

Chapter 27

Plant metaphore and Midlands Plants

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CULTURAL OR BLOOD LINKS ACROSS EUROPE AND SOME NORTH MIDLANDS PLANTS¹

Celtic traditions and Christianity appear to have fomented Grail legends. Notwithstanding the controversies surrounding claims of a trans-European Grail family, there may have been cultural roots for the Plant name in England that were shared with the *Planta* homeland in Switzerland. In Biblical tradition, God's kingdom arose like *planta* from sole clay and men's seeds. Belief in man's emergence from the land as well as from blood ties led on to belief in man's *vegetable soul* and this forms a trans-European basis for understanding many Plant-like names.

In England, the initial DNA evidence relates east Cheshire Plants to ones across north Derbyshire near Sheffield with the proviso that higher resolution DNA testing now suggests that the *Plant's Yard* Plants may have split early from a particular east Cheshire branch. By the 18th century, the forefather of most Sheffield Plants was seemingly the brickmaker, William Plant of Duckmanton and evidence from his will supplements that of earlier Chapters. This William's son, the *Plant's Yard* bricklayer John Plant, had a son Samuel (1785-1865) whose uncle, the farmer Thomas of Clowne (1745-1827), was grandfather to the Sheffield shoemaker William Plant (*i.e.* $W^m(shoe)$ 1803-48 of Chapter 20). Both $W^m(shoe)$'s eldest son, James, and Samuel's eldest son, John, appear to have prospered in Victorian Sheffield.

27.1 Myth and modified metonymy — reviewing the Plant metaphore

 It is only natural to view surname meanings from a modern standpoint but, for Plant, we also need to reflect an ancient perspective. Beliefs found in ancient myths, about vegetation and the soul, progressed through late medieval scholastic developments and, now, the onset of science has changed how we apply the plant metaphore. Recent DNA evidence gives cause to reassess the metonymy of Plant. Theories of metaphores have developed in recent decades and they help in reviewing the probable basis of meaning for this surname.

27.1.1 Some relevant mythology leading on to medieval beliefs

On the grave of Sennutem in the 14th century BC Osiris was depicted green and was evidently a deity of vegetation and agriculture. By 2400BC it is clear that the Egyptian god Osiris played a double role as the god of the dead or the underworld and the god of fertility². He had the power that granted all life from the underworld, from sprouting vegetation to the annual flood of the Nile river.

¹I am grateful to Professor M. Short of Lancaster University for some helpful comments, for recommending further reading on metaphores, and for drawing my attention to the Lévi-Strauss analysis of the Oedipus and Zuni myths. I am also grateful to Andreas Arduš of Estonia for suggesting some detail of the Osiris, Dylan, and Achilles myths as well as for drawing my attention to an on-line Swiss surname Dictionary and some web sites relating to *Planta*. Furthermore, I am grateful to Mme. Nanette Pafumi of Switzerland for her analysis of Plant-like names in a Swiss telephone directory and for supplying extracts about the *Planta* family from the *Dictionnaire Historique and Bibliographique de la Suisse*.

²*Encyclopædia Britannica* (CD 2000 Deluxe Edition)

In the Egyptian middle kingdom Osiris festivals included the construction of the 'Osiris garden', a mold in the shape of Osiris filled with soil and various drugs, water from the Nile, and sown with grain. Later sprouting grain was taken to symbolise the vital strengths of Osiris.

Greco-Roman authors connected Osiris with the god Dionysus³. In Greek mythology Dionysus is a youthful god of vegetation, wine and ecstasy and, in Roman mythology, he is represented by the god Bacchus. Originally he may have had a mythical role similar to Demeter, the Greek goddess of vegetation and fruitfulness. Like her Roman equivalent Ceres, Demeter was especially associated with corn. She possessed mysterious powers of growth and even resurrection. Her name meant 'mother earth' representing the abundant soil as well as the resting place of the dead. When Zeus's brother Hades tried to abduct her daughter Persephone to the underworld, Demeter lost all interest in fertility, so that the plants languished, animals ceased to multiply and people feared for their future. As a compromise Persephone divided the year between her husband Hades and her mother Demeter. Persephone as Kore ('the maiden') was identified as the power within corn itself.

Relevant beliefs, relating to vegetation and the soul, appear to have arisen with a mixing of Greco-Roman and Celtic traditions⁴. It has been held that Greek colonists at the western end of the Mediterranean first encountered the idea of transmigration of souls from their Celtic neighbours, though similar ideas have been related back to the Orphics and to Vedas as a basis for widespread Indo-European beliefs. In the 6th century BC, Pythagoras became interested in reincarnation and his followers accepted transmigration through animals and plants and, as a result, proposed the kinship of all living things.

Aine was the Irish goddess of love and fertility, whose main responsibility was to encourage human love. Her worship was always associated with agriculture however because, as goddess of fertility, she had command over crops and animals. Even as late as the 19th century, celebrations were still held in her honour on Midsummer Eve at Knockainy ("Aine's hill") in County Kerry. There was also a Welsh goddess of fertility, called Ceridwen.

Ogma, the Irish god of eloquence, was responsible for conveying souls to the otherworld which, unlike the kingdom of the Greek god Hades, was inviting. A Welsh otherworld was called Annwn and it was an idyllic land of peace and plenty. This can be compared with Langland's 14th century line '*Love is the lovest thing ... and eke the plente of pees*'. In Annwn there was a fountain of sweet wine and a cauldron of rebirth which, it would seem, was a basis of the medieval Grail myth. In Arthurian legend, the Grail (Sangreal) endowed immortality. It showed characteristics of the Celtic 'cauldron of plenty' and the 'cauldron of rebirth' whilst also showing Christian characteristics being the cup that Christ drank from at the Last Supper — it received the blood of Christ at the Crucifixion and was said to have been brought to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, lost, and then sought by for example Sir Percival (Parsifal). Such concoction of Celtic and Christian traditions has been ascribed to 12th century monks at Glastonbury.

Written accounts of Greek teachings survived especially in the Islamic world. Translations entered Western Europe in, for example, medieval Moorish Spain where a mixing of views on man's origins from (a) blood ties and (b) plants is in evidence. The 12th century philosopher Averroes at Cordoba maintained that 'the plant comes into existence through composition *out of* the elements [including earth]; it becomes blood and sperm through being eaten by an animal and from sperm and blood comes the animal, as it is said in the Divine Words: *We created man from an extract of clay ...*'. This can be compared with a string of modern metaphors of causation⁵. One is 'the object comes *out of* the substance' as in 'a plant is composed *out of* the elements' or 'I made a statue *out of* clay'. Another is 'the substance goes *into* the object' as in 'I made the clay *into* a statue'. Yet another is the 'creation is birth' metaphor as in 'he *conceived* a brilliant theory' or 'the theory of relativity *first saw the light of day* in 1905' or 'Edward Teller is the *father* of the hydrogen bomb'. In Averroes's 12th century scheme of creation a plant turns *into* the gametes for the generation of

³*The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Mythology* by Arthur Cotterell and Rachel Storm (1999) pps 38-9, 304, 307.

⁴Arthur Cotterell and Rachel Storm (1999) *ibid*, pps 98-9, 114, 138, 156, 162, 168.

⁵George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, pps 72-75.

man. This metaphoric conduit through which a plant turns *into* man can be compared with the plant that is depicted to be physically *in* man in late medieval Green Man head carvings.

In Greek mythology Persephony was the Kore *in* vegetable life. This notion of a human image *in* vegetation was turned inside out by Plato and also, for example, in the 13th century scholasticism of Western Europe. A thriving cultural impetus became that there was a vegetable soul *in* man which carried the powers of nutrition, augmentation, and generation. The latter vegetable power, generation, was responsible, along with God's planting of the creative Word, for the creation of the life of a child.

27.1.2 Re-examining the metonymy of Plant

It seems natural to ask, in English with a modern philosophy 'Does Plant mean an herb or a planter?'. The DBS⁶ effectively responds with 'A gardener not a vegetable' and it selects particular evidence to support this. It points to single occurrences of the 'similar' names *le Planteur* and *Plantebene* near early occurrence of the mainly French name spelling *Plante*⁷ in 13th century SE England; the DBS then points also to the mainly French name *Planterose* while ignoring the more common Middle English name *Plantefolie* and the name form *de la Plaunt*. It thereby arrives at its answer for the meaning of Plant, *viz.* '[metonym] gardener, planter'.

