

Chapter 20

Plantagenet *vita* and Plant's Yard life

LIFE'S MEANING IN PLANTAGENET TIMES AND A PLANT'S YARD PLANT SHOEMAKER

May 2000. One of a series of Chapters by Dr. John S. Plant, Keele University, England, ST5 5BG.

The Plant name evidently formed, around 1200, in proximity to [correction made later: Geoffrey Plante Genest whose bastard descent included the Warren earls of Surrey and whose royal descendants eventually bore the Plantagenet surname]. In the "Plantagenet" environment of Oxford by the early 13th century, new learning was in evidence in the writings of Grosseteste, who added light to Islamic traditions for the 'plant soul'. Such a context of evidence provides clarification for the meaning that was being set for the emerging Pl(a/e)nte name in England.

By around 1350, the Plant name evidently settled with the illegitimate Warren descent in east Cheshire. It remains doubtful that the name Plant should be associated too narrowly with a particular occupation. It may not have been until the mid 16th century that this name spread significantly to mid north Derbyshire and this was followed by the arrival in mid 18th century Sheffield of the *Plant's Yard* Plants — life for the Sheffield shoemaker William Plant (1803-48) was no doubt influenced more by an environment of 'mechanical life' than by erstwhile beliefs relating to 'Plantagenet' *vita*.

20.1 A context of meaning for Plantagenet and Plant

Around the turn of the 1st millennium, one Arab poet described Cordova, in southern Spain, as a 'garden of the fruits of ideas'. This imagery draws in a picture of ancient beliefs in mother earth with her plenty. In French, 'mother earth' has become *notre mère commune* with belief in the virgin birth¹ and *la Trinité*². This differs from the monotheist beliefs of the Mohammedans. Moorish philosophy combined learning from many cultures³.

In particular, the Divine words 'We created man from an extract of clay', with the implicit intermediaries of plants and animals, left their mark on orthodox Christian faith as the Pl(a/e)nte name was forming England.

¹Mohammed M. Pickthall (1945) *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, pps 405-6 remarks 'For Christianity, celibacy is the ideal; even monogamy is a concession to human nature. For Mussulmans the ideal is monogamy, the concession to human nature is polygamy'.

²The Trinity is a complex manifestation of the Christians' *one* God; most particularly as the father, son, and holy spirit.

³The were particular influences from the Greeks, India, and China. The introduction to Sir R.F.Burton's translation of the 16th century Arabic treatise 'The Perfumed Garden', edited by A.H.Walton (1982), pps 30-1, 40 notes that an Arab poet has ideally expressed the fundamental reverence underlying their attitude to Oriental erotology with 'Love enters in through the eyes which are the doors of the spirit, and then diffuses himself throughout the whole soul.' More generally, a primary characteristic of Spanish-Arabic poetry in Moorish times was a deep feeling for nature (Reynold A.Nicholson (1930) *A Literary History of the Arabs*, pps 417, 425).

20.1.1 A Moorish influence concerning 'the plants'

The civilising influence⁴ of the Moors⁵ had, even by the 8th century, extended into western France, with Cordova (southern Spain) becoming a centre of learning for Christians as well as Muslims. Moorish philosophy in Spain ended with Averroes (1126-98) who was born at Cordova. In his book *'Incoherence of the Incoherence'*, Averroes⁶ disputes with Ghazali's (*i.e.* Algazel's) book *'Incoherence of the Philosophers'* and this includes, in one section, the following remarks:-

'Ghazali says:-

... matter can receive any form, and therefore earth and other elements⁷ can be changed into a plant, and a plant, when an animal eats it, can be changed into blood, then blood can be changed into sperm, and then sperm can be thrown into the womb, and take the character of an animal ...

I (*i.e.* Averroes) say:-

... For instance, the plant comes into existence through composition out of the elements; it becomes blood and sperm through being eaten by an animal and from sperm and blood comes the animal, as is said in the Divine Words: 'We created man from an extract of clay ...'.

In general terms, Averroes⁸ was defending much of Avicenna's approach, which included the philosophical compromise⁹ that:-

- *genera* (or universals, such as life) are at once before things, in things, and after things.

More particularly, as a part of his diatribe, Averroes is referring to something akin to a traditional 'conduit for creation' from mother earth to man, which can be thought of as involving, at least in part, some 'genera' such as 'life'.

20.1.2 Apparent relevance to the Plantagenet and Plant names

It seems relevant for our present purposes to note that this influence of Averroes at Cordova in Moorish Spain can be expected to have impacted on philosophy at Anjou in western France, from where the "Plantagenet" kings and their noble relatives came to England. The historical

⁴In the view of the historian of philosophy, Bertram Russel (1946), *History of Western Philosophy*, pps 395, 420:- 'Our use of the phrase the Dark Ages to cover the period from 600 to 1000 (AD) marks our undue concentration on Western Europe. ... From India to Spain, the brilliant civilization of Islam flourished. ... Mohammedan civilization in its great days was admirable in the arts and in many technical ways, but it showed no (noted) capacity for independent speculation in theoretical matters. Speaking generally, the views of the more scientific philosophers come from Aristotle and the Neoplatonists in logic and metaphysics, from Galen in medicine, from Greek and Indian sources in mathematics and astronomy. ... The Mohammedans ... preserved the apparatus of civilization — education, books and learned leisure (They) stimulated the West when it emerged from barbarism ... mainly in the thirteenth century ... — the stimulus produced new thought ... scholasticism.'

⁵Following the closure of the Neoplatonic Institute in Athens in 529 AD, learning spread most notably through Baghdad to North Africa. After having been asked by the ruler of southern Spain to help with a rebellion against King Roderick of Spain, the Moorish Arabs from NW Africa pushed onwards into France and captured Bordeaux in 732 AD though they were later driven back into Spain. The Moors introduced irrigation, grain, fruit crops, learning, and science into a backwards Europe. Under the Moors, Spain gained a reputation as the most civilised country of western Europe, introducing for example the study of such subjects as astronomy, geography, chemistry, and natural history at their capital Cordova.

⁶*Averroes's Tahafut Al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, Translated from the Arabic with Introductory Notes by Simon Van Den Bergh (1954), reprinted 1969, Vol.I, pps 327, 332.

⁷That is fire, air, and water as well as earth.

⁸The final part of Averroes' book *Tahafut Al-Tahafut* is 'About the natural Sciences' and comprises four discussions on (1) The denial of a logical necessity between cause and effect; (2) The impotence of the philosophers to show by demonstrative proof that the soul is a spiritual substance; (3) Refutation of the philosophers' proof for the immortality of the soul; and (4) Concerning the philosophers' denial of bodily resurrection.

⁹In terms of ancient reasonings, these accounts for the generation of man can be seen as being a mix of (1) methodistic arguments (*cf.* Aristotle) building from earth; and, (2) teleological arguments (*cf.* Plato) centring from the purpose of creation, man.

record in England indicates that the place name Plontone, the bye-name Plantan', and the surname 'Plant(a/e)genet' attended the formation of the Plant surname.

Postulate 1. Averroes's influence provides a consistent context of meaning for the names Plantagenet and Plontone.

A *plant-horse* interpretation of the Plant(a/e)genet name can be taken to denote a 'divine right stemming from mother earth', in as much as it forms a major part of Ghazali's and Averroes's 'conduit for creation'. Moreover, much of the remaining part of Ghazali's and Averroes's scheme, to wit the blood and the sperm that is thrown into the womb, can be compared with the fact that the two Middle English names Plontone and Plantegenet can be taken to form a 'Freudian' paradigm^a, with Pl(a/e)nte-Tun meaning 'fertile enclosure' and the noble Pl(a/e)nte-Genet remaining apposite as a 'horse borne establisher'.

^aAssociatism theory can be applied to various beliefs and inflexion by gender permeates many tongues. Latin and other languages denote inflexion by word suffices.

Postulate 2. This same context may apply to the formation of the Plant name^a.

From 1219 onwards, the formative *Pl(a/e)nte* name is found in England with *various* proximities to the 'Warren Plantagenet' descendants of Henry II's illegitimate half brother, Hamelin 'Plantagenet' (Chapter 19). In 1225, Hamelin's son, William 'Plantagenet' (Warren) (1166-1240) married Maud Marshall (1192-1248), who is known to have had direct links to *both of*:

1. the Striguyl estate in Monmouthshire (SE Wales borderlands) which is subsequently known to have included a manor called *la Planteland*; and,
2. the c1254-8 bye-name *Plantyn* in Norfolk, neighbouring Warren 'Plantagenet' lands and early evidence for the *Pl(a/e)nt(e)* name.

^aDeterminism, which was associated with Aristotelianism and Averroism, was condemned in 1277 by the Church as heresy.

Inference. It seems likely that the meaning of the Pl(a/e)nte name should be considered initially in a context of influence stemming from Averroes's 'genera of creation'.

Thus, it seems likely that the Pl(a/e)nte name formed, following on from the 12th century renaissance of Latin West Europe, in a context of Moorish influence accompanying the arrival in England of [~~correction made later~~ Geoffrey Plante Genest's descendants] the Warren earls of Surrey. Within such a context, both *plente* and *plante* can be taken to refer the progeny of 'mother earth', yielding a general meaning '*establisher child*' for Plant. This meaning remains consistent with various evidence.

20.2 The 'plant soul' and the 13th century Pl(a/e)nte name

Concepts of 'mother earth' and her progeny seem relevant to the emerging Pl(a/e)nte name. As will be indicated further below, the words and name *Pl(a/e)nte* can be regarded as being redolent, under the "Plantagenets", not only of a strategy¹⁰ for the 'colonisation of lands', but also of allusions to the 'plantation' of 'Plantagenet-Christian' beliefs in England such as beliefs in a 'plant soul' with its powers of nutrition, growth, and (reproduction or) generation (Table 20.2).

