes earl of Chester</p> <p>1262 The name <i>Plaunte</i> appears in Essex</p> <p>1266 Geoffrey Plantagenet is recorded with garderobe duties to the king at Wodestock (near Oxford)</p> <p>1254-68 Possible connection between Roger Plantyn or Planteng' and Flintshire near Chester</p> <p>1301 Ricardo <i>Plant</i> is granted a license to gather coal and deadwood at Ewelowe in Flintshire and, the same year, Prince Edward (later Edward II) becomes prince of Wales and earl of Chester</p> <p>1303 The name <i>Plonte</i> appears near Ashford</p> <p>1307 Prince Edward (later Edward III) becomes earl of Chester</p> <p>1308-59 Officers at Chester called Blount, serving the Plantagenet earl of Chester</p> <p>1315 Final agreement between Thomas de Corona, querant, and Thomas of Adlington, chaplain, deforciant^a concerning the manor of Adlington (NW Prestbury)^b ... <i>And the other half of the manor shall remain to John Blount and Margaret his wife and the heirs of the said John Blount</i>^c</p> <p>1333-76 The Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock (eldest son of Edward III), remains earl of Chester</p> <p>1370 The name <i>Plont</i> is known to have become well established around Prestbury and Leek</p> <hr/> <p>^aA deforciant is a defendant who deforces another or prevents him from inheriting an estate.</p> <p>^bAdlington is in the north west of Prestbury parish and had held an importance as great as the manor of Macclesfield.</p> <p>^cJ.P.Earwaker (1877) <i>ibid</i>, Vol.II, p 233.</p>

Table 18.9: The similar names *Blount* and *Plaunte* and possible connections with the earls of Chester, perhaps as diminutives of their names

west Derbyshire being thought to mean ‘many ashes’ and the surname Monypenny being thought to mean ‘many coins’ (*cf.* Planterose which might be translated as, for example, ‘coin abundance’). A spelling *Plont(e)*, for the Plant name, can accordingly be compared with a likely pronunciation of the Old French spelling *plaunte*.

It may be noted that Bl(o)undeville had founded Dieulacress at a time when monastery foundations were rare and it may also be recalled that the verb *plaunte* had particular associations with founding religious houses (*cf.* the verb *plauten* 3(a) in Table 18.5). One might accordingly *wonder* whether the name Blundeville might perhaps, in a blend of dialects, have been occasionally (mis)taken as a ‘Spanish-like’⁴² pronunciation of *Plaunteville*, meaning a ‘monastery founder’. A further secondary influence on 14th century developments of the Plant name might accordingly be considered to be:-

subtheorem 3(c): The two *phonetically similar* names, Blount⁴³ and Plaunt, which existed around Cheshire, may have reinforced each other here in the 14th century (*cf.* Table 18.9). Furthermore, it might be considered whether *both* of these names could have been (?mis)understood, at least *at times locally* if not originally, to be diminutives of the names of the Bl(o)undeville and then Pla(u)ntegenet earls of Chester (*cf.* theorems 1 and 2).

18.2.4 A possible *Blount* link between Chester and east Cheshire

Given that there may have been some local confusion between the names *Blount* and *Plaunt* (*cf.* subtheorem 3(c)), it may be relevant to note that there was evidently an early 14th century link between Blounts at Chester and the Blount name at Adlington in Prestbury parish of east Cheshire. This might perhaps hold some relevance in connection with the known existence of the *Plant* name near Chester in 1301 and then in Prestbury parish of east Cheshire by around 1370 (*cf.* Table 18.9).

The juxtaposition to east Cheshire of the High Peak, which was transferred in 1372 to Gaunt’s Lancastrian hands⁴⁴, can be contrasted with Cheshire’s reputation⁴⁵ for being the only English county to offer serious resistance to the new Lancastrian regime around 1400 with for example, in 1403, a large group of gentry from NE Cheshire being involved in Hotspur’s rebellion against the new order of Henry IV. As one possibility, it might accordingly be considered whether (some of) the Plonts could have been ‘old guard’ opponents of the Blounts, as some of the Blounts are known to have deftly moved over to the Lancastrian cause.