By *metonym* the DBS implies that Plant is a shortened form of 'a person who tends the plants'. The COED⁸ defines 'gardener' as 'a person who gardens, especially servant employed to tend a garden'. This leads on to a notion, for Plant, of assorted servants (perhaps of a rich household) or to alternative ideas of whatever we take as the meaning of 'planter'. Surnames are often taken to refer to a person's title or occupation though this selects only some features of a person's activities and other personal features can be selected to explain such a surname as Redhead or Brown.

The DBS designation that Plant is a *metonym* can be explored further. The 'gardener' presumption is based on a type of metonymy that has been called 'object used for the user'. Examples of this are 'The gun he hired wanted fifty grand' or 'The buses are on strike'. We may similarly postulate a statement such as 'The plant is pruning the roses' though there is no evidence of a 'gardener' metonymy for *plant*. Such a meaning for Plant would seem to imply 'one from many different gardener families'. Recent DNA evidence indicates that the Plants are largely a single family and so 'gardener' is rather misleading.

Another special case of metonymy, which is listed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980)⁹, is what traditional rhetoricians have called *synecdoche*, where the part stands for the whole. For example, there are expressions 'He's got a new set of wheels' or 'We don't like longhairs' or 'She is a redhead' or 'Richard was called Lionheart'. Which part is picked determines which aspect of the whole we are focusing on. For example, Lionheart can be taken to focus on the sensory (animal) operations of the medieval soul. Rather similarly, Plant can be taken to focus on the 'plant' within man or, in other words, the vegetable operations of the soul¹⁰.

Certainly, soul was important in late medieval times and can be regarded, in part, as a substitute for much of our modern scientific understanding. There was a long tradition of vegetation, fertility, and the soul. Though archaic, a 'bearer of the medieval plant soul' seems better than 'gardener' for explaining the metonymy of Plant and meaning based on the vegetable soul could highlight, for a single family, its hereditary continuity through generation.

⁶Dictionary of British Surnames.

⁷In modern times, the spelling *Plante* is found mainly around Aquitaine in SW France.

⁸Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 1964.

⁹George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, p 36.

¹⁰Thirteenth century scholastics considered the human soul to have intellectual, sensory, and vegetable functions and the latter appears to be illustrated by contemporary carvings of Green Man heads which show men with (implanted) vegetation issuing from the mouth and sometimes also from the eyes and the ears.

27.1.3 Ontological metaphore and a culture of planted *vertue*

There is a fair amount of evidence, in what is usually known as cognitive metaphore theory, that an enormous amount of our thoughts are metaphorically based on very concrete bodily experience. Abstract notions are metaphorically grounded on well recognised, clear cut, physical realities. It seems that both the emotional experience of love and a religious sense of creation were grounded on the earthly experience of plant life.

In the 14th century, Langland states that 'love is the plant of *pees* [peas or peace] most precious of *vertues* [strengths, virtues, or green powers]'. Any allusion to human generation is indirect whilst grounded on planting pea seeds. Generation in man's vegetable soul was associated with God's creation and God nurtured man with His creative light through the holy vine of Jesus. Man's and God's love were metaphorically grounded not only on planting seeds but also on the integrating vine of the pea plant.

Other metaphores are grounded on modern experiences and, as such, they are inappropriate to medieval times. The metaphore whereby 'love is a journey'¹¹ is coherent between a car journey (as in 'we've had a bumpy ride'), a train journey (as in 'our relationship has come off the tracks'), and a ship journey (as in 'our marriage has hit the rocks'). Though these are grounded on *mainly modern* experiences, other experience can be considered to have remained unchanged from the earliest times.

It is widely relevant that we experience our body as a container¹². We treat the fuzzy edges of a wood as the boundary of a container and speak of walking *in* and *out of* it. This extends to a tub being a container-object and water a container-substance, so that we get *in* and *out of* water. This carries through to our visual field as in '*coming into* view'. Events, actions, activities, and states are also treated as containers. For example we speak of being *in* love or *out of* trouble. Life is a container as in 'Her life is *crammed* with activities', 'His life *contained* a great deal of sorrow', or 'Live life *to the fullest*'. This ontological 'container metaphore' is found also in medieval times.

In medieval scholasticism man was regarded as a container of corporeal substance 'planted' with spiritual substance by God. There is Middle English reference to *planted vertue*. *Vertues* were in men and in plants. Planted *vertue* was involved in the generation of children. The 13th century scholastic Roger Bacon, of Oxford and Paris, noted¹³ (in Latin) the opinion 'that the virtues of the father are *in* the semen [seeds] and that they remain during the generation of the progeny'. Boethius (480-525) had maintained that not only Christ, but also virtuous men could receive (as a container) divine goodness. While lacking the more modern verb 'to implant', there was evidently a metaphore for the placement of *vertue* in a container and this was grounded on the everyday activity of planting in soil. The Word of God was also *planted*. Since the times of St Augustine (354-430), the Word of God had been 'that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world'. In the womb a foetus is enclosed, as a seed in the earth, whence it emerges with the 'waters of life'. As will be enlarged upon later in this Chapter, such aspects of our ontology seem key to understanding much in myth.

There was evidently a widespread metaphore whereby 'living substance was planted' and 'continuing human life was a plant'. For evidence of this, we need look no further than the Bible¹⁴. Isaiah 5:7 states 'For the *vineyard* of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant *plant*'. In the New Testament, men are represented as tended offshoots of Jesus with God as the gardener or husbandman. In John 15:1-5 Jesus says 'I am the *true vine* and my Father is the husbandman ... ye are *branches*: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much *fruit*'. Men could abide *in* Jesus and Jesus *in* man. In other words, man as the branches could

¹¹Lakoff and Johnson (1980) *ibid*, pps 43-5.

¹²Lakoff and Johnson (1980) *ibid*, p29 onwards.

¹³*De Multiplicatione Specierum*, Part VI, Chapter 2, lines 25-7. Facing Page Translation by David C Lindberg (1983).

¹⁴*The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesty's Special Command*, Appointed to be read in Churches, Oxford University Press.

integrate with Jesus as the vine. Rather similarly, in Greek tradition, Persephone was *in* corn and the vegetable was *in* man. Such tradition underlies a metaphor whereby ‘a people *are* a plant’. This is stated in Isaiah and we still talk of *trees* of descent from a *root* ancestor, though some place themselves as the root and consider an ancestral tree branching backwards from themselves.

In as much as plant life is used as a metaphorical basis for ongoing generation, we can modify the DBS definition of Plant to ‘[ontological metaphor] propagator or offspring’. Moreover, we can question the monoseme ‘propagator’. In our modern culture, we see ourselves as more active than passive and, with a so-called me-first orientation¹⁵, it may seem natural to list *propagator* before *offspring*. It is often noted however that surviving medieval literature highlights more of a passive orientation in Nature beneath God. Sense for man as a ‘propagator’ can be left modestly unstated in deference to God’s role in creation. This then leaves a meaning for Plant as an ‘offspring or planted soul’. More generally, Plant-like names can reflect the Lord’s husbandry and the noble powers of the soul; some can also be related to a work ethic as required for preserving the soul.

27.1.4 Analysis of pre-scientific myth with plants as a model for humans

The ancient Greeks considered plants were a *model* for humans¹⁶. This underlies an analysis by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963)¹⁷ of the Oedipus myth. He regards it as an attempt in Greek culture to reconcile (a) man’s origins from blood ties (the union of a man with a woman) with (b) man’s autochthonous origins (as plants emerge from the earth). He extracts from the surviving versions of the myth four features (a1) overrating blood relations, (a2) underrating blood relations, (b1) denial of autochthonous origins, (b2) clumsiness of men born from the Earth. He notes that the features (a1) and (a2) relate to man’s origins from sexual union in much the same way as (b1) and (b2) relate to origins from the Earth. In this way the myth is said to bring a harmony to two conflicting views of man’s origins within Greek culture.