¹⁰There are associable definitions of the Middle English verb *plauten*, or *to plaunt*, along the lines of 'to establish such things as a religious establishment, a city, or a colony'.

Like other ancient religions, the religions of Egypt and Babylonia were originally fertility cults: the earth was female and the sun male. Throughout western Asia, the Great Mother was worshiped under various names, and when Greek colonists in Asia Minor found temples to her, they named her Artemis and took over the existing cult^a. Orphic doctrines contain much that seems to have come from Egypt to Greece via Crete. The Orphic proclaimed himself the child of the earth and the starry heavens, with the body coming from the earth and the soul from the heavens. Socrates held that death was the separation of the soul from the body. Pythagoras believed in the transmigration of souls from one life form to another.

In Plato's dualism, the soul is superior to the body. For Plato:-

‘The soul is like an eye: when resting on that which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands, and is radiant with intelligence, but when turned towards the twilight ... then she has opinion only ...’.

For Aristotle, the purpose of an eye is to see but it cannot see when parted from the body and, in fact, it is the soul that sees — hence, the soul is what makes the body one thing, having unity of purpose and, moreover for Aristotle, the mind is separate from the soul in essence.

^aChristianity transformed her into the Virgin Mary, and it was a Council of Ephesus that legitimated the title ‘Mother of God’ as applied to Our Lady.

Table 20.1: Ancient Souls

Christian teachings in England had been concerned with man's relationship to God but it seems clear that, by 1209, Grosseteste (Oxford) had taken up Avicenna's scheme for the three biological divisions of the human soul. By c1238, he provided a detailed summary of Avicenna's scheme including, for ‘the plant’ aspect of the soul:-

<p>the vegetative soul has the three fundamental functions...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition, • growth, and • reproduction; 	<p>which are governed by the four powers...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. attractive, 2. retentive, 3. digestive, and 4. evacuative.
---	---

For example, the expanding and stabilizing qualities of heat and dryness are taken to assure the efficacy of the attractive power, to attract nutrient required for growth to the average size and then to restore matter lost in the unceasing flux of life.

Grosseteste gave more emphasis in the ‘plant soul’ to celestial light. He used a form of science, or light-metaphysics, in an attempt to deduce the four underlying powers of the vegetative soul from the optical properties of light. The ensuing energy from the ‘light quanta’ is referred to as ‘vegetable life’ or the ‘life force’, whose efficacy was taken to depend on the relative force of the light and the resistance that the matter offers.

Table 20.2: Grosseteste's early 13th century scheme for ‘the plant soul’

The name *Plente* is found in 1219 at Oxford and in Kent, and at York in 1230. These locations correspond with ones of likely religious amelioration in England. One might perhaps consider that the ancient desideratum of hot arid climes was for an 'oasis' of plants and plenty, to be supplied through the auspice of 'mother earth'. In the colder, darker climes of England, it might well have been felt that an amended emphasis was needed such that attention was given to a more topical desideratum, to wit *light*^a. Grosseteste, who introduced light into the 'plant soul', had evidently come into the king's favour by 1235 when, from Oxford, he was appointed bishop of Lincoln though this did not prevent him from holding definite ideas about the relationship of the Church to the realm^b — he was no courtier^c.

^a*In essence* light (or perhaps the element Fire) can be related back to the ancient male God, the sun.

^bJames McEvoy (1982) *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, p 435. Typically, Grosseteste has less to say concerning the dignity of the king's position and more about the responsibility it imposes.

^cGrosseteste reminds Henry III:- *Priesthood was instituted to govern for eternal peace, kingship for temporal; neither should interfere with the other's domain, both should co-operate. However, the Church receives its power immediately from God, the prince, on the other hand, from God through the church Christian princes have the Gospel for light ... At his investiture the king receives a non-sacramental anointing conferring the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for his chief need is wisdom to guide his subjects*

Table 20.3: Formation of the Pl(a/e)nte name and Grosseteste

The 12th century renaissance of Latin West Europe owed much to Moorish learning which, for example, had preserved much of the ancient philosophy of the Greeks. From the beginnings of the 12th century, there was an influx of new ideas into Latin west Europe from the Muslim world and the Christian world was challenged by both of:-

Moorish learning involving renewed knowledge of Aristotle^a and some Greek science, together with the discovery of Islamic thought. This led to pantheism, associated with Amarinus and Averroism, in which everything in the world is part of God. This could be largely assimilated into a Catholic framework.

Contact with heresies the most potent of which was Catharism. These had to be rejected though mysticism, deriving from the 13th century translations of Proclus, Plotinus and the pseudo-Dionysius, came to constitute the mainstream of unorthodoxy^b. The only scholastic to concern himself greatly with such matters as the kissing of toads on the mouth, a charge made against the Catharists of southern France, was William of Auvergne (1180-1249). Pope Gregory IV, who was obsessed by heresy, claimed in his bull *Vox in Rama* of 1233 that the Devil appeared to heretics in the form of a toad, goose, duck, black cat, or pale man^c.

In the 1277 condemnation of determinism, associated with Aristotelianism and Averroism, 219 were condemned at Paris and 30 by the archbishop of Canterbury at Oxford^d. Roger Bacon was imprisoned in 1278 (Table 20.5).

^aThe Greek view, found in Aristotle and Plato, is that creation out of nothing is impossible and that God is an architect of primitive matter. This contradicts the view of St Augustine who maintains, as every orthodox Christian must, that God created substance, not only order and arrangement. Bertrand Russell (1946) *ibid*, p 352.

^bJeffrey Burton Russell (1971) *Religious dissent in the Middle Ages*, p 111.

^cJeffrey Burton Russell (1972) *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, pps 126, 147, 160-1.

^dGeoffrey Leff (1967) *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, pps 5, 32.

Table 20.4: Moorish learning and Religious orthodoxy

With the arrival in the 12th century of the “Plantagenets” from western France, there was a renaissance in learning as England’s first University was founded at Oxford, near the royal palace of Woodstock^a. In the 11th century all Christian religious houses had been Benedictine but, by the early 13th century, there were mendicant friars who were not responsible to diocese or bishop and who could walk through boundaries of parish, diocese, and country. The first mendicants to arrive were the Dominicans in 1221 followed by the Franciscans in 1224.

The three most important Franciscan scholastics were Roger Bacon (c1220-92)^b, Duns Scotus (ca. 1270-1308)^c, and William of Occam (c1290-1349)^d. Around 1247 Roger Bacon had claimed that all English theologians, all philosophers, and indeed the universality of thinkers taught the direct creation of the intellectual soul only. However, by c1237 as bishop of Lincoln, Grosseteste had evidently changed from such a ‘philosophical’ view to holding that all three souls were directly created. New Dominican teachings were to attain a major significance, with St Thomas Aquinas (1225/6-1274) writing his most important work *Summa Contra Gentiles* in 1259-64. Aquinas was at the University of Paris where he, unlike others there, did not adhere so closely to the writings of Averroes. The intent of *Summa Contra Gentiles* was to establish the truth of the Christian religion and it is seemingly written for an imaginary reader well versed in the philosophy of the Arabs. Where St Thomas discusses ‘the plants’, he develops the view of Aristotle that ‘*Self nutrition is the only psychic power possessed by plants*’ and he embeds this into his ‘first principal of life’, which builds into the ‘*more or less*’^e standard scheme for three ingredients^f for the human soul^g:-

plants — nutritive (also augmentative and generative)

animals — nutritive + sensory

humans — nutritive + sensory + rational

^aAt this time, an increasing number of books relating to Greek philosophy were becoming available to western students, with translations coming from Constantinople, Palermo, and Toledo. Toledo in central Spain was the most important source though these translations were often from Arabic rather than directly from the Greek. Most of the philosophers at that time were French and these early ‘scholastics’ were primarily orthodox Christian and, where they included original thinking in their work, they generally disguised it. Initially they appealed either to the scriptures or to Plato until, increasingly by the 13th century, they began to appeal to Aristotle instead.

^bRoger Bacon (c1220-92) has been praised in modern times because he valued experiment, more than argument, as a source of knowledge and he is credited with pioneering science teaching at Oxford, though his unorthodoxy was not accepted into the curriculum — in 1278, his books were condemned by the General of the Order and he was put in prison for 14 years, dying soon after his release.

^cDuns Scotus (ca. 1270-1308) continued Bacon’s pattern of Franciscan rivalry with Aquinas and defended the Immaculate Conception — in this the University of Paris, and ultimately the whole Catholic Church, agreed with him.

^dWilliam of Ockham (c1290-1349) is remembered for *Ockham’s razor* which is traditionally represented by the phrase ‘entities are not to be multiplied without necessity’. Though his writings do not contain this phrase, it captures the spirit of his philosophy; that is ‘if everything in some science can be interpreted without assuming this or that hypothetical entity, there is no ground for assuming it’.