Some further information about 14th century Blounts is summarised in Table 18.10. By the late 14th century, it is known for example that there was (1392) a prominent *Blount* connection with the Lancastrian affinity and it is also known that a John *Plaint* testified in 1396 in connection with a child issuing from the (?extra-)marital affairs of the Lancastrian, Catherine Swynford, who had been John of Gaunt’s mistress and then wife (Chapter 17). This leaves some uncertainty about the extent to which the east Cheshire *Plonts* were loyal to the last king of the House of Plantagenet, Richard II. It seems possible, for example, that the *Plonts* may have retained grievances about the first duke of Lancaster’s 1347 expulsion of the Warennes from East Anglian land though it is alternatively possible, for example, that the *Plonts* moved over more or less imperceptibly to supporting the emerging Plantagenet cadet line of king Henry IV and his ensuing royal House of Lancaster.

⁴²In such a pronunciation ‘applause’ can sound like ‘a blouse’.

⁴³Reaney (1959) considers that the the names *Blunt* and *Blount* derive from the Old French *blund* meaning ‘blond, fair, yellow haired’. However, he also considers that the name *de Blunuil*’ of 1207 derives from the town of Blonville-sur-Mer (Calvados) and gives rise to the name *Bloomfield*. On the other hand, he considers that the names *Bloom* and *Bloomer* derive from the Old English word *bloma* and accordingly mean an ‘iron worker’.

⁴⁴Henry IV’s father, the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, had acquired the manor of the High Peak in 1372.

⁴⁵Allan Crosby (1996) *A History of Cheshire*, p 35.

- 1308** Inquisition Post Mortem for John de Distelegh^a taken at Chester before Stephen le Blount, Escheator^b ...^c
- 1315** Mention of John Blount and heirs in a deed relating to de Corona land at Adlington (just north of Macclesfield in Prestbury parish) (Table 18.9)
- 1316** Hugh de Corona gave the whole of his manors at Parva Neston and Hargrave, with small exception, to John de Blount, or Blound, citizen of Chester, in consideration of an annual payment of 10 marks^d
- 1327** Sir Thomas Blount, steward of the royal household announced that it was dissolved, bringing an end to the reign of Edward II^e
- 1331-6** Roger le Blount was mayor of Chester 4 times between 1331 and 1336^f
- 1335-59** John le Blount was mayor of Chester 13 times between 1335 and 1359^g
- 1392** Sir Walter Blount of west Derbyshire, a Lancastrian Commander whose father and uncle had been prominent in the service of Henry Grosmont, 3rd earl of Lancaster (1345-61), was chief steward to John of Gaunt, spending 96 out of 176 days at court in 1392^h

^aDisley is in east Cheshire.

^bEscheators were royal officials who, with their deputies, were responsible for effecting escheats of land held of the king. When a tenant of land died and there was no Common Law heir, or if his heir had forfeited his rights on account of felony, the land escheated to the immediate lord. On the death of a tenant-in-chief, the escheator, who usually held control over one or more counties, called an enquiry entitled Inquisition Post Mortem, with a local jury, to ascertain what lands the deceased had held and who was the heir.

^cJ.P.Earwaker (1877), *East Cheshire: Past and Present*, Vol.II, p 85.

^dJames Croston (1882) *Nooks and Corners of Lancashire and Cheshire*, pps 290-1.

^eMay McKisack (1959) *The Fourteenth Century*, p 91.

^fH.J.Hewitt (1967) *ibid*, p 72.

^gH.J.Hewitt (1967) *ibid*.

^hSimon Walker (1990) *The Lancastrian Affinity*, pps 12, 28, 33, 50, 82, 89, p1, 201, 211, 215, 217, 221-1, 223, 228, 229, 264, 285.