The fourth feature in the above analysis - (b2) clumsiness of men born of the Earth - is open to some debate. It is based on the meanings of the names of Oedipus’s family as Labdacos = lame, Laios = left-sided, Oedipus = swollen-foot. Robert Graves¹⁸ has different interpretations Labdacos = help-with-torches, Laios = having-cattle, Oedipais = son-of-the-swelling-sea; the last of these is analogous to the Welsh hero Dylan (‘son of the Wave’), who leapt from his mother’s arms at birth and plunged straight into the sea; it is also reminiscent of the mythical marine origins of the Merovingians. Marine origins can be viewed as a variation on man’s origins as inanimate plants; both might be associated with ‘lame’ (on land). In Celtic tradition¹⁹, when the virginity of Arianrhod was tested by Math’s magic wand she gave birth to one full-formed son, Dylan, who immediately dived into the sea and swam away, and an unformed “little thing” (pethan) which its grandfather Gwydion snatched up and placed in a chest. After a suitable number of months had passed, the chest was opened and a healthy baby emerged. Here there is *magical* emergence from a chest rather than a child from the earth. Both the meaning ‘children’ of the Welsh word *plant* and the meaning ‘to beget children’ of *planta* are said to be late adoptions from the Latin *planta* meaning ‘shoot for propagation’ though there may also have been a Celtic magical influence modified by Biblical teachings such that *plant* could mean ‘planted life from the Lord’.

As well as invoking Greek tradition, Lévi-Strauss notes that, in North American Pueblo mythology, those who lead the emergence from the earth are lame (‘bleeding-foot’, ‘sore-foot’, etc.). He analyses the North American Zuni emergence myth along two axes of change towards death. The first relates to the blood ties of twins and to incest:-

a0 mechanical value of plants (used as ladders to emerge from the lower world);

¹⁵Lakoff and Johnson (1980) *ibid*, pps 132-2

¹⁶Pausanias, VIII, xxix, 4.

¹⁷Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963) *The Structural Study of Myth* as Chapter XI in *Structural Anthropology*, pps 206-231.

¹⁸<http://mural.uv.es/maelro/myth.html> – Robert Graves *Greek Myths*, chapter 105 which is on page 13 of volume 2 of the 1990 Penguin reprint.

¹⁹<http://www.imbas.org/lugos.htm>

- a1 emergence led by beloved twins;
- a2 sibling incest (origin of water);
- a3 gods kill children of men (by drowning).

The second axis relates to sources of food, such as plants:-

- b0 mechanical value of plants (used as ladders to emerge from the lower world);
- b1 food value of wild plants;
- b2 food value of cultivated plants;
- b3 periodic character of agricultural work;
- b4 food value of game (hunting);
- b5 inevitability of warfare.

It seems that plants were important ontologically in *various* pre-scientific cultures.

27.1.5 Prototypical meaning and a context for Plant in the Welsh Marches

The nature of a *figurative* extension to a meaning can be understood in spatial terms to be a meaning that is less central in a spread of possible meanings. For example, the Middle English meaning of *gardiner* is defined in the MED²⁰ as ‘a gardener, or *figuratively* one who takes care of the soul’. It is widely held, following Rosch (1977)²¹, that we categorise things in terms of prototypes with more loosely related items clustered around a central, most apt example. For instance a robin is a bird *par excellence* but an ostriche is less prototypical though still a bird *strictly speaking*. Similarly a whale is only a fish *loosely speaking* and a moped is only a motorcycle *technically* for the purposes of bridge tolls but not for motor insurance. Rather as we hedge a meaning with a system of non-prototypical examples we can hedge it also with a system of metaphores²². Structures of peripheral meaning can differ between different cultures and even prototypical meaning can differ between geographically adjacent languages. Though ‘young human life’ is the *prototypical* meaning of *plant* in Welsh, this is only an (archaic) peripheral meaning in *modern* English.

A ‘young human offspring’ meaning for *plant* was evidently the prototypical meaning in Wales and it was probably *almost prototypical*, and hence the most salient meaning for a surname, in the adjoining Marches. For the Plant name there is in particular the following to consider:-

- by the 14th century there is already evidence for the Plant name in its *principal* homeland in the NW Midlands of England, near Wales, where different linguistic considerations are adjacent; and,
- it hence needs to be considered, alongside *modern* English meanings, that the *literal* Welsh meaning of *plant* is ‘children’.

More widely, there had been a mixing of vegetable and human concepts, culminating in belief in the *vegetable soul* throughout Europe where various Plant-like names are in evidence.

27.2 Some cultural contexts for the meaning of Plant-like names

 In their teachings, the 13th century scholastics regarded generation, or the production of a new physical being, as a function of the ‘vegetable soul’. There were slightly differing views amongst them as to the extent to which this soul and its operations were more closely tied to (spiritual) heavenly light or to the (earthy) corporeal elements. Ideas of generation extended to minerals but the same plant powers extended also to sexual union and to an emotion such as love [*cf.* love potions or intoxicating wine from the vine or God’s planted love].

²⁰Kurath and Kahn *Middle English Dictionary*

²¹Eleanor Rosch (1977) Human Categorization in N. Warren, editor, *Advances in Cross-Cultural Psychology*, vol 1, New York: Academic Press

²²Lakoff and Johnson (1980) *ibid*, pps 115-125.

27.2.1 A cultural context for Plant in Staffordshire

In general Western European churches were not prepared to permit imagery of a sexual nature but there is an exception in the Plant homeland of Staffordshire. The font of St Mary's in Stafford has attracted much debate²³. It is often claimed to have come from the older St Chad's church in Stafford. It bears the inscription 'You are not wise if you do not flee from lions' [Discretus non est si non fugis ecce leones] which, along with another inscription has been dated in style²⁴ to the 12th or early 13th century. This is roughly contemporary with the crusading king Richard the Lionheart and his lecherous younger brother John who remained largely in England and then succeeded to the throne. Unusually for a Western church the font is carved with naked women, as well as lions standing on apes. Near the women at the top of the font there is the damaged inscription 'Thou bearest from Jerusalem ??? endowing me with grace and beauty'. This provides evidence of a local tolerance of the Church to 'priapic' imagery, at least when faced with 'lions'.

Views on the significance of the font have related to old tales of the Black Men of Biddle (*i.e.* nearby Biddulph Moor) whose arrival in the area has been ascribed to the bailiffs²⁵ of returning crusaders and perhaps also their concubines. There is dispute whether the Black Men of Biddle were gypsies or truly of Moorish origin. Certainly the font in St Mary's can be thought to show a medieval Moorish influence.

It is a small step for the imagination to pass from rampaging 'lions' and naked women on a font to the act of baptising children. Taking an 'offspring' meaning of Plant, there are consistent meanings for the 13th century English names Plantebene, Plantefolie, and Planterose of respectively hallowed, bastard, or risen child. Here 'risen' can allude to the 'plant metaphore' and mean 'grown from the roots of emergence' as will be substantiated later.

27.2.2 Blood or cultural links to similar Swiss names

It is not as yet clear whether similar names in Switzerland arose from a similar culture to that near north Wales or from male descent from a single family. A Swiss web site of names²⁶ lists the following:-

Plantaz – Du latin et patois planta, plante, dans le sens de plantation, p'épinière. Le latin plantare, plante, explique aussi Plant, Plantin, Planton, Plantand, Plantard, dans le sens de planteur, cultivateur. Plantamour d'origine chalonaise est un patronyme particulièrement poétique. (17.1.93)

In other words, Plant and various similar names are ascribed an occupational sense of 'planter, cultivator' though, as already noted, this does not fit well with the recent DNA evidence for Plant. It is hence perhaps of more interest that the Swiss site also mentions the 'particularly poetic' name Plantamour from nearby Chalon. In a scheme in which *plant* in a surname can mean 'young human life', Plantamour could mean 'love child' or an 'implant of God's love' though there is also a French wine called Saint Amour such that Plantamour might instead be related to planting a variety of vine. It would seem inappropriate, however, to ignore a poetic sense. The 'plant metaphore of human life' is evident in Switzerland, as in other cultures, in that '*une belle plante*' means an attractive woman [*cf.* the tradition of Demeter as a planted place²⁷ or Persephone as Kore].