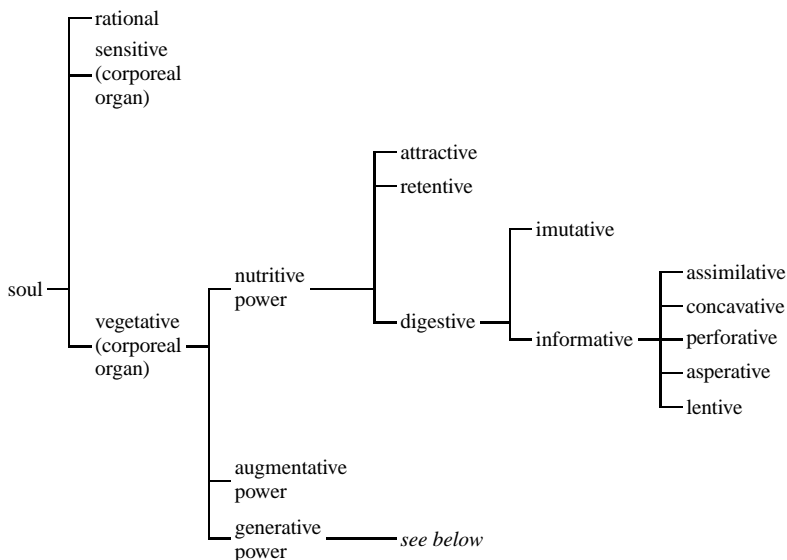
^eThere were ongoing disputes about the detail however. For example, the Franciscan Roger Bacon (Oxford) followed the earlier view of Averroes in holding that the active intellect is a substance separated from the soul in essence. He quotes various eminent divines, among them Grosseteste, as also supporting this opinion, which is contrary to that of St Thomas who regarded intellect as the cognitive faculty of the rational soul.

^fAquinas, however, did not think of the human soul as three nested, co-operating substantial forms but as a single form that gives a human being its specifically human mode of existence.

^gNorman Kretzmann and Eleanor Stump (1993) *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*.

Table 20.5: Early “Plantagenet” learning and the subsequent growth in Scholasticism

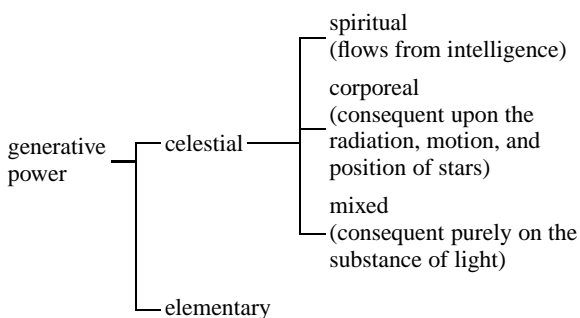
The structure of the vegetative soul is indicated in this book to be:-



Elsewhere in the *Summa Philosophae* there is a discussion of the **generative** power, which forms a function of the vegetative soul, though it also occurs elsewhere in the general scheme of this philosophy. Thus:-

The generative power, properly, is the power operative in the transmutation of elements from one to another or the generative power of living things The motive power of generation as understood loosely however is fourfold: ... productive of composition (any composition), ... of the composition of sensitive life, ... of the composition of rational life, ... of inanimate things.

For each of these sorts of generative power, the structure is outlined as:-



though, for the power productive of inanimate things, the celestial corporeal component of the power is called the empirical or mineral power (*virtus empirica*) and this is divided according to its production of stones, metals, or minerals, with each case being described in further detail.

Table 20.6: The late 13th century English *plant soul* as outlined in the *Summa Philosophae*

20.2.1 Origins of the 'plant soul'

Concepts stemming from 'mother earth' seem discernible in the Arabic writings of Avicenna (b 980), Ghazali (d 1111)¹¹, and Averroes (1126-98)¹². These writings also contain ongoing views from Greek philosophy concerning the soul (Table 20.1)¹³. In the view of Avicenna, the human soul had three parts, one shared with the plants, one with animals, and one more exclusively human:-

'God began with the noblest of substances, Intelligence, and He concluded with the noblest of beings, the Intelligent. ... God divided Man's substantiality into body and soul, the former containing his grosser and the latter his subtler elements. ... The physical element He implanted in his liver, to regulate his digestion and evacuation. ... The animal element He associated with his heart... Lastly he fashioned the human, rational soul in the brain... By virtue of the animal soul, he shares with the animal; his physical soul links him with the plants; his human soul is a link between him and the angels. ... The function of the physical soul is to eat and drink, to maintain the parts of the body, and to cleanse the body of its superfluities ... The reward of the physical soul's function is not to be expected in the spiritual world, and does not wait upon the resurrection, for this soul will not be raised up after death; it resembles a plant, in that when it dies it is dispersed and obliterated, never to be recalled to life.'

20.2.2 Arrival of 'the plant soul' and scholasticism in England

The *Plente* name is first known to exist at Oxford in 1219. Radulphus Plente had duties to the king which included *reparations* to the royal household. *Reparations* might mean building repairs, or spiritual ameliorations (*cf.* Table 20.3) agreeable to both crown and church¹⁴. Soon after, here at Oxford, the English scholastics Robert Grosseteste (c1170-1265)¹⁵, Robert Bacon¹⁶ and later Roger Bacon (1220-90) were active in developing English philosophy and in teaching theology to the Franciscan and Dominican orders, whose influence was rapidly growing at the royal court at that time.

By the early 13th century, the 'plant soul' was ascribed a seemingly more elevated position in England than elsewhere with a notable new feature in the writings of Grosseteste being the introduction of a concept to it of a 'heart of light' (Table 20.2). With Grosseteste's 'heart of light' in

¹¹It was Ghazali (d 1111) who won the battle for Islamic orthodoxy. His book *Incoherence of the Philosophers* was directed at such as those as the Teheran Philosopher Avicenna (b 980) who, even in his own lifetime, had been suspected of religious infidelity. Arthur J Arberry (1951) *Avicenna on Theology*, pps 1, 6, 50.

¹²Averroes (Ibn Rushd) was born at Cordova in Moorish Spain in 1126. He studied first theology and jurisprudence; then medicine, mathematics, and philosophy. He was recommended to the Caliph who took him into favour and, in 1184, made him his physician. Averroes continued in the service of the Caliph's successor until he was exiled in 1197 for unorthodox teaching, first to a place just outside Cordova and then to Morocco. He was accused of cultivating the philosophy of the ancients at the expense of the true faith. Shortly after, Moorish territory in Spain was greatly diminished by Christian conquests though Granada remained the last Moorish stronghold in Spain until it surrendered in 1492.

¹³Disputes about the eternity of the soul, and its parts, were continuing, as is indicated by the following extract from Averroes book *Tahafut Al-Tahafut* (Simon van der Bergh (1969) *ibid*, Vol.I, p343):- *But the discussion of the soul is very obscure, and therefore God, answering the question of the masses about this problem, says that this kind of question is not their concern, saying 'They will ask thee of the spirit. Say: "The spirit comes at the bidding of my Lord, and ye are given but a little knowledge thereof." ' And the comparison of death with sleep in this question is an evident proof that the soul survives, since the activity of the soul ceases in sleep through the inactivity of its organ, but the existence of the soul does not cease, and therefore it is necessary that its condition in death should be like its condition in sleep, for the parts follow the same rule.*

¹⁴This latter interpretation is consistent with the contemporary reconciliations, in the times of Henry III, between the "Plantagenet" Crown and the "Holy Roman" Church.

¹⁵Grosseteste was intimately and continuously connected with Oxford from at least 1225 (probably earlier) until he was elected bishop of Lincoln in 1235.

¹⁶In 1234 for example, there is a royal mandate directing Grosseteste, together with Master Robert Bacon OP, and the chancellor of the university to supervise the arrest of all prostitutes in Oxford who had disobeyed a royal order to leave the town. Robert Bacon was probably the uncle of the Franciscan Roger Bacon. (Francis Seymour Stevenson, MP (1899) *Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln*, pps 65-6.)

the plant soul, the 'vegetable life' or 'life force' of the plant soul was thought to derive from the 'celestial'.

It appears that concepts relating to the 'plant soul' were largely orthodox, albeit with detailed amendments, for both the Islamic and Christian faiths (Table 20.4).

Islamic influence. For Ghazali, 'matter can receive any form, and therefore earth and other elements can be changed into a plant' and, for Averroes, 'the plant comes into existence out of the elements', such that the 'plant soul' might have been thought by many to combine elements from 'mother earth', in as much as the element(s) Earth (and Fire) was (or were) brought by the element Water to the plant and, thereon, through the *genera* (cf. Avicenna) to the human soul.

Christian faith. It might be considered that such a view differed *only in fine detail* from the subsequent doctrine of St Thomas Aquinas (1225/6-74) who, albeit apart from the Averroist majority at Paris, held that the 'plant soul' was a *first* principal of life (Table 20.5).

As a 'first principal of life', the plant soul evidently¹⁷ related to 'vita'¹⁸ — in the Latin text of the *Summa Philosophae*, the generative function was loosely associated with the term *Vita autem composita inanimatorum* (i.e. eternal life however composed of inanimate things) — as a part of the 'genera of creation', *pl(a/e)nte* represented *both* the progeny of 'mother earth' and an establishing component of 'eternal life'.

20.2.3 Further comments on the likely meaning of Pl(a/e)nte

Within the context of both the developing philosophy and other literary evidence, it appears to matter relatively little to the meaning of *Pl(a/e)nte* whether we adopt the spelling *plente* or *plante*¹⁹ even though, with our modern beliefs, we consider the more modern spellings *plenty* and *plant* to represent quite separate meanings. Holding in mind a meaning 'mother earth's progeny', it seems a natural consequence that the surnames *Plant* and *Plenty* could have evolved from the same name *Plente*²⁰, which is in evidence just as English scholasticism was beginning to flower.

First, there is a record for a Radulphus Plente whose duties to the king involved funds for the

¹⁷The generative function was one of three, along with the nutritive and the augmentative, to be found in the 'plant soul' according to the *Summa Philosophae*. This book was long thought to have been written by Grosseteste (c1170-1265) but, more recently, it has been dated to c1265-75 in England. Charles McKeon (1948) *A Study of the Summa Philosophae of the Pseudo-Grosseteste*, pps 5-9, 151, 180.