Table 18.10: Some information about 14th century Blounts

18.3 The Plant homeland and crossing the Peak

Dieulacress Abbey (1214-1538), like Combermere Abbey with its livestock outpost at Wincle Grange on the east Cheshire-Staffordshire border, was a Cistercian House. Both Wincle Grange and Dieulacress were founded by Ranulph de Blundeville, earl of Chester at the western edge of The Peak. Dieulacress with its lands of Rudyerd and Leek (Table 18.9), in the NW Staffordshire Moorlands, was founded as a replacement for Pulton Abbey in Cheshire where, it is said, the Cistercian, or white monks were *too much exposed to the incursions of the Welch*⁴⁶.

It seems possible that war, trade, and communication links through the church, nobility, and the crown may have played their parts in linking influence from the SE and Norfolk to east Cheshire. Such a 'route' may have held particular significance during the Welsh Wars for royal Plantagenet control of the NW and Wales. Such a 'trade connection' across The Peak and the so-called 'Big Moor' of north Derbyshire, with its challenges to horse transport and to the breeding of suitable livestock, including fine horses bred perhaps from Arabian studs, might even be considered to have related to such a meaning 'instigator of small Spanish horses' (*cf.* Table 18.4) as has been deliberated for the *Plantegenet* name⁴⁷.

Certainly, it is known that Edward I came to Macclesfield and left again in 1290 by crossing the Peak⁴⁸, as is detailed in Table 18.8. The spelling *Plonte* of the Plant name is known to occur shortly after near Ashford in 1303 though the royal manor of Ashford which Edward I visited in the NW Midlands Dialect District is not the Ashford in Kent that is traditionally associated with this early *Plonte* record (Table 18.1). From those times there are various records for a royal horse breeding stud at Macclesfield, as will be described more fully in a later Chapter. The Black Prince, who was Gaunt's elder brother and the potential heir to Edward III's crown, also visited Macclesfield, in 1353 and 1358 (Table 18.8). The *Plont* family homeland thus appears by 1370 to be in the general vicinity of Warene resettlement and, more particularly, near royal activity around Macclesfield.

18.3.1 Some early Leek Plants

It is known, for example, that in 1406 Edward Plont was granted by the Abbot of Dieulacress (Leek) a lease for 39 years of *two mess' one croft called Calwo-heye de Roche Graunge*⁴⁹. In 1485 Radulphus (Ralph), lord of Rudyerd (in Leek parish), reputedly slew the last Plantagenet cadet king, Richard III, and 20 years later he was granted a tenement in Rydrord called ?Bottsés or ?Battles by Lawrence Plant (Chapter 17). It has been reported earlier in *Roots and Branches* that, at about that same time, in 1504, Laurence Plonte of Rede-erth sold (?perhaps the same tenement) the ?Boghés to (presumably the same) Rauffe Rydrort⁵⁰.

By 1514, a Richard Plante and Robert Plante became 'priests secular' *by title of the monastery of Dieulacres*⁵¹. Following the dissolution of Dieulacress, it was reported in 1539 that Lawrence Plunte had received xx^s under the heading *Fees and annuities granted owt by Convent sealle, before the dissolution of the seid monastery*⁵². There are then records relating to a Christopher and other (?related) Plants in Leek parish. The first recognised record (so far) for a Plant in north Derbyshire, near Ashford across the Peak, is for a Christopher Plant at about this same time.

The Leek records for Christopher Plant occur in conjunction with the names Thomas Rudyerd of Rudyerd (who was evidently a successor and grandson of the aforementioned

⁴⁶John Sleigh (1862) *A History of the Ancient Parish of Leek, in Staffordshire*, pps 32-33.

⁴⁷This name appears explicitly in Oxford in 1266.

⁴⁸Sir Maurice Powicke (1962), *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307*, Oxford University Press.

⁴⁹W.K.Plant (1991), *Roots and Branches*, Issue No 2, page 7.