In a modern Swiss telephone directory, the following names (with number of occurrences) are found mostly in German Switzerland or the Grisons:-

Plant (1), Planta (52), Plantahof (2), Plantak (2), Plantam (1), Plantamura (1), Plantera (7), Von Planta (78)

whereas the following are found mostly in the Geneva or Lake Lemman area near a French border:-

²³<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/stchads/blackbid.htm>

²⁴<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A2=ind0306&L=medieval-religion&P14837>

²⁵Some claim that the surname Bailey originated in this way.

²⁶<http://www.sites-romands.ch/patronymes/patronymes.p.htm>

²⁷In French, *plante* can mean 'a planted place'.

de la Planta (1), de Planta (10), Plantadis (1), Plantaporrets (1) – this is dialect for leeks (offshoot of porrection or augmentation), Plantard (3), Plantaz (2), Plante (1), Plantefoi (3), Planterose (2), Planterose de Berville (3), Plantevin (3), Plantfor (4), Plantier (2), Plantin (3).

The most common here are Planta and Von Planta. The *Dictionnaire Historique and Biographique de la Suisse* has 3 pages concerning the Planta/Von Planta family through the ages. According to this source they were a family of ministers from the Engadine in the Grisons with a family seat at Zutz (Zuoz), site of the Tour Planta. The first recorded history dates back to the 12th century. In 1244 Bishop Volkart (of Chur) appointed Andreas Planta von Z(uoz), the Chancellor of the Oberengadin (Upper Engadine) and so established the hegemony of the Planta family and the Z(ou)z neighbourhood lasting until 1798²⁸. In 1475 there was a battle of the river Planta²⁹ and in 1840 the episcopal palace of Sion was built on this river's bank. Sion is the capital of Valais/Wallis and there is also a Mount Sion near Annemasse and a twin peak Sion Vaudémont. These Sion placenames derive from the Celtic Sidh³⁰, a place where the Celtic otherworld can be contacted. This suggests some commonality of tradition with Celtic Wales. The medieval Grail legends, for example, are associated with both the Plant and Planta homelands. By the 16th century the Planta family had split into 5 different branches with a further 2 in France — the Planta de Valence and the Kirgener Barons de Planta.

In due course DNA testing of the French name Plantard, the Swiss name Planta, the English name Plant, the French name Plante, and apparent male-line descendants of the 'Plantagenets' may help to reveal whether these names were male-line related. So far, the barely substantiated DNA finding that the French-Canadian Plante family is of different male-line stock from the English Plant family indicates how it may become appropriate to demur on 'trans-European blood links' but favour that 'at least some similar Plant-like names across Europe originated from a common culture'.

27.3 More on medieval meaning

One of the 5th century "Pseudo-Dionysius" writings³¹ is called *On the Divine Names*. An extract³² from this is 'As the mighty root sends forth a multitude of plants which it sustains and controls, so created things owe their origin and conservation to the All-Ruling Deity'. Such a metaphorical grounding of creation on plants seems to have held widespread sway in medieval Christian times.

Two errors of far-reaching import arose in connection with the writings of "Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite". In the first place, this series of famous writings was ascribed to the Areopagite known to St Paul³³ and, secondly, in the 9th century, he was popularly identified with the holy martyr of Gaul, Dionysius, the first Bishop of Paris, though this was disproved in the 12th century by Peter Abelard.

The 9th century Irish humanist and philosopher, Johannes Scotus Erigena, who joined the court of Charles the Bald of France around the times of Bernard Planta Pilus of Aquitaine, made a Latin translation of the "Pseudo Dionysius" writings, and the 12th and 13th century scholastics Hugh of Saint-Victor (Paris), Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas wrote commentaries on them. The

²⁸<http://www.sn1.ch/dhs/externe/protect/textes/D1547.html>

²⁹<http://www.catholink.ch.sion/de/geschichte.html>

³⁰Sidh-hill is Sidh-Dunum which became Sedunum in the Gallo-Roman epoch and was later corrupted to Sion in much the same way as Lug's hill became Lyon.

³¹As detailed by <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05013a.htm> the clues furnished by the first appearance and by the character of the writings enable us to conclude that the author belongs at the very earliest to the latter half of the fifth century, and that, in all probability, he was a native of Syria.

³²De divinus nominibus, x, 1 in P.G. III 936D.

³³By 'Dionysius the Areopagite' is usually understood the judge of the Areopagus who, as related in Acts, xvii, 34, was converted to Christianity by the preaching of St. Paul, and according to Dionysius of Corinth (Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., III, iv) was Bishop of Athens.

writings also influenced the 12th century “Plantagenet favoured” scholastic Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln and Oxford who, like others, wrote significantly about the *vegetable soul*.

27.3.1 Feet as the foundation of God’s kingdom

It seems clear that a common feature in pre-scientific myth and philosophy is the origins of *human* life from the land as well as from blood ties. This can be related to the Latin word *planta* which means *both* sole of foot (man’s contact with the land) and shoot for propagation (emergence of new life).

There may have been a particular influence throughout Europe from Daniel 2:31-44 in which a great image has feet made from iron and clay; these are smashed by a stone that becomes a mountain and the miry clay mingles with the seeds of men to bring the kingdom of God of heaven. Not all metaphors are used with a whole system of coherent concepts and some modern metaphors, such as ‘a mountain is a person’, may have just one or two instances associated with them. Thus, we commonly talk of the *foot* of a mountain but we can regard references to ‘head’, ‘shoulder’, and ‘trunk’ of a mountain as no more than a rare imaginative extension to the metaphorical expression ‘mountain foot’. In connection with the Latin word *planta* (sole of foot or propagating shoot) it can be noted that there is a metaphorical sole that lies at the *foot of a mountain* where clay is found (in Latin *solum* means ground) and this basis for God’s vineyard of propagating life is provided by the smashed *feet of clay* of Babylon’s third kingdom. The Pearl poet’s passage relating to Daniel includes ‘*to rose [augment] him in his rialty ... to Babylon*’ [*Cleanness* lines 1371-2] and he also associates *rose* with virgin birth. For medieval times there is only limited written evidence available, which can make it difficult to be certain just how fundamental to people’s thinking particular metaphors may have been. It is difficult to regard the plant metaphor however as anything other than systematic and pervasive. The Bible represents men as *plants* in God’s *vineyard* and as the *branches* of Jesus as the *vine* though the *rose* or *pees* can be substituted for the vine in Middle English; a young person can still be described, albeit now rather rarely in English, as a *spring* or *scion*.

The surname Von Planta can be compared with the German *von pflanza* meaning ‘from the plant’ or, in terms of late medieval scholastic belief, ‘from the first principal of God’s kingdom’ which was founded on miry clay as washed to a mountain’s foot. In Switzerland, the river Planta might be associated with the origins of life, or rebirth from a Celtic otherworld. In Welsh tradition³⁴, Math could only live if his feet were held in the lap of a virgin, for which purpose he tested Arianrhod; her father Gwydion could transform trees into warriors and, for Arianrhod’s son Lleu, Gwydion and Math created Blodeuedd whose name means ‘born of flowers’ as she was created from blossoms of oak, *broom*, and meadowsweet. In Greek tradition, Achilles was held by the foot while he was dipped in the waters of the Styx which left his heel as his vulnerable spot; also Eros, after dropping an arrow on his foot, was diverted from his quest and fell in love with the princess Psyche, the ‘soul’. In modern English, the OED defines *plant n2* as ‘sole of foot’ and it begins the definition of *plant n1* with (1a) a young tree, shrub, or herb newly planted; (1b) ... ; (1c) figuratively a young person (now rare). The latter *figurative* meaning is reinforced in as much as *plant literally* means children in Welsh and it seems that an ontological extension of plants to life’s foundations as feet or young life persisted throughout Christian (Latin) Europe.

27.3.2 Piecing together the medieval meaning

In modern times, we may consider two sets of requirements, one for describing the plant kingdom and a different list for humans with little intersection between the two. In medieval times however the overlap between the two could be greater. It seems that the difference between the modern

³⁴Cotterell and Storm (1999) *ibid*, pps 101, 108, 139, 145, 149, 499.