¹⁸It has been suggested in modern times that the word *vita* here is an improper rendering of *virtus* since, in medieval Latin, *vita* means 'eternal life' whereas the 'power' implication of *virtus* derives from its meaning 'virility'. (In R.E.Latham (1965) *Revised Medieval Latin Word List from British and Irish sources*, *vita* = 'eternal life' c730, c800, c1362, c1430.) Though modern scholars have questioned the detailed sense of such meanings, it seems relevant to note that this book seems to leave open, under a "Plantagenet" influence in England, questions concerning the generative (cf. procreative) powers of the plant soul as they relate to the human soul's celestial components thereby leaving open possible implications, reinforced by the word *vita*, for 'eternal life'.

¹⁹A rigid interpretation of the spelling *plente* gives meanings abundance, fertile, or plenarty, which can be related to the plant soul's growth and generative powers. To this, it may be added that medieval English literature seemingly contains examples of reinforcements of meaning between *plente* and *plante* and such reinforcements remain compatible with notions of a soul-like eternal 'life cycle' of (re-)generation, growth, and abundance (cf. subtheorem 3(b)).

²⁰In his *Dictionary of British Surnames*, P.H Reaney (1976) lists *Plant* and *Plenty* as two separate surnames, citing evidence for their early existence as follows:-

Plant(e) — William Plante 1262, *Select Pleas of the Forest* (Seldon Society 13, 1901) Essex; William Plauntes 1275, *Rotuli Hundredorum* (London, 1812-18), Norfolk; and,

Plenty — Simon Plente 1230, *Pipe Rolls*, Yorks; William Plentee 1243, *Assize Rolls*, Somerset.

upkeep of Oxford²¹ and for reparations of the royal household at Oxford in 1219. Secondly, the MED²² lists the word *plente* as, amongst other things, a variant spelling of *pla(u)nt(e)*. Thirdly, the two 'variant surname spellings' *Plente* and *Pla(u)nte(s)* are known to have coexisted in Norfolk by around 1275 — both these, and other dialect spellings of the Plant surname, remain in evidence in later centuries.

A 20th century preoccupation with 'vegetable matter' or 'gardening', in connection with 'Plant related' names, can seemingly be traced back to Weekly's 1916 book on surnames²³. This suggests various meanings such as 'offspring' or 'cudgel' for Plant but then states separately for Planterose:-

Plantrose [John Plaunterose, *Hund. R.*] and Pluckrose [Alan Pluckrose, *ib*] still exist and have plenty of medieval support; *cf.* Simon Schakerose (*Pat. R.*), Peter Porterose (*ib*), Andrew Plantefene (*Leic. Bor. Rec.*), Elyas Plantefolye (*Fine R.*). For the cited name *Plantefene*, Weekly adds the footnote:-

From *foin*, hay, Lat. *faenum*.

However, the MED does not list any such meaning for *foin* and it lists *fene* as a known variant spelling of *fain*²⁴ yielding a likely interpretation of *Plantefene* as an 'eager (or happy) establisher child' (or perhaps, less likely, a 'spear lunger'²⁵).

Reaney²⁶ has contended that the Plant name means 'a gardener'²⁷ ignoring, for example, prominent 'Plant related' names such as Plantefolie and Plant(e/a)genet. Though a claimed connection with gardening sits easily with our *modern* understandings of the words *plant* and *rose*, it should be noted that a gardening interpretation for the Plant name relies heavily on supposing a particular connection between the names Plant and Planterose together with the assumption of one particular interpretation from several possible for Planterose. A different interpretation for Planterose, 'courtly establisher child', is more widely compatible with the historical record and with late medieval and early modern literature.

20.3 The Chester context for a 1301 Plant record

Though a general interpretation 'establisher child' for the Plant name does not preclude possible allusions to occupational activities, it should be stressed that the medieval context leaves this name widely non-committal of any specific answer to the question 'Which occupation?', leaving various possible 'occupational allusions' to be considered for the context of Chester and east Cheshire.

There is a 1301 record for a Robert *Plant* at Ewelowe, to the west of Chester, near the Welsh borderlands territory of the earl of Surrey, John 'Plantagenet' (de Warenne). There were outcrops

²¹Moorish *learning* and the Plant(a/e)genet surname appear in England in early "Plantagenet times" and they attend the foundation of Oxford University, near the royal palace of Woodstock, around the 1160s. The first "Plantagenet king" of England was Henry II who was from Anjou in western France and, after his crowning in 1154, it is estimated that the early "Plantagenet kings" spent about a third of their time in England. It seems of more direct relevance to the Plant name, however, to note that the descendants of Henry II's illegitimate half brother, Hamelin, are known to have become firmly based in England by c1154.

²²Kurath and Kahn, *Middle English Dictionary*.

²³Ernest Weekly (1916) *Surnames*, p 268.

²⁴The MED lists the following meanings for *fain*: adj: (1a) Joyful, happy; (1b) *for fain* = for joy; (1c) pleased, satisfied, or content; (2a) happy, willing, eager (to do something); (2b) glad, content under adverse conditions (to be able to pursue a certain course of action); (3) desirous of, or eager for something (with for, of, to phrase); (4a) favourably disposed (to a person); (5a) pleasing, enjoyable, attractive; (5b) suitable, good (for a purpose). Also, *fain*: adv: Gladly, joyfully, eagerly.

²⁵The MED lists for *foin*: n1: (a) A thrust or lunge with a pointed weapon; (b) a type of spear. For *foin* n2: (a) The beech marten; (b) the fur of the beech marten.

²⁶P.H.Reaney (1976) *A Dictionary of British Surnames*.

²⁷There were, for example, formal gardens at Belgrave, just outside Chester, where after 1290 Richard Lenginour, one of the supervisors of Edward I's castle building programme, built a country residence and laid out a formal garden within a double moat, its plan based on that of Flint castle. Alan Crosby (1996) *A History of Cheshire*, p 46.

Near Chester, a “Plantagenet” influence, as well as trade with Spain and western France, may have played a role in the revitalisation around 1300 of north western technology. More widely, it may be noted that, as a part of England’s renaissance, Henry II’s son, king John, had tried to introduce mechanised fulling into England though it was not until almost 200 years later, in the late 14th century, that England’s principal export turned from raw wool to woollen cloth^a. In the 13th century, skilled trades people had been increasing in evidence as the wool trade grew along with other industries based on lead, tin, coal, iron, and salt^b. A particular concentration of pre-1331 fulling mills, as well as surface coal, is in evidence (Figure 20.1) in the hinterland of the Monmouthshire port of Striguil (SE Wales) which had been associated with the wife of William ‘Plantagenet’ (Warren) and which included the manor of ‘*la Planteland*’.

In the 13th century philosophical schemes, the ‘plant soul’ had *not* related *directly* to industry, though there may have been some slight, indirect, industrial connotation. In particular, for the generative function, there was said to be (Table 20.6) a ‘celestial corporeal’ component which was called the *virtus empirica* or ‘mineral power’.

^ae.g. May McKisack (1959) *The Fourteenth Century 1307-99*, pps 365-70.

^bRoy Strong (1996) *The Story of Britain*, p 79.

Table 20.7: “Plantagenet” industry and the ‘plant soul’

of coal just over the Welsh border from Chester, where coal was mined at Eulowe and at Buckley (Figure 20.1). Such a local historical background can be associated with the 1301 license that was granted to Richard *Plant* of Ewelowe for gathering coal and deadwood at Ewelowe. From 1326 at least, it is known that coal was brought in regularly to Chester, by water — this may have been for lead founding or for iron forging purposes.

It would seem that it is only in ‘old French’ that there is a suggestion of a meaning *lead* to *plont*²⁸ and it can be added that the 1396 French phrase *monnaie de plont* may have derived from a (lead) ‘paten’ or its ‘imprint’ as was used in the minting of coins. Irrespective of the limited basis for adopting a meaning *lead* to *plont*, it seems possible that the Plants around Cheshire *may have had* some early *connection* with lead.

From 1284 to 1320, Flintshire dominated the lead markets of Cheshire, as well as of north and west Wales with their massive castle building programmes. For the production of lead in Flintshire at Holywell, there is evidence of the ‘simple bole smelting process’ which involved blocks of wood and brushwood. This evidently suffered from a chronic shortage of fuel around 1301-6²⁹ though, in 1303-4, quantities of lead were conveyed to Chester castle from Northop and Flint, with a monk of Combermere Abbey spending more than twenty weeks in the founding and then in the application of the lead to the roofs of the towers of nearby Beeston Castle³⁰. Details of the local manufacture, from lead, of salt pans for example are not certain though there was a ‘leadsmithy’ in Middlewich before 1316 and probably much earlier³¹.

²⁸There seems little reason to suppose a connection between such place names as Plumpton and lead, except perhaps in Cumbria, though the name Willelmus Plumbarius appears in 12th century Pipe Rolls [Pipe Roll Society, 19 Henry II, p 112]. Furthermore, there seems little *direct* reason for supposing that the name *Plont* could have arisen locally in the north west of England as a *straight-forward* ‘occupational surname’, of a similar type to such surnames as Silver (metonymic for a ‘silver smith’), Ledbetter (old English for a ‘lead worker’), or Ledder (possibly a ‘plumber’). P.H.Reaney (1976) *A Dictionary of British Surnames*. The apparently similar surname Gold is, on the other hand, said to be a nickname meaning ‘golden haired’.

²⁹I.S.W.Blanchard (1981) *Leadmining and smelting in medieval England and Wales*, p 83, in *Medieval Industry* edited by D.W.Crossley, Council for British Archaeology Research Report No. 40.

³⁰Beeston is about 10 miles SW of Chester, about midway between Chester and Combermere.