⁵⁰W.K.Plant (1991) *ibid.*

⁵¹W.K.Plant (1996) *Roots and Branches*, **12**, pps 48-50.

⁵²John Sleigh (1862) *ibid.*, pps 65-6.

Rauffe Rydrort) and Sir Ralph Bagnall. In 1552 Sir Ralph Bagnall was granted the manors of Leek, Leek-frith, and other properties, including the abbey, with most of its possessions, by Edward VI (1546-53) *'in consideration of the good, trewe, and faithfull sarvice, which he as well as in Fraunce, Scotlaund, and Irelaund, as elsewhere, to his deare father's maiestie, & sythens then to his highnes, theretofore had done & hereafter intended to doe'*⁵³. Subsequently in 1559, Queen Elizabeth gave this Sir Ralph Bagnall⁵⁴ the rectoral tithes of the parish of Leek⁵⁵.

In the 1560s, Elizabeth I was experiencing difficulties in curbing Parliament and the Puritans who were more enthusiastic than she to rid the country of its old Catholicism. The Leek records relating to a Christopher Plant include the following records of Final Concords, which suggest a challenge by Bagnall to the 'hereditary rights' of Plants in Leek⁵⁶:-

1565 Elizabeth Plante, complainant, and Ralph Bagnall, knight, deforciant of tenements in Leeke; and

1567 Between Christopher Plante, Thomas Plant, John Damporte and Elizabeth Damporte, widow, complainants and Ralph Bagnall, knight, deforciant of 4 messuages, 4 gardens, 4 orchards, 400 acres⁵⁷ of land, 100 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood, and 40 acres of firze and heath in Leeke.

This Christopher Plant may perhaps be he of a subsequent 1591 will (PRO Lichfield)⁵⁸. The same year as that of this will, there appears⁵⁹:-

18 April 1591 Between Thomas Greene and Lawrence Plont, complainants, and James Davemport, deforciant, of a messuage, a garden, an orchard, 100 acres of land, 20 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture, 3 acres of wood, 100 acres of moor in Leeke and Leek-frith. James remitted all right to Thomas and Lawrence and to the heirs of Thomas, for which Thomas and Lawrence gave him 130 marks of silver.

Soon after there is a deed⁶⁰ dated *last March, 1597* from Sir H. Bagnall⁶¹ to Thomas Rudyerd of Rudyerd, conveying the manor of Leek and Frith, the rectory, fairs and markets of Leek, and other property, for the sum of £512 subject to payments by Rudyerd to the ministers of Chedleton and Horton. This is endorsed, on the second skin, by Thos. and Lawrence Plant and seven others.

The manor of Heaton (adjoining Leekfrith in the north of Leek parish) had been retained by the crown after the Dissolution (1538) until 1614, when it was sold to William Tunnicliffe of Bearda Farm and William Plant also of Heaton. Plant and Tunnicliffe then sold it in 1629⁶².

18.3.2 Possible descent of the Plant's Yard Plants

In the year of the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1538), a Christopher Plant was leasing estate at Bakewell (in mid north Derbyshire, across the Peak from Leek) from Ralph

⁵³Sir Ralph Bagnall is mentioned in history as, having in his place in parliament, opposed Queen Mary (1553-8) and Cardinal Pole in their attempt to restore the pope's supremacy in England.

⁵⁴Ralph Bagnall is mentioned in Grafton's *Chronicles* as knighted at the '*cruell battayle of Muskelboroughe*' in August 1546. Ralph and Nicholas, sons of John Bagnall, born at Newcastle-under-Lyme, ... raised again their sunk ancient family, once seated at the village of their own name, by their valour only. John Sleight (1862) *ibid*, pps 18 and 20.

⁵⁵John Sleight (1862) *ibid*, pps 18-20.

⁵⁶Wm Salt Archaeological Society (1880) *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, Vol XIII, pps 245 and 265.

⁵⁷An acre in these records is not necessarily the same measure as a modern English acre.