English and Welsh *literal* meanings of plant was not as great as we are now predisposed to think. The concepts of a young plant and a young person were more nearly the same.

Guided by late medieval literature, the requirements for a prototypical plant might be listed as follows:-

- object newly planted or emerged or grounded with roots or foundations (feet) on Earth;
- displays powers of nutrition, augmentation, and generation;
- composed out of earthly elements with the help of God's spiritual light; contains virtues and green (visibly or invisibly); may develop an erect habit;
- may display remorse (pertaining to the past participle of the Latin word *plango*);
- subject to God's will.

This complies with various requirements beyond those that would feature in a modern English list. For example God first planted the world as the Garden of Eden and the Latin word *planta* implies planted on earth as with new life or our experience through the sole of the foot. In Spanish and French *plant* can describe foundations or the floor of a building. The MED describes *plant* as something planted such as an herb, a shrub, or a tree or as something newly emerged, such as a scion, and, according to Langland, a tree could *hath trewe love*. At birth we display vegetable powers such that we are a *plant loosely* if not *strictly* speaking, not yet planted with the *intellective* Word though this was a point that was deliberated in the more advanced philosophies of Grosseteste and Bacon. In France children are called 'little cabbages'.

An aspect of the plant metaphore is seemingly the colour green. Not only an herb but also a legendary knight could be green in body. The legend of the Green Knight is associated with the 14th century Plant homeland but the fact that he was headless³⁵ indicates 'metaphoric' or 'mythical' sense rather than physical reality. Rather than just looking at a specific image of the Green Knight or of a carved Green Man head issuing vegetation from the mouth (sometimes also from the ears and eyes) and imagining that early Plant family members were adorned in such a way, it seems better justified to look more widely for 'concrete' human bodily experiences that were relevant ontologically to a 'plant metaphore for created life'.

27.3.3 Medieval meaning betwixt ancient and modern

A mixing of concepts for the basis of both vegetable and human life, with a Deity as the root and with belief in transformations from vegetable into human life, can seem less odd if we make an effort to cast aside our modern scientific preconceptions. In modern times, our understanding of biology distances the origins of plants from man by over 400,000,000 years. We now tend to regard plants as no more than a *distant* figurative metaphore for the human condition. We retain the remnants of an earlier philosophy of God's planted Word but only as a faint metaphore of ideas. Lakoff and Johnson (1980)³⁶ note the metaphore that 'ideas are organisms, either plants or people'. They note such examples as 'Where did you *dig up* that idea?', 'Whose *brainchild* was that?', 'Those ideas *died off* in the Middle Ages', 'His views have finally come to *fruition*', 'He views chemistry as an *offshoot* of physics', 'She has a *fertile* imagination', and 'Here's an idea I'd like to *plant* in your mind'. This can be seen as a substantially reduced view of the 'planted Word of creation'. Much is forgotten of the medieval philosophy of Roger Bacon for example, for whom the cause of corruption was diminution of the light of creation — this can be seen as having been grounded directly on the physical reality of plants. The medieval scholastics had developed ideas dating back to the Pythagorean 'kinship of all living things' to the extent that they believed that the vegetable soul determined both moral and physical qualities in man.

³⁵Beheading tests are associated with Celtic mythology though the Pearl poet's poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* shows also a Christian influence.

³⁶Lakoff and Johnson (1980) *ibid*, p 47.

In a *modern* Christian culture, we are more likely to consider ‘heavenly origins’ (descent of souls) than man’s origins from the land as plants. This then places an emphasis more on God planting virtues down to earth than men emerging from the (pagan) underworld. Both ideas were present, however, and we should not presume that the metaphore of plants springing from earthly roots was lost in ‘Christian’ late medieval times. The 14th century Pearl poet of the principal Plant homeland described (?black³⁷) virgin birth with ‘*And there watz rose reflowr where rotz [roots] hatz ben euer [ever]’* [*Cleanness* line 1079]. The basic vertical motion of a young plant, such as a rose scion, is upwards though, in ‘more spiritual Christian’ teachings, divine substances are planted downwards.

Relatively little was known about the internal workings of the body in medieval times. Such workings were associated *directly* with plants. The vegetable soul was viewed as a corporeal organ; Avicenna placed it as the liver though Grosseteste considered a unified soul with vegetable and sensory and intellective operations. The plant within us was seen as more physical than just an idea. It was more than an *obscure* metaphore for love. The ‘plant of *pees*’ could evoke the origins of a man with the planting of his *vertues* as *pes* or peas. From seed and root through the route of our umbilical cord we emerge into God’s heavenly light with Love planted by God as the Prince of *Pees* (Peas or Peace, *cf.* Jesus as the integrating vine).

For pre-scientific times we should not leave out aspects of the ‘plant metaphore’ whereby the origins and physiology of plants were more intimately related to humans than we are now prepared to consider. *Planteveleu* can mean ‘hairy foot’ as well as ‘hairy generative scion’ (*cf.* *Plantegenest* as the ‘hairy sprig of broom’). Though some may have related to a religious work ethic, there is sense as ‘souls of God’s vine’ for such names as *Plantevine*, *Plantebene*, *Plantefeve*, *Planterose*, and *Plantamour*. In England, *Plantebene* or *Plantefolie* can mean a ‘hallowed offshoot or child’ or a ‘child of (contrition of) sin’ and, rather similarly in Switzerland, *Plantefoi* or *Plantfor* can mean a ‘child of faith or testimony’ or a ‘child of tribunal or conscience’. The vegetable soul of augmentation or porrection can explain the national emblems of England (rose) and Wales (leeks). Meanings based on the sole³⁸ (foundation) of God’s kingdom, or the soul of augmentation or porrection, or the soul of love or generation of children can explain such names as *Planta*, *Planterose*, *Plantaporrets*, *Plantamour*, and *Plant*.

27.4 Early times in England and early evidence of the Plants

Precent controversial book³⁹ has claimed that a blood line *Planta* in England descended from the Plantard family of Brittany. Though this can be dismissed as unsubstantiated, it is interesting to investigate such conjecture further. The Plantard name provides a geographical bridge between the Plant name in England and the noble name *Planta* in Switzerland; Plantard is found in France around Brittany and also near Switzerland. Another possible link between Plant-like names, between western France and England, is provided by ‘Plantagenet’ activity. Though extant evidence is scant for the early use of Plantagenet as a surname, John Sleight (1862)⁴⁰ noted a supposed connection between the noble name Plantagenet from France and Plant in the NW Midlands of England. The first evidence in England for the Pl(a/e)nte name is in 1219. This is

³⁷As detailed further at <http://www.plant-fhg.org.uk/pearlpoet.pdf> (Chapter 23) the Pearl poet refers to Mary as ‘the Phoenix of Araby’ in a passage seemingly relating to the Virgin birth of Christ. The reference to ‘Araby’ can be compared with the french *Arabe* or the latin *Arabem* giving the modern english meaning of Arab as ‘one of a semetic race inhabiting Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries’. This might be compared with the late medieval European cult of the Black Virgin.

³⁸There is mention of Julius *Planta* in the edict of Claudius (Menner in *Mitth.d.C.C/ XIV* (1869) p 160). Later the blazon of the *Planta* family is silver with a black bear foot with a red sole pointing outside. As an alternative to a ‘sole’ meaning for *Planta*, a corruption has been suggested of such place names as *Plantalais* (?plan de l’avais) and *Plantafu* (?plan de fossa). <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/gufidaun/chroniken/p/planta.wildenburg.htm>

³⁹Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln (1996) *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*.

⁴⁰John Sleight (1862) *A History of the Ancient Parish of Leek*, p 33.

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shortly after the times of the lecherous king John (1167-1216) though an alternative possible link between Plant origins and the 'Plantagenets' involves the Warren descendants of Hamelin, natural son of the 12th century Geoffrey Plante Genest, count of Anjou and Maine.

In 1159, near the beginning of these more orderly 'Plantagenet times', in what has been regarded as the first age since classical antiquity in which the intellect re-emerges as a driving force, John of Salisbury wrote at the close of his *Metalogicus*, 'I have been distracted by other tasks, not different merely but inimical to study'. This was typical of the spreading cultural impetus, scholasticism, which set out to create a body of systematic doctrine about the nature of God and the universe and which was to form the framework of thought for the whole of society until the Black Death two centuries later. The first evidence for the Plant surname in England is found in these so-called 'scholastic times'. As previously noted (Chapter 26), a 'planted life' meaning can be elaborated for Plant as '*a descended implanted soul, a descendant, or children*', with the initial DNA evidence indicating that these were children of a single family.