³¹H.J.Hewitt (1967) *Cheshire under the three Edwards*, pps 46-7, 52, 66.

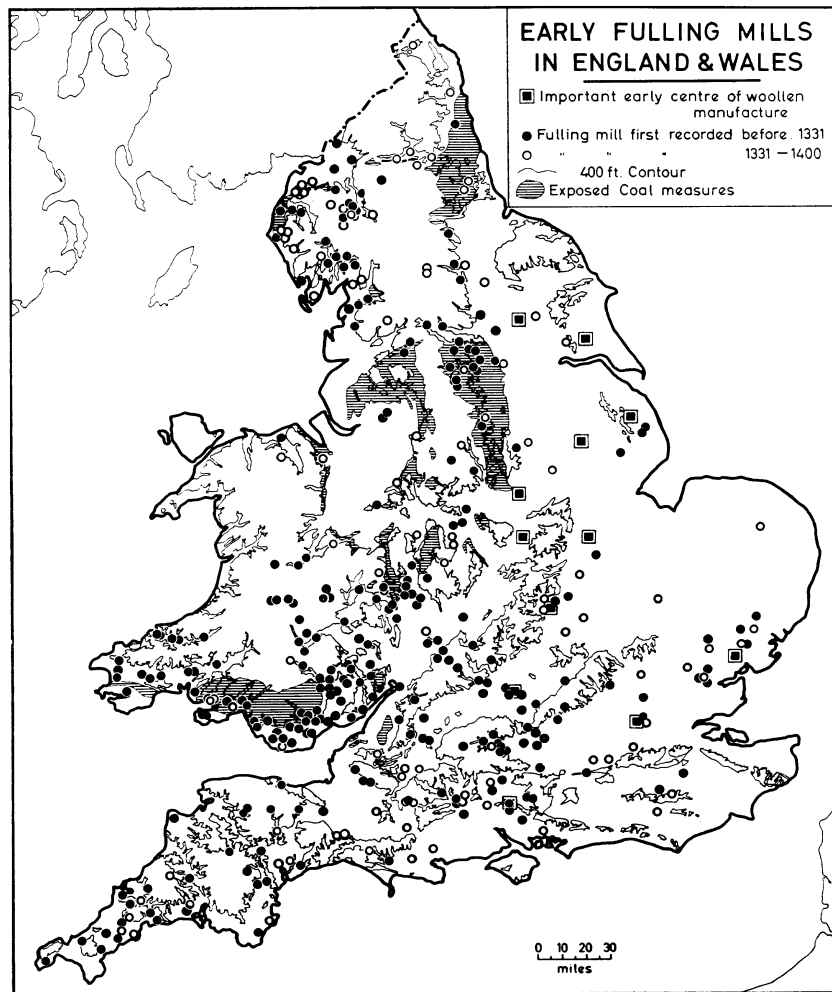


Figure 20.1: The 14th century distribution of some known Fulling Mills (from R.A.Pelham (1954) *Fulling Mills: A study of the Application of Water Power to the Woollen Industry*), showing also exposed coal measures — in the early 14th century, surface coal was used mainly just for industrial activities.

A possible interpretation of the Plant(a/e)genet name is a ‘horse (borne) establisher’ or an ‘instigator of small Spanish horses’^a. This might be thought to have evoked pictures of pack horses wending across broom-clad moors^b and such allusions may have helped to keep the naming traditions used by the Warren ‘Plantagenet’ affinity compatible with local traditions, around the times of their evident mid 14th century arrival in east Cheshire. The local traditions included horse-breeding and, seemingly also, the pack horse transport of salt and other commodities across the Peak District of east Cheshire and north west Derbyshire (Figure 20.3).

Lead mining in the High Peak. In medieval times, there was for example an evident royal interest in developing industrial activities in the north Derbyshire Peak District, adjoining east Cheshire, with a 1280/1 lead mining dispute there referring to the men of the field of king Edward I as well as those of his queen, Eleanor of Castille (northern Spain). There is however no *direct* evidence that the name Plant originated with lead trading activities, involving a *westbound* transport of ore from the royal forest of the High Peak (Table 20.9). It may merely be noted that, towards the end of the medieval phase of lead mining there, the name Plont is found well established just to the south west around Macclesfield.

Royal stud at Macclesfield. Around 1310-14, the last Warren earl of Surrey held the High Peak and, around those times, there is evidence for the royal earl of Chester’s horse-breeding stud nearby at Macclesfield in east Cheshire. As early as those times, it is known that a stallion was kept in the manor buildings in Macclesfield, which included a queen’s hall, a king’s chamber, and a great stable. This was the centre of the “Plantagenet” earl of Chester’s livestock interests^c. Hay gathered in the park was said to be ‘*for the lord’s stud and deer*’. Stallions were valued particularly highly and a bay stallion was bought in 1301 for £5.6s.8d. The 63 horses, colts and foals at the Macclesfield stud of the earl of Chester (Edward III) in 1329 included 2 stallions and 23 mares. In 1358 for example, 8 foals ‘*stamped with the lord’s sign*’ were transferred to the ‘*Prince’s keeper of great horses*’. The Black Prince (eldest son of Edward III) also had stud farms elsewhere, at Woking, Beckley, Prince’s Risborough and, for a time at least, at Denbigh.

Local uses of horses. In Cheshire, it is known that horses were used for haulage and as carriers. As well as mention of ‘cartloads’ and ‘horseloads’ in connection with tolls at the gates of Chester, every visit by the king, the prince, or nobles involved baggage which was normally horse-borne. In 1351 the Cheshire area abbeys of Chester, Vale Royal, Combermere and Dieulacress protested jointly to the Black Prince, concerning the excessive burden of providing for visitors with their grooms, horses and greyhounds, and even for the gross discourtesy of their guests. The Justice of Cheshire was instructed to take steps to prevent such abuse.

^aVarious Plant(agenet) related names can be considered to be of a verb-noun type and verb-noun surnames are commonplace in nearby Lancashire for example. Also, the Old French word *genet* means ‘small Spanish horse’ and there was a significant Spanish influence on western France from where the “Plantagenets” originated.

^bIt has been suggested in this and earlier Chapters that an interpretation ‘horse borne establisher’ may be most apposite for the Plant(a/e)genet nickname of the Plante Genest forefather of the Warrens, with their affinity, prior to its settlement in east Cheshire c1350. It should be noted, however, that the Plantagenet name is more often associated with the Latin words *Planta genista* which are interpreted to mean ‘sprig of broom’. It seems that it was some time *after* the 1330 execution of Thomas ‘Plantagenet’ (of Woodstock), earl of Kent, for something akin to ‘witchcraft’ that there is evidence of an association of ‘broom sticks’ with witches.

^cH.J.Hewitt (1967) *Cheshire under the three Edwards*, pps 31, 34-6, 44, 66, 89, 92.

Table 20.8: Transport and horse breeding in east Cheshire, c1300-60

There may perhaps have been transport of lead ore to the west of The Peak before lead workings within the royal forest of the High Peak were eclipsed^a (these workings are thought to have been around Castleton, which is shown in Figure 20.2). By 1260-1360 lead production became concentrated in the region between the modern A6 road (see Figure 20.2) and Lathkill Dale, in the manors of Bakewell and Ashford. The *main* carriage of lead ore from The Peak is generally thought to have been to the east, such as from Hucklowe (Figure 20.2) to smelting boles at Baslow (on the modern A619 road junctions just to the SE of Calver in Figure 20.2) in 1360-1420 and then, with activity moving further south, to boles around Stanton (east of Alport) in 1420-50^b.

^aThe obliteration of early workings by later lead workings in the High Peak has left a general ignorance about the detail of the early workings.

^bL.S.W.Blanchard (1981) *ibid*, pps 74, 76, 80.