⁵⁸W.K.Plant (1993) *Roots and Branches*, 5, p 17.

⁵⁹W.K.Plant (1994) *Roots and Branches* 8, p18.

⁶⁰John Sleight (1862) *ibid*, pps 21-2.

⁶¹This is evidently Sir Henry Bagnall, the son of Sir Nicholas Bagnall who was the younger brother of the aforementioned Sir Raufe Bagnall who died without legitimate issue. Sir Henry was *knighte-marshalle and lord deputy of Ireland* killed '*fighting amongst the thickest*' near Blackwater, 14th August 1598. John Sleight (1862) *ibid*, pps 20 and 302.

⁶²Victoria County Histories: Staffordshire, Vol VII Leek and the Moorlands, (Oxford University Press 1996).

<p>Elinor (mother of King John):-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The very Spirit of Plantagenet! I am thy gradam</p> <p>Bastard:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Madam, by chance but not by truth What though?</p>
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Table 18.11: A Shakespearian comment about illegitimate descent from the Plantagenets

Gell of Hopton. It is not (as yet) clear whether there is a connection between this first recognised record for a Plant in north Derbyshire and the aforementioned 16th century Christopher Plant who had been subjected to deforcement from lands around 20 miles to the west in Leek. The Christopher Plant of north Derbyshire was leasing the Old House (now a Museum) in Bakewell.

Bakewell is not far from Great Longstone where there are known to have been several Plants by around 1650. The ‘Great Longstone ancestral contention’ for the Plant’s Yard Plants (Chapters 15 and 17) begins with a William Plant who was baptised to Anthony Plant and Emma (formerly Piddock) at Great Longstone in 1650. This William from Great Longstone may have visited either Gawsorth (east Cheshire) or Leek (north Staffordshire), about 20 miles to the west, around the time of the birth (*ca.* 1696-1708) of $W^m(0)$ of Duckmanton — Duckmanton is about 15 miles east of Great Longstone and 10 miles south of Sheffield where, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, two of $W^m(0)$ ’s sons, a bellows maker Benjamin and a bricklayer John, feature prominently at the two Sheffield sites of Plant’s Yard, evidently involved in the conversion of Sheffield’s grinding wheels to water and steam powered forges⁶³.

18.4 Synopsis

The available evidence for the formation of the Plant name is fragmentary, as is not unusual for medieval times, though it is rather more remarkable to note that there seems scope for more controversy in ascribing a meaning to the Plant name than there is for most other surnames. As indicated in this Chapter, various strands of meaning from otherwise separate words and names, such as Plantegenet, Plente, and Plaunte, can be brought together, within the historical circumstances of the 13th century, to produce the rudiments of an explanation for the meaning of Plant. The meaning ‘royalist auxiliary’ seems to be more robust to detailed scrutiny than the more summarily supposed notion, which has abounded in recent years, that Plant can be taken simply to mean a ‘gardener’. A more complete framework that encompasses *various* meanings, which have been proffered in various books for *Plant*, can be expressed in the form of three theorems, which can be summarised as:-

1. ‘royalist auxiliary’ — anything from a gardener to a king’s minister; and perhaps, in particular,

⁶³Their nephew $W^m(1)$ arrived in Sheffield around 1800 and it was he who was apparently the father of the Sheffield shoemaker William Plant (1803-48) as will be described in some detail in a later Chapter.

Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou, fathers the bastard Hamelyn, whose line became the Warenne earls of Surrey, as well as fathering Henry II who, along with his son John, issued trading charters to Chester, with those by John signed (1188-99) by Roger de Plan'; the Norman earl of Chester, Ranulph Blundeville, married the widow of John's elder brother and founded Dieulacress Abbey in Leek (*ca.* 1214) — the phonetically similar expression *plaunte ville* to his name means 'found monastery'; the illegitimate Warenne line formed a marriage link (*ca.* 1235) with the Norman Bigod earls of Norfolk whose butler was called Roger Plantin (1254); the Bigod earls were in charge of the commissariat and Flintshire and a variant Norfolk name Roger Planteng' (1268) can be supposed to relate to 'founding Englefeld' which was the name given to Flintshire and adjoining lands won in Wales; the Plant name itself appears in Essex by 1262 and in Flint by 1301 with coal rights which may have related to the activities of the commissariat; the Blounts (or Blounds) were Chester officials (1308-59) with a link to Prestbury, under the Plantagenet earls of Chester (1254-1399); the Plont name became well established in Prestbury and Leek (by 1380) before the fall (1399) of the royal House of Plantagenet to the Plantagenet cadet House of Lancaster.

Table 18.12: Some facts of likely relevance to the Genesis of the Plant name around its Cheshire homeland

2. '*Plantagenet child*' — early Plantagenets practised nepotism — hence this meaning can be seen as a particular possibility under the general heading of (1) above.
3. Beyond this, there are possible secondary meanings, such as:-
 - (a) from Plumpton or from the Plantagenet colony;
 - (b) particular associations with foundation, growth, and plenty; and
 - (c) possible associations with, in particular, the names of the famous earls of Chester through such diminutives as *Bl(o)undeville* → *Bloun(d/t)* and *Plant(e/a)genet* → *Pl(e/a/o)nt(e)*.

The preponderant meaning for *Plant* can hence be supposed to be 'royalist auxiliary' (theorem 1) and this was clearly the role of Radulphus Plente at Oxford in 1219, as well as of the king's minister Roger Plent at Exeter around 1364-8. There is literary evidence that *plente* was a variant spelling of *plante* and, indeed, there is evidence of a confusion between the meanings of *plaunte* and abundance (*cf.* subtheorem 3(b)). The more specific possible meaning 'Plantagenet child' (theorem 2) can thereafter be assessed in the light of a smattering of further evidence — for example, *plant* has a meaning 'child' for the Welsh, the title Child(e) had noble connections in medieval times and, if taken as a diminutive of Plantagenet, Plant could mean 'natural child' in keeping with the known Plant heraldry.

Such a supposed connotation of 'illegitimate child' might perhaps be associated with one of the many alleged bastards of king John — it may hence be appropriate to reflect on some lines of Shakespeare (King John, Act 1, Scene 1) which appear in Table 18.11. An alternative line of illegitimate descent is, however, through John's uncle Hamelyn and there is a modicum of evidence to support a Plant association with Hamelyn's line, as has been outlined in this Chapter. Some related chronology is set out in Table 18.12 and such facts can be presented rather more summarily with some poetic license in a simple verse:-

After John Lackland chartered Chester, as signed by Roger de Plan',
the earl of Chester planted Dieulacress; so, Blundeville was a *Plaunteville*.

The Plantagenet bastard Warennes wed with Bigod earls of Norfolk
and Bigod's butler, Roger Plantin, turned to Planteng' planting Englefeld.

After Plantagenet earls of Chester annexed Blundeville's little Blounts,
Lancastrians faced Plantagenet kin and Cheshire had the Plonts.

Further evidence for Leek in the Plant homeland, by Tudor times, suggests that the Plants had particular ties to the pre-Dissolution establishment of Dieulacress. By the 1560s, a Christopher Plant and other Plants were being deforced from Leek land by Sir Ralph Bagnall whose reputation had been built on his opposition to the Catholicism of Queen Mary. A 1538 Bakewell deed shows that (?another) Christopher Plant had been leasing estate, at the other side of the White Peak, from Ralph Gell of Hopton whose fortunes were based on wool and lead mining.

A century later, Sir Ralph Gell of Hopton kept Derbyshire under firm Roundhead control through the English Civil War by which time a small knop of Plants was to be found at Great Longstone near Bakewell. In the Great Longstone ancestral contention, the Sheffield Plant's Yard Plants are taken to have had a particular line of descent from those 17th century Plants of Great Longstone.