Early Plants are found near Hamelin's Warren descendants⁴¹, particularly in their post-Black Death homeland of east Cheshire⁴² and into north Staffordshire. The Warrens had owned Conisborough, near Sheffield, from post-Conquest times⁴³ when a rebellion in the north was savagely put down and military castles of earthworks and timber were built to demote the Anglo-Saxon civilisation to one which was in many ways far less sophisticated⁴⁴. Around a century later the king's brother, Hamelin, natural son of Geoffrey Plante Genest count of Anjou and Maine, married the Warren heiress and built a stone castle at Conisborough, in about 1180, which reflected the new era. The castle was primarily a domestic residence but with built in precautions for protection against social unrest. There were ancient saltways across the Peak⁴⁵, such as from Doncaster and Rotherham near Conisborough to Stockport in east Cheshire, and returning from Macclesfield in east Cheshire by around Great Longstone and Bakewell to Sheffield and Chesterfield, and back again by Matlock Bridge to north Staffordshire and Congleton. These trade routes may have been relevant to how the early Plant family ramified, perhaps from their principal homeland in east Cheshire and north Staffordshire across the Peak District of north Derbyshire.

An alternative possible explanation of the early distribution of the Plant name may date back to the times of the aforementioned font in St Mary's. This was around the times of Ranulph Blundeville, earl of Chester and Lincoln, who was close to king John and who is accredited with founding Dieulacres Abbey in north Staffordshire and Bolingbroke Castle in south Lincolnshire. These two locations are where the two principle clusters of the Plant name are subsequently found.

Along the ancient saltways joining these locations at either side of the north Midlands of England, there are a few early signs of the Plants. By 1538, a Christopher Plant was leasing estate at Bakewell from Ralph Gell of Hopton, whose fortunes were based on wool and lead mining. When parish records begin at nearby Great Longstone, about halfway across north Derbyshire, there is a Plant family there from 1648. A little further to the east in north Derbyshire, from 1731, there is a William Plant at Duckmanton, near Chesterfield, who is denoted $W^{22}(0)$ below and described in some detail. It seems that he may have married at Ault Hucknall, NE of Nottingham, in 1725 before moving to near Chesterfield.

There were the stirrings of important historical developments in the locality. Erasmus Darwin was born at Elston Hall, NE of Nottingham, in 1731 and he went on to translate the 'plant categori-

⁴¹Chapter 19.

⁴²The Poynton Warren line of east Cheshire is usually associated with illegitimate descendants of the 8th earl. The 5th earl was Hameline (Plantagenet) of different male-line descent from the first 3. The Poynton Warren line is hence usually taken to be of male-line descent from Hameline though, controversially, it has been claimed that they descended instead from the 2nd earl – <http://genforum.genealogy.com/warren/messages/8350.html> – this would have different Y-line DNA implications

⁴³Joseph Hunter (1819) *Hallamshire: The History and Topography of the parish of Sheffield in the County of York*, p247.

⁴⁴Roy Strong (2000) *The Spirit of Britain: A Narrative History of the Arts*, Pimlico, pps 38-9, 49.

⁴⁵Figure 20.3.

sations' of the Swedish botanist Linnaeus in those times before his grandson's Charles Darwin's evolutionary work on the *Origins of the Species*. Matthew Boulton (b 1728), Josiah Wedgwood (b 1730), and Erasmus Darwin (b 1731) were all born in the heart of England in counties that curve around the Derbyshire Peak, all descended from 'yeomen', small landowners and farmers⁴⁶. Erasmus attended school in Chesterfield, near the farmer and brickmaker William Plant, and wrote in 1749 '*All flesh is grass*' and soon after speculated wildly '*on the resemblance between the action of the human souls and that of electricity*'. In those times, before when the term 'scientist' was coined in 1830, agriculture was giving way to manufacturing. Philosophy and the arts (including such 'arts' as the 'mechanical arts' of water-power) were combining to challenge old religious 'superstitions'. A hint of a more developed philosophy of a 'vegetable life force from the earth', around the times of *W^m(0)'s* death, is given by Christopher Smart in *Jubilate Agno (1759-63)* with '*For Matter is the dust of the Earth, every atom of which is the life. For Motion is as the quantity of life direct ... For the Earth which is an intelligence hath a voice and a propensity to speak in all her parts [cf. the planted Word of God]*'. This shows the seeds of ideas developing towards our more modern scientific understanding. The medieval power of a plant within man, which generated a single family, was developing towards a notion of the plant (*i.e.* equipment) to generate an industrial product.

Genealogical schemes for the north Derbyshire Plants are sketchy before *W^m(0)'s* times. Further DNA testing of the descendants of this *W^m(0)* and of other Plants may eventually provide some further clues. So far, one of those in a genealogical scheme descending from *W^m(0)* has been found to have a characteristic Y-line mutation; in due course, this characteristic difference from an otherwise modal Plant DNA signature⁴⁷ may help in testing and developing the genealogy of this Plant family branch further.

27.5 Wm(0)'s 18th century will and family

he NE Derbyshire brickmaker and farmer, William Plant of Duckmanton (*W^m(0)*) may have descended from Plants in east Cheshire and north Staffordshire though it has not been possible to ascertain any detailed line of descent. There is evidence to connect a William Plant in the vicinity of Sheffield in the times of *W^m(0)* to '*Branside, Prestbury*'. This can lead to the consideration of a possible baptism for this William Plant at Gawsorth (Prestbury, east Cheshire) (Chapter 15). Alternatively, we may note that the parish of Leek adjoins the southern edge of this Prestbury parish and that there are other possible baptisms for a William Plant there. It may also be noted that *W^m(0)* may have been the William Plant who married at Ault Hucknall in 1725 and this is more in the direction of the south Lincolnshire, rather than the east Cheshire, Plant cluster. Either way, it may be added that an east Cheshire Plant has different mutations from an otherwise modal Plant DNA signature suggesting that this particular east Cheshire Plant branch may have split quite early from *W^m(0)'s* branch which leads on to the Sheffield *Plant's Yard* Plants.

Some confirmation of a scheme of descent from *W^m(0)*, as described in earlier Chapters, is found in *W^m(0)'s* will which includes mention of some offspring. This will, made 5th August and dated 15th December 1768, describes *W^m(0)* as William Plant of Duckmanton in the Parish of Sutton and county of Derby Farmer and Brickmaker. A summary of *W^m(0)'s* bequests, mentioning his kin, is:-

£20 —daughter Esther, the wife of John Jackson;

£70 **plus all wearing apparel** —son Robert Plant;

£70 —son John Plant;

£20 —daughter Anne, the wife of Joseph Morton;

⁴⁶Jenny Uglow (2002) *The Lunar Men: the Friends who made the Future 1730-1810*, pps 1,7.

⁴⁷This signature so far apparently matches with the ancestral Plant signature at 25 markers, with just a single mutation at the 26th marker (DYS 392), though two different mutations have recently also been found with high resolution testing for an east Cheshire Plant.

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£20 —grandson William, the son of Edward Milnes;

£70 —son Benjamin Plant;

£150 —son Thomas Plant; and,

the remainder —son James Plant and heirs.

The inheritance by $W^m(0)$'s son James was subject to the proviso that he would provide for William's widow Elizabeth. The estate demised to James included:-

'my Messuage House or Tenement and Hereditaments in Bolsover in the said County of Derby which I purchased of Richard Bennett and now in the possession of Isaac Wood or his assigns with the Appurtenances ... all my Moneys, Goods, Chattels and personal estate ... all Moneys due to me upon Bond ... together with all my Right of Possession to the House and Farm at Duckmanton where I now dwell provided always ... that he [James] permit and suffer my Wife Elizabeth Plant to dwell in the House she formerly lived in before I married her ...'