Table 20.9: Lead mining to Cheshire's east, c1200-1450

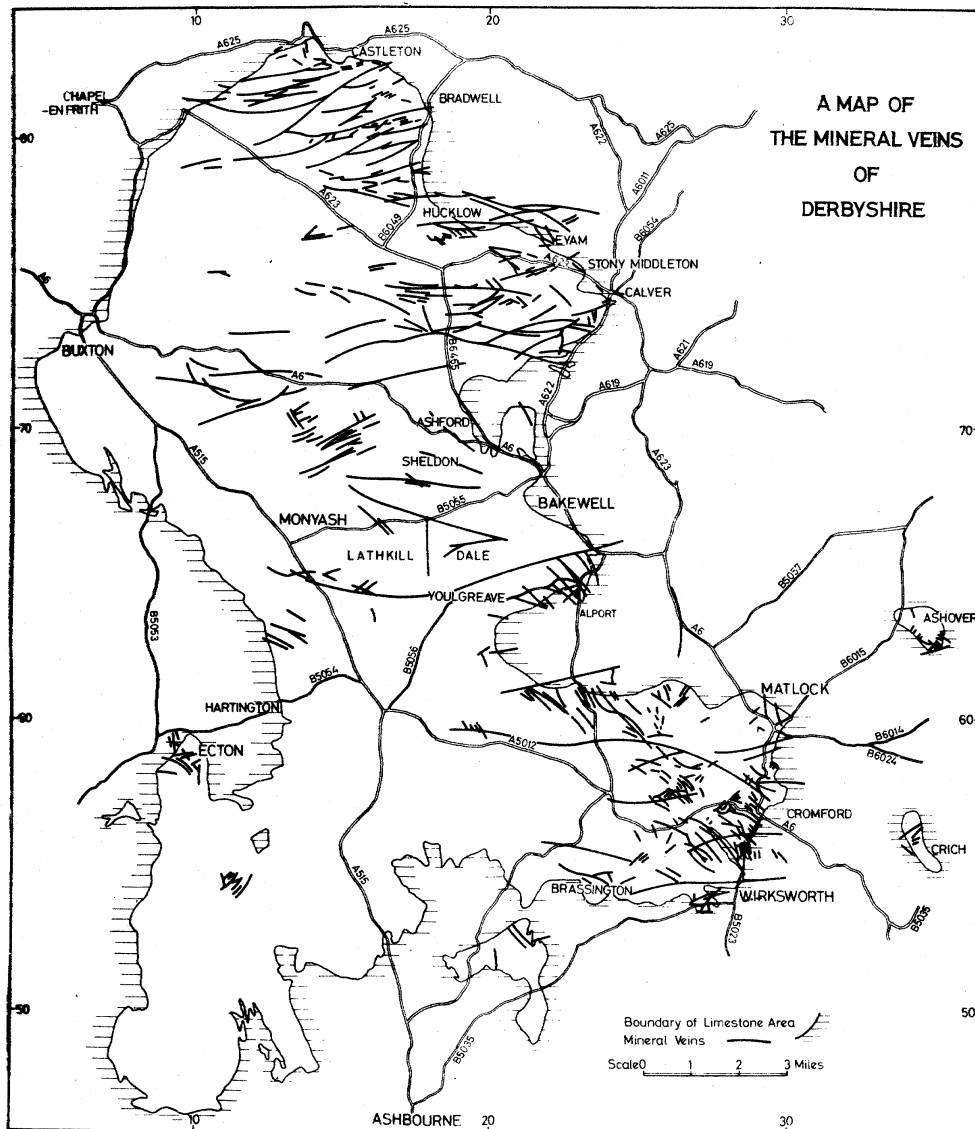


Figure 20.2: Lead veins in the White Peak, *i.e.* in the limestone area of NW Derbyshire (from Trevor D.Ford and J.H.Rieuwerts (1970) *Lead Mining in the Peak District*)

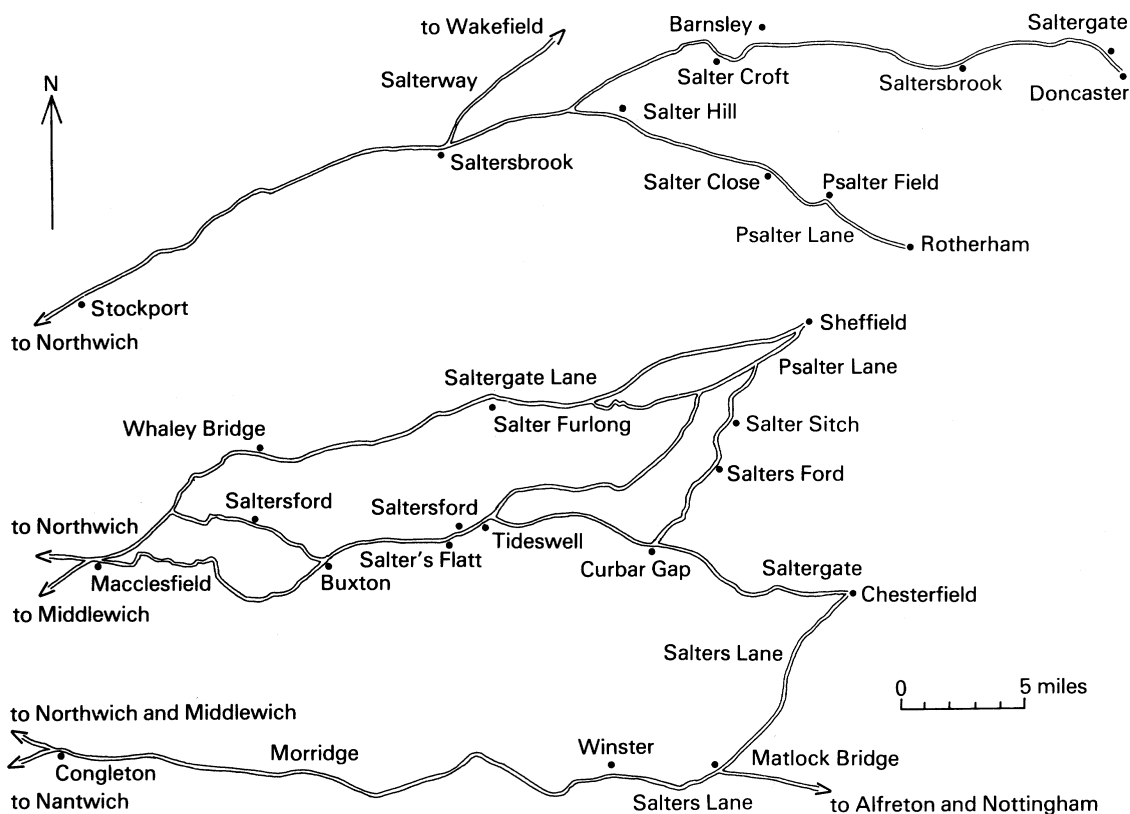


Figure 20.3: Ancient saltways across the Peak, from Stockport, Macclesfield, and Congleton in east Cheshire (from David Hey (1980) *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads*)

The feud between Thomas Molyneux of Cuerdale and Henry Chaderton, the 2nd duke of Lancaster's delinquent bailif, evidently began in Lancaster in 1369. By around 1380, Robert de Vere was the current broker of royal patronage in Cheshire and service with him offered the chance of breaking the hold of the Lancastrian affinity around the royal Palitinate of Chester. So when de Vere called on Molyneux to raise an army in 1387 the lines of division in the NW became sharp^a.

The ringleaders of the 1393 rebellion were the dissident Lancashire knights, Sir Thomas Talbot and Sir Nicholas Clifton, along with Sir John Massey of Tatton who held land in NE Cheshire and who had been appointed sheriff of Chester by the king in 1389. Richard II's reluctance to condemn his Cheshire retainers involved in this rebellion, against his uncle John of Gaunt of Lancaster, ultimately led on to a decisive schism between the crown and the Lancastrians.

With the help of social pressures from his wiser retainers, Gaunt largely quelled the 1393 so-called 'Cheshire rebellion'. A sense of unrest continued, however, and this became acute when Richard II began a rapid expansion of his household and 'Cheshire guard'^b. The perceived threat to the Lancastrians became still more critical after Gaunt's death in 1399. That same year at Chester, Gaunt's son, Henry Bollingbroke, captured Richard II who was seemingly inadequately protected by his watches of Cheshire retainers; and Bollingbroke thereby became the first king of the "Plantagenet cadet House of Lancaster".

^aSimon Walker (1990) *The Lancastrian affinity 1361-99*, pps 165-181.

^bIn 1397, the royal presence in Lancashire proceeded to become perceived as a threat to Gaunt, since Lancashire was his *primary* seat of authority.

Table 20.10: The 1393 Cheshire rebellion

20.4 The east Cheshire Plant homeland and Gaunt

By the times of the 13th and 14th century *royal* earls of Chester, trade and transport across the High Peak may have held some strategic importance³² (Tables 20.8 and 20.9) (*cf.* Figures 20.2 and 20.3). Following the 1359 marriage of Blanche of Lancaster to Edward III's son, John of Gaunt, animosity between the Warren affinity and the Lancastrians may have begun to subside in deference to Gaunt of Lancaster. Local division and mistrust of Lancaster's local authority, however, surrounded the so-called 'Cheshire rebellion' of 1393 (Table 20.10).

The Warren affinity. The 1347 disinheritation of the Warren "Plantagenets" coincided with a displacement of the Plant name (c1350) from ex-Warren Norfolk lands. Seemingly this was part of a wider disinheritation of a Warren "Plantagenet" *affinity* and it led on to the appearance of more settled Plant clusters in south Lincolnshire and, more especially, east Cheshire³³. The bulk of the ex-Warren lands went to the 1st duke of Lancaster (d 1361), and also to some of his associates who have been regarded as having constituted an emerging powerful Lancastrian affinity, with Gaunt becoming 2nd duke of Lancaster in 1362 prior to the 1368 death of his wife, Blanche "Plantagenet".

Warren allegiance. It is known that Sir John de Warren, of the illegitimate 'Warren Plantagenet' descent in east Cheshire, married (c1371) Margaret de Stafford and that, 50 years later, her memorial effigy (c1420) in Over Peover church shows her wearing the Lancastrian SS livery collar (Chapter 19).

Plant allegiance. At Lincoln it is known that a John *Plant* (perhaps with links to east Cheshire) testified as the principal witness of the proof of age in 1396 of Gaunt's retainer (1382-99), the Lincolnshire knight Sir Thomas Swynford who was a son of the late *husband* of Gaunt's mistress Catherine Swynford (Chapter 17).

20.5 Shoemaker William's origins and kin

East Cheshire evidently remained the principal homeland of the Plants from c1370 until c1670. By the mid 17th century it seems that the bulk of the Plant family had migrated mostly southwards into north Staffordshire and, by that time, a few Plants had migrated eastwards across the Peak into mid-north Derbyshire, to the parish of Great Longstone near Ashford in Figure 20.2. In the 'Great Longstone ancestral contention' (Chapters 15 and 17), it is evidently those Plants of Great Longstone who were the ancestors of the *Plant's Yard* Plants of Sheffield³⁴.

Midway to Sheffield across north Derbyshire, around the lead mines of Ashford and Great Longstone, there were references to the *planting* of forces, engines and pumps, indicating early signs for the emergence of, eventually, a widely recognised industrial connotation to the word *plant*. It would seem that it was from such a background that the *Plant's Yard* Plants arrived in Sheffield, around the mid 18th century.