The further provision for his widow Elizabeth comprised a series of options, as follows.

option (a) — *'[James] pay to her ... the Sum of six pound ten Shillings a year, half yearly, for and during the term of her Widowhood ... find a Cow for my said wife Elizabeth Plant and keep her the said Cow both Winter and Summer in the Same Manner he keeps his Own ... allow her to take unto herself all the Household Goods she had when I married her ... lead her what Coals she burns and a sledfull of Wood to kindle Fires with for Nothing ... give her Liberty to Whiten her Yarn in the Orchard, and one half of the fruit trees in the Orchard to her own Use.'*

option (b) — *'But in Case my said Wife Elizabeth Plant do not, nor be not Willing to accept the beforementioned Annuity and Priviledges, Then ... the Sum of Ten pound a year ... to be paid her Quarterly'*

option (c) — *'... if the Sons of my said Wife Elizabeth Plant viz; Robert Fern or Francis Fern ... pay the Arrears of Rent, unto my Executor, which I paid to Godfrey Clarke Esq. being due to him from my wife Elizabeth Plant when I married her; then ... I will that he or they enjoy the Possession of the Land again which were in her Possession before I married her; ... Then ... I only give unto my Wife the Sum of forty shillings a year ...'*

$W^m(0)$ added *'his mark or Ink'* as a cross and a blob.

27.6 The farmer Samuel Plant from Rotherham

From the 1760's onwards, two of $W^m(0)$'s sons, James and Benjamin, appear at Sheffield's Coal Pit Lane, which was probably the site of *'Late Plant yard'*, and one of these sons, Benjamin, and another, John, then appear at the Little Sheffield site of *Plant's Yard* just a mile to the south. There is clear evidence that the bricklayer John Plant was from Duckmanton and, hence, was surely the son John of $W^m(0)$. He was then at Rotherham and he also had an association with Beighton while he settled next to his brother, the bellows maker 'Benjamin Plant of Sheffield Moor' at Plant's Yard. He is described in his 1816 will as *'John the Older of the Township of Sheffield but late of the Township of Beighton'* (Chapter 14).

As indicated in Figure 27.1, a Samuel Plant, who is to be found at Beighton by 1809 for the baptism of his first child John, was quite undoubtedly this bricklayer John's son Samuel who was baptised in Rotherham in 1785 (Figure 14.6). It is presumably this Samuel who is recorded as having freehold houses and land at Birley Moor, in the 1832 Electoral Roll for Beighton. In the 1851 and 1861 Beighton Census returns, he is recorded as a farmer from Rotherham (about 6 miles NE from Sheffield) with his wife Maria and unmarried daughter Ellen, who is recorded as a dressmaker born at Birley Vale (*i.e.* Beighton).

There is a will (under £100) for this Samuel Plant (d 28.3.1865), late of Eckington. Samuel is described as a farmer *'of Birley Moor in the parish of Beighton in the County of Derby, but late of Saint Cross, Ridgeway, in the parish of Eckington in the same County'*. Beighton village

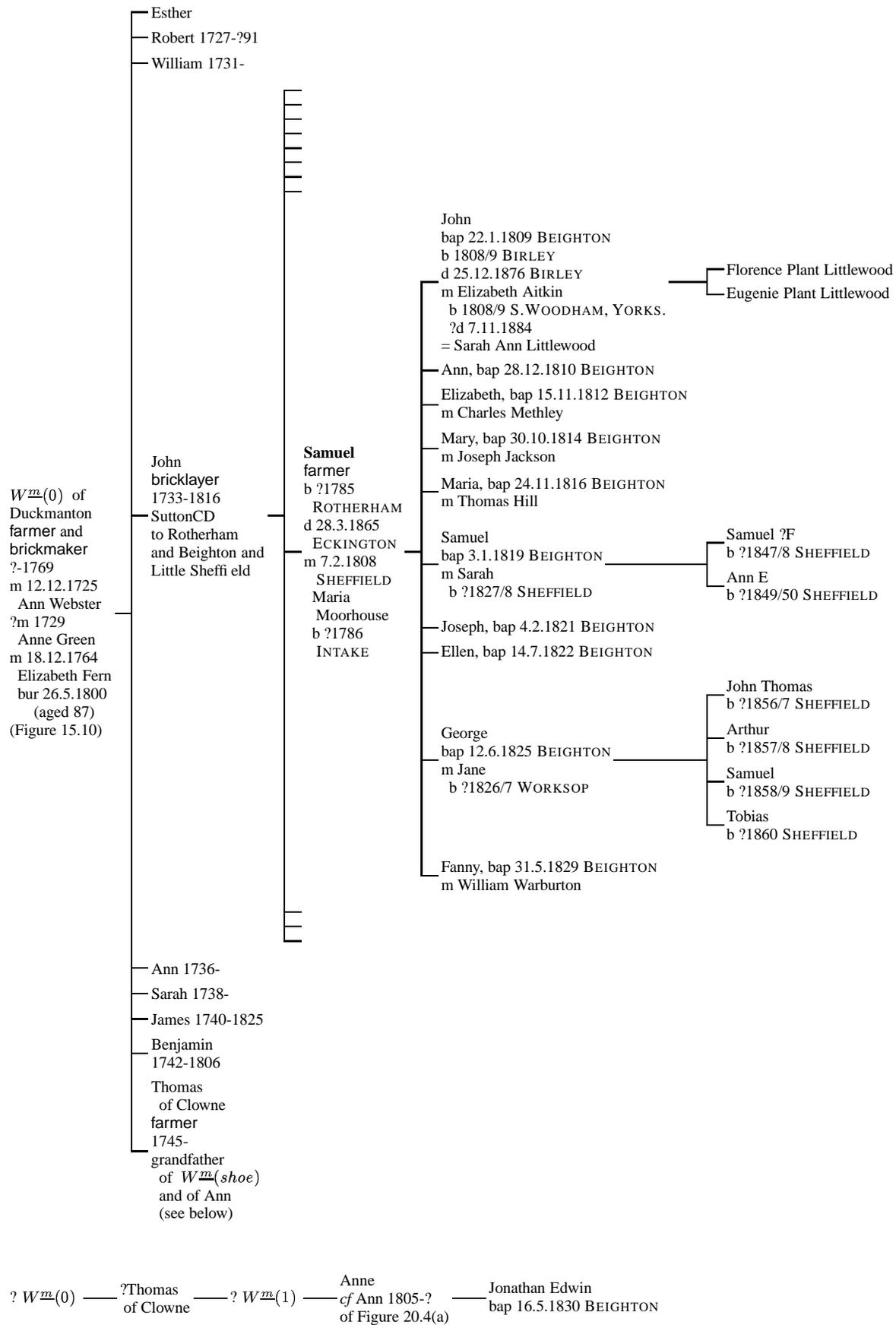


Figure 27.1: Some Beighton descendants of the farmer Samuel Plant

There is evidence to indicate that it is the farmer John Plant of Birley who is recorded in Sheffield Trades Directories to have been active in various businesses based near central Sheffield and at Birley (*i.e.* Intake):-

- John Plant, Corn & Seed Merchant, 5 Corn Exchange, and Intake (*W.White's 1849*)
- John Plant, Farmer, Birley (*Kelly's 1854*)
- John Plant, Agricultural Implement Manufacturer, Birley, Intake (*W.White's 1856*)

By 1860, he appears still to be living at Birley Moor but with his business address given as Victoria Road:-

- John Plant, Corn, Cake, Seed and Tillage Merchant & Agricultural Implement Manufacturer and Dealer, 11 Victoria Road, home Birley Moor (*White's 1860 and 1862*)

Victoria Road was near the 'Midland Station' which was in central Sheffield and this station is mentioned in the following entries:-

- John Plant, Corn & Seed Merchant and Coal Merchant, Victoria Road and Midland Station (*Drake's 1863*)
- John Plant, Agricultural Implements Dealer and corn, seed and tillage merchant, 11 Victoria Arches, Victoria Road and Corn Exchange; and coal merchant (Wm Hucknall agent) Midland Station, Saville St, Wicker; and farmer Hackenthorpe, Beighton; home Birley, Intake (*White's 1864 and Kelly's 1865*)

Midland Station at that time was the 'old Midland', which was before 1870 at ground level between Spital Hill and Saville Street just beyond the end of the Wicker, which is just north of Bridge Houses near central Sheffield (*cf.* Figure 10.1); after 1868 this station had become the Midlands Goods Depot^a. Accordingly, after 1870, the Directory entry for John does not refer to the (old) 'Midland Station' but to it as the goods depot 'Midland Depot':-

- Plant Jno., Coal and Coke Mert., & Implement Agent, Midland Depot; home Birley Moor (*White's 1868*)
- John Plant, Corn Merchant, Corn Exchange, and Local Merchant, Midland Depot and farmer Birley Moor (*1871*)
- John Plant, Corn Mert., & Collier Propr., Corn Exchange (*White's 1876*)

^aAt that time, the nearby Great Central line to Manchester was built on the Wicker Arches which adjoined the new Victoria Station, which was reached by steps and a lift from the Wicker and by the inclined Station Approach Road from Blonk Street.