³²Even as early as the early 13th century, it is known that the earl of Chester granted to his monks immunity from tolls and it has been suggested that his motive was to encourage trade. All but one of earl Ranulph de Blundeville's grants in England for quittance from tolls was to a Cistercian house, with grants going to Basingwerk, Bordesley, Combermere, Dieulacress, Stanlow, and to the Benedictine house of St Werburgh. Another such grant was to his Cistercian house of St Mary (Aulney; Calvados in Normandy). James W. Alexander (1983) *Ranulph of Chester; a Relic of the Conquest*, p 45.

³³The illegitimate Warren descent of the Warren "Plantagenets" evidently became settled *predominantly* in east Cheshire, where they had earlier become linked by marriage (c1340) to *de Stockport* lands.

³⁴It seems clear that the subsequent local progenitor of the Plant's Yard Plants was the brickmaker William Plant (*i.e.* $W^m(0)$) of Duckmanton in NE Derbyshire (Figures 17.6 and 20.4). The farmer Thomas Plant was his youngest son and he settled just 5 miles NE from Duckmanton at Clowne (NE Derbyshire), where his eldest son $W^m(1)$ was baptised in 1772. As described in detail in Chapter 9, the shoemaker William Plant (*i.e.* $W^m(\text{shoe})$) was almost certainly a brother of another Sheffield shoemaker, Benjamin Plant (*i.e.* $Ben(\text{shoe})$) from Clowne and, hence, it seems quite certain that both of these shoemakers were sons of $W^m(1)$. Amongst various evidence to support this, it can be noted that the stated age on $W^m(\text{shoe})$'s death certificate coincides exactly with the age of $Ben(\text{shoe})$'s brother $W^m(2a)$ whereas the only known alternative contention would produce a 2 year discrepancy of age. The less likely contention is that the shoemaker William might instead have been $Ben(\text{shoe})$'s cousin $W^m(2b)$ — *cf.* Figure 20.4(a).

20.5.1 Wm(shoe)'s evident father, marriage, and associates

It seems that the Sheffield shoemaker William's evident father $W^m(1)$ may have traveled fairly extensively for his times.

It seems possible that $W^m(1)$ married at Wirksworth (Figures 20.4(a)) which is some 20 miles SW of his family home at Clowne (Clowne is about 10 miles SE of Sheffield). It then seems possible that he had a child at Matlock, which is near Wirksworth (*cf.* the maps of Figures 17.3 and 20.2), before returning to Clowne for the baptism of his (?further) children by 1799. He may already by then have traveled to Ecclesall Bierlow near Broom Hall, Sheffield, perhaps working there as an agricultural labourer as well as on his father's farm in Clowne — at that time in this region, farm work was often supplemented by metal craft activities and $W^m(1)$ may have taken advantage of his *Plant's Yard* uncles' prominent industrial connections in Sheffield to improve his income. Such an early connection with Sheffield would help to explain the mention of $W^m(1)$ in the 1805 will of his uncle the bellows maker '*Benjamin Plant of Sheffield Moor*' — this will mentions only three of *Ben(bellows)'s* many Plant nephews and $W^m(1)$ was one of those favoured few³⁵.

The shoemaker William Plant ($W^m(\text{shoe})$) married Elizabeth Hartley in Sheffield in 1828. They were married by banns at the parish church, later to become the Sheffield Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul.

They were married by Edwin Goodwin; both were of that parish, bachelor and spinster, and both signed in the presence of John Plant and Benjamin Hudson. It is not clear whether the witness John Plant could have been $W^m(2a)$'s brother, cousin, or uncle for example, all of whom are included in Figure 20.4(a).

Later, in the 1841 household of this shoemaker William Plant of Sylvester Street, there is included Samuel Hartley, aged 22, file smith, who was no doubt a younger relative of $W^m(\text{shoe})$'s wife Elizabeth Hartley, whose stated rounded age by that time was 30.

It seems likely that a Button Lane shop of a William Plant in Sheffield Directories³⁶ was that of the shoemaker William. In view of the substantial evidence, which was detailed in Chapter 9, for a close association between the shoemakers Benjamin and William (regardless of whether they were brothers or cousins, though probably they were brothers), it seems that this shop could have been an outlet for:-

- the hats and dresses made by *Ben(shoe)'s* wife (Chapter 9); as well as,
- *Ben(shoe)'s* shoes and other leather goods; and perhaps also,
- shoes made by $W^m(\text{shoe})$ who was the more senior, in as much as he was older than *Ben(shoe)* by 14 years.

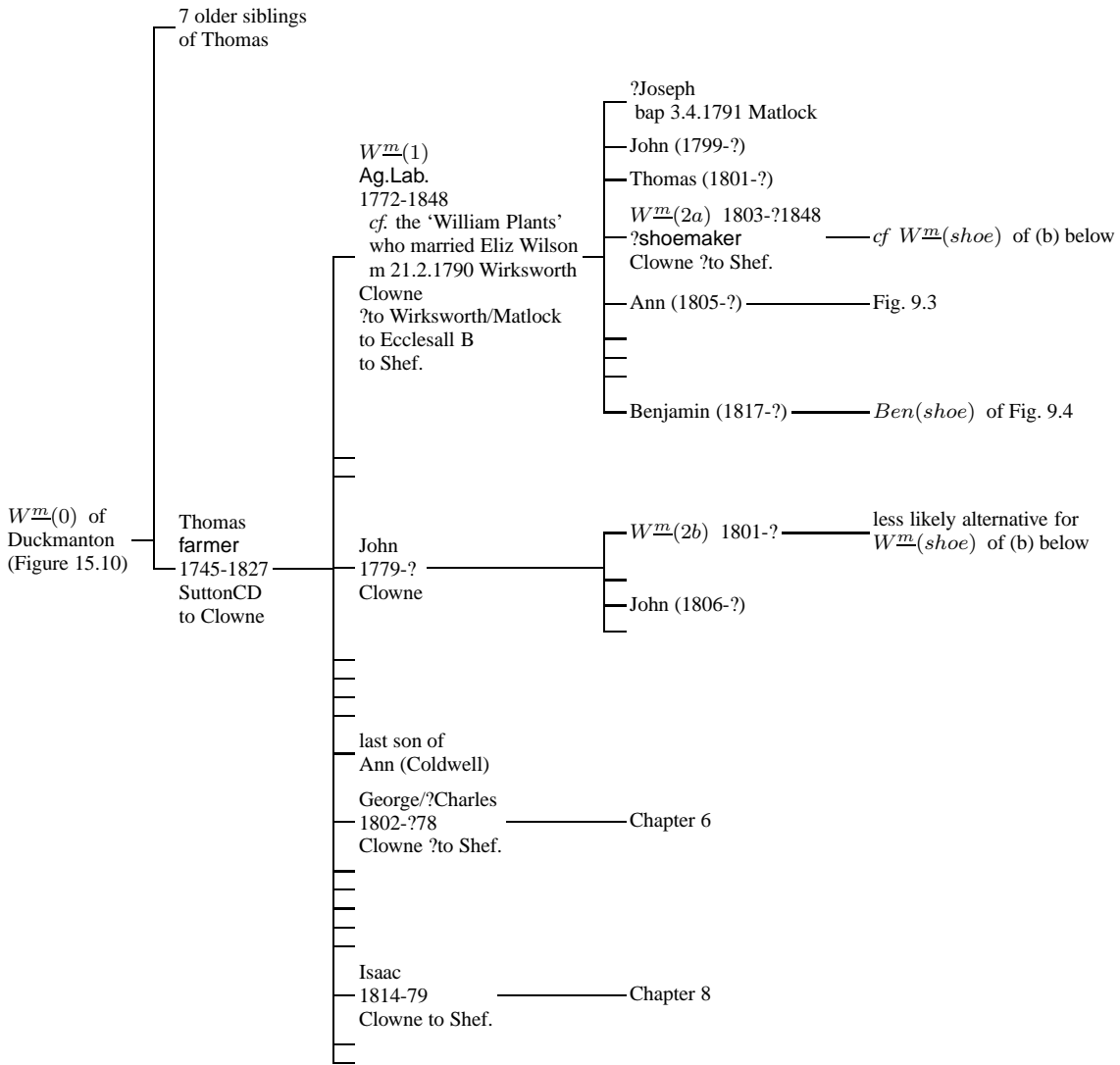
20.5.2 Wm(shoe)'s children and death

Apart from $W^m(\text{shoe})$'s eldest son James, who will be described in some detail in a later Chapter, the (known) sons of the Sheffield shoemaker William died young. $W^m(\text{shoe})$'s son William ($W^m(3a)$) in Figure 20.4(b)) died in infancy in 1838 and this was followed soon after by the birth and death of Thomas.

³⁵ $W^m(1)$ was awarded only £10 in *Ben(bellows)'s* will, though he apparently also retained some connection with some of *Ben(bellows)'s* former lands 2 miles to the west of the Little Sheffield site of *Plant's Yard*. Later records of 1851 indicate that $W^m(1)$'s widow was living at the site of those lands and they indicate that she was from Pontefract, which is 20 miles NNE of Sheffield.

³⁶There is a Directory entry *William Plant, shopkeeper, 49 Button Lane (W.White's 1841)*. No Plants are recorded in the 1841 Census returns for Button Lane suggesting that the said 'shopkeeper' did not live at the shop and the only likely contender seems to be the 'shoemaker' William, who lived in 1838 in the nearby Porter Street and, by 1840, in the adjoining Sylvester Street — all these addresses were at the foot of (Little) Sheffield Moor.

(a) Probable descent from the Duckmanton Plants of Wm(shoe)



(b) The Sheffield shoemaker William's wife and family

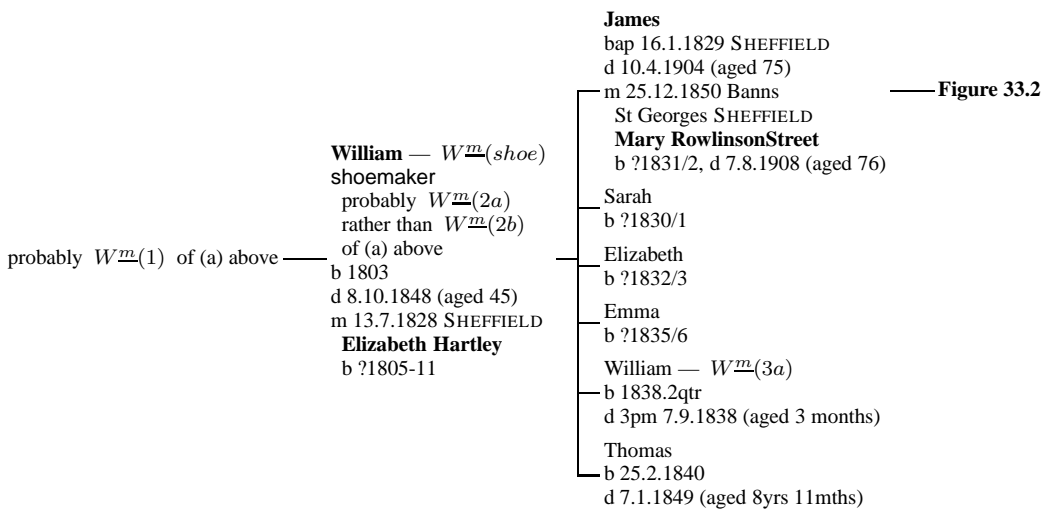


Figure 20.4: Shoemaker William's descent and family

Death of Wm(3a). The informant of the death of *W^m(shoe)*'s 3 month old son William is given on the death certificate as 'William Plant shoemaker of Porter Street, Sheffield'. This 1838 death certificate shows that this baby died of convulsions. Included in the box 'when and where died' there is *3PM* and *Porter Street* whereas, above this box, is written *Haymarket* which suggests that a visit there may have been involved in the final days of this baby's life and a hay-borne disease may have been suspected.

Birth and death of Thomas. Eighteen months later there is a birth certificate for a Thomas, who is stated to be a son of the shoemaker William and his wife Elizabeth (who is here clearly stated to be 'formerly Hartley'). This birth certificate shows that the family had moved by 1840 from Porter Street to the nearby Sylvester Street. In the 1841 Census returns, for a household in Sylvester Street, there is listed shoemaker William (stated rounded age 35), Elizabeth (30), James (12), Sarah (10), Elizabeth (8), Emma (5) and Thomas (1); all are indicated to have been born in Yorkshire. The death of William and Elizabeth's son Thomas, at 8 years 11 months in 1849, was registered by Elizabeth Plant of Sylvester Street; Thomas is recorded on his death certificate to have died of 'Small Pox after vaccination' and to be a son of 'William Plant shoemaker *deceased*'.

W^m(shoe) and his apparent father *W^m(1)* (Chapter 9) both died in 1848, in adjoining Sheffield streets near Plant's Yard in Little Sheffield (Chapter 10).

Death of Wm(shoe). The above reference to shoemaker William as *deceased*, on Thomas's death certificate, helps to provide confirmation that the correct death certificate for *W^m(shoe)* is the one for a William Plant at Sylvester Street, who had died just 3 months earlier on the 8th October 1848. This William had died of phthisis (*i.e.* a lung condition), as registered curiously by 'the mark of Rachel Plant present at death Sylvester Street Sheffield'; no other trace of a 'Rachel' Plant has (yet) been found in this region throughout this era though the certificate states that it was she who gave shoemaker William's occupation simply, at death, as 'labourer'.

20.5.3 Wm(shoe) at Sylvester Street and his son James

Thus, the household of the shoemaker William, at least by 1838, was at Porter Street which is about 0.4 miles NE from the Little Sheffield site of Plant's Yard. *W^m(shoe)* is known to have been living nearby at Sylvester Street by 1840 and, after the 1848 death of *W^m(shoe)* at Sylvester Street, his only (known) surviving son, James, is known to have been living in Sylvester Street in 1851 together with his new bride whom he had married the previous year (Figure 20.4(b)).

Sylvester Street. In 1700, Mr. Field Sylvester had laid a foundation stone, near the head of (Little) Sheffield Moor, for the Presbyterian Meeting House³⁷. He also gave his name to the Sylvester Wheel³⁸ on the Porter Brook near the foot of (Little) Sheffield Moor. It was on the adjoining Sylvester Street that the shoemaker William Plant was to be found approaching the time of his 1848 death (aged 45) and he died there, fairly young, from a lung condition which was an endemic disease of smoky Sheffield. It seems that it was around this time that water power ceased to be used at the adjacent Sylvester Wheel — the power of the Sylvester Water Wheel was assessed as 10hp in 1835 and, though 1850-1 rate books still note the head and fall of water, an 1851 map labels the dams as 'reservoirs' which suggests that they were by then being used as storage for steam engine boilers.

³⁷A 1771 plan of Sheffield by William Fairbank names the Chapel that he founded as the Upper Chapel for Dissenters whom, it was noted by Hunter in 1819, 'followed the manner of French preachers'.

³⁸The water wheel called the Sylvester Wheel was just downstream from the foot of Little Sheffield Moor, to Sheffield's south, on the Porter Brook which flowed north eastwards to join the River Sheaf at the Pond Tilt (Chapter 13) which was near Pond Lane at the western edge of Sheffield town.

20.6 Résumé

In the first regnal year (1199) of king John³⁹, shortly before the death of John's uncle Hamelin 'Plant(a/e)genet' (1130-1202), the name *Plantebene* appears near the inherited Norfolk lands of Hamelin's wife, Isabel de Warenne (1137-99). The names *Plantefolie* and *Plantan'* appear in 1209 and 1220, in the times of Hamelin's and Isabel's son, William 'Plantagenet' (1166-1240), who was intermittently loyal to king John and then loyal to John's son Henry III — so also was William's son, John 'Plantagenet' (1231-1304) (de Warenne) who was made Henry III's ward after his father's 1240 death. The Pl(a/e)nte name evidently formed in proximity to the activities of the Warren earls of Surrey, who were descended from Geoffrey Plante Genest whose nickname eventually led on to Plantagenet as an ongoing surname.

Reaney⁴⁰ does not relate the name Clay to the Divine Words 'We created man from an extract of clay' — the name *de Clai* is found in Suffolk in 1177, *de la Claie* in Essex in 1200, and *Cley* in Cambridgeshire in 1221. Even so, in a context of the 'genera of creation', it is to be noted that the emerging Pl(a/e)nte name was seemingly set to the *simultaneous* meanings:-

'abundant produce' or 'child' — the progeny of 'mother earth'; and, at once,

'establisher' — an establishing component of the human soul.

In the same scheme, Plant(a/e)genet can be taken⁴¹ to mean '(from) the plant-horse genera of creation' or, in other words, 'a horse borne establisher'⁴².

The spelling *Plente* occurs first at Oxford and in Kent, near evident activity to amend the 'plant soul', and then in 1230 near the further religious centre of York. Evidence for a contemporary Islamic influence on Christian 'orthodoxy' is found (c1209-38) in the writings of Grosseteste on the 'plant soul'. The spelling *Plante* occurs in Essex in 1262. Both of the spellings *Plante* and *Plente* coexist near Warren 'Plantagenet' lands in Norfolk c1275, and the spelling *Plant* occurs near the lands of John 'Plantagenet' (de Warenne) near Chester in 1301.

Though an 'establisher child' meaning for Plant does not preclude occupational allusions, it remains unclear whether Plant should be ascribed any such allusion as 'coal power establisher'⁴³, 'lead worker', 'horse breeder', or 'gardener'; or perhaps more generally a 'Plantagenet technologist'. Such meanings would seem to be appropriate, as *secondary allusions* of the name's meaning, in the environment of east Cheshire, which evidently became the principal homeland of the illegitimate Warren descent and the Plants by c1370. It might be noted more particularly that the more general meaning '*establisher child*' for Plant remains consistent with interpretations for 'related' names, such as *Plantebene*, *Planterose*, and *Plantefene*, which yield the more specific meanings 'hallowed establisher child', 'courtly establisher child', and 'happy establisher child'.

About half a millennium later, more is known about the early 19th century life, near Plant's Yard, of the Sheffield shoemaker William Plant (1803-48). Soon after *W^m(shoe)'s* death, his son James (1828-1904) was building up various business interests and he was to become the Plant who appears most consistently in Victorian Sheffield's many surviving Trade Directories, as will be described further in a later Chapter.

³⁹Following the disputes of the first "Plantagenet" king with the Archbishop of Canterbury, his son, the crusading, Lion Heart, Richard I (1157-99) died without children and his youngest brother, John (1167-1216), became king until the crown passed to John's son Henry III (1207-72).

⁴⁰P.H.Reaney (1976) *A Dictionary of British Surnames*.

⁴¹The writings of Averroes (1126-98) include a description of the *genera* of creation, from earth to plants to humans, and this provides a consistent context of meaning for the surname *Plantagenet* and the bye-name *Plantan'*.

⁴²*Plantan'* can be taken to derive from the place name Plonton yielding a compatible interpretation '(from the) fertile enclosure'.

⁴³In 13th century schemes of English philosophy, the *generative* function is associated with the 'plant soul' and also with the terms *Vita autem composita inanimatorum* (i.e. 'eternal life however composed of inanimate things') and *virtus empirica* (i.e. 'the mineral power').