Table 27.1: Some Trade Directory entries for Samuel's son John

is a little more than a mile east of Birley and 2 miles north of Eckington (which is about 6 miles SE of Sheffi eld). Samuel bequeaths to his daughter Ellen Plant '*all the household furniture plate linen glass china books pictures fuel housekeeping stores and other effects of the like nature*' and he makes provision for his dear wife Maria and six named children. This will was proved by Samuel's son John Plant, miller and farmer.

27.6.1 Farmer Samuel's eldest son John

In the 1841 Census returns, there is listed at Handsworth an Elizabeth and a John Plant. This John is stated to be a farmer and corn factor of rounded age 30. It would hence appear that this John was the eldest son of the aforementioned Samuel, as indicated in Figure 27.1. In the 1851 Census returns for Birley Moor there is listed John Plant (42) farmer 80 acres with wife Elizabeth (42) and servants.

There are various deeds in the name of John Plant around Sheffi eld and at least some of these no doubt relate to this farmer John Plant of Birley. These include deeds for Handsworth in 1854 (GK-146-160), Freedom Hill, Walkley in 1863 (XF-426-449) and 'Hanover Road - Lawson Street',

Ecclesall Bierlow in 1863 (XF-759-797).

It seems, for example, that by the time of his 1876 death this John Plant was described also as a ‘*Collier Propr.*’ (Table 27.1). Farmer Samuel’s eldest son, John (1809-76) seemingly prospered near Victorian Sheffi eld. Though John’s 1867 will described him simply as a farmer and miller, he is described variously elsewhere as ‘*a farmer, corn factor, corn & seed merchant, agricultural implement manufacturer and dealer, coal and coke merchant*’ and eventually, in 1876, as a ‘*Corn Mert., & Collier Propr.*’. The wills of John and his widow Elizabeth are outlined in Table 27.2.

27.6.2 Farmer Samuel’s son Samuel

Samuel’s son Samuel (*i.e.* the above John Plant’s younger brother Samuel, bap 1819) is shown as a Timber Dealer and Carpenter, aged 33 from Beighton, in the 1851 Census return for 273 Pitsmore, Brightside, Sheffi eld. He is listed together with his wife and children who are included in Figure 27.1. This Samuel is presumably he who is listed in an 1852 Sheffi eld Trades Directory as:-

- Samuel Plant, Wheelwright & Timber Dealer, Effingham Street; home Brighton Terrace, Pitsmore (White’s 1852)

27.6.3 Farmer Samuel’s son George

Unlike other children of the farmer Samuel such as the eldest child John, there is no mention of Ann, Samuel, Joseph, or George in their father’s 1860 will. It seems clear that George was still alive however and, by 1876, he was apparently associated with the coal business of his eldest brother, the collier proprietor John Plant.

Earlier, around 1850, George seems to have been close to the family of his second cousin, the shoemaker William (*i.e.* $W^m(shoe)$). An early Plant in Sheffi eld was $W^m(0)$ ’s grandson $W^m(1)$ (1772-1848) from Clowne and there seems to be little doubt that the shoemaker William was $W^m(1)$ ’s son (Chapters 9 and 20). This $W^m(shoe)$ and his sister Ann remained close to farmer Samuel’s family with, for example, both Samuel’s son George and $W^m(shoe)$ ’s son James⁴⁸ living close to each other, near Plant’s Yard, by 1851. In 1851, this George Plant was living in Hermitage Lane and, though $W^m(shoe)$ had died, his children James and Emma (Figure 20.4(b)) were still living nearby in Sylevester Street. Hermitage Lane was midway between Sylvester Street and Plant’s Yard, at about 0.2 miles from each. The proximity of the addresses of $W^m(shoe)$ and George Plant, even though they were only second cousins, can be considered alongside the earlier evidence that $W^m(shoe)$ ’s sister Anne⁴⁹ apparently bore her first child at Beighton, in 1830, where George would have been, aged 5. Various further information about George Plant is outlined in Table 27.3.

$W^m(shoe)$ ’s son James, who prospered in Victorian Sheffi eld, will be described more fully in a later Chapter. There seems to have been a particularly close relationship between this dram flask maker James, whose father died early, and his probable uncle $Ben(shoe)$ — in 1851, James is described as a Powder Flask Maker (Journeyman) and this may have been under the auspices of $Ben(shoe)$ who, as well as being a shoemaker, is described as a Powder Flask Maker in 1858.

⁴⁸Anne’s apparent brother, the shoemaker William ($W^m(shoe)$) (Chapter 20) had a son James who prospered in Victorian Sheffi eld, as will be described in a later Chapter.

⁴⁹It may be recalled (Chapter 9) that $W^m(1)$ was the nephew of the Plant’ Yard Plants, Benjamin and John, and that $W^m(1)$ ’s daughter Ann (Figure 20.4(a)) was married at Rotherham in 1834. One of the witnesses at this Ann’s marriage was apparently a relative (called Amelia Hartley) of the wife, Elizabeth (née Hartley), of the shoemaker William Plant (1803-48). More particularly, it may be presumed that, Jonathan Edwin Plant, who was baptised in 1830 at Beighton (Figure 27.1) was this Ann’s illegitimate son. Beighton is roughly midway between Clowne and Sheffi eld and it seems possible that Anne may have traveled from Clowne or from Sheffi eld to bear the child discretely, perhaps staying with the family of the aforementioned Samuel Plant at Beighton. If our suppositions are correct this Samuel Plant, who is known to have been from Rotherham, would have been a cousin of Ann’s father $W^m(1)$.

There is a will (under £3000) for a John Plant, farmer and miller, late of Birley (d 25.12.1876 at Birley). This will (made 20.11.1867) was proved (24.1.1877) by Henry Sibray of Handsworth, nursery man, and William Cotterill, bank clerk, of Clarke Street, Broomhall, Sheffield. This same William Cotterill of 6 Clarke Street was also the person to prove the will (£1533.10.1d) of Elizabeth Plant, late of Handsworth, d 7.11.1884, and this Elizabeth was apparently John Plant's widow.

The value of John's will (under £3000) is similar to that of an almost contemporary will (£2957.14.10d) made by this John's second cousin, the Provision Dealer Thomas Plant, who was a son of Isaac Plant from Clowne (Chapter 8 and Figure 20.4(a)). The values of these wills correspond to circa £90,000 at 1985 prices. This John Plant's 1867 will was accepted as binding in 1877, which implies that the condition had been met that he should die without *lawful* issue. Immediate payments of £100 were bequeathed to his dear wife Elizabeth and to each of his brothers and sisters or, if dead, to their surviving children. Life annuities were also to be made of £100 *per annum* to his wife and £20 *per annum* to the spinster Sarah Ann Littlewood of Dent Lane in the parish of Beighton. Provision was to be made for the maintenance, education and bringing up of *Florence Plant Littlewood* and *Eugenie Plant Littlewood*, children of the said Sarah Ann Littlewood—it seems that these were *illegitimate* children of this wealthy John Plant who had no children by his wife Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Plant's will was made on 14.11.1877 shortly after (her late husband) John Plant's will had been proved. Elizabeth's will (proved 16.12.1884) bequeaths an annuity to her brother Isaac Aitkin mason of 13 Weston Street, Sheffield and, in the event of his death, to her sister-in-law Jane Aitkin, widow of her late brother Samuel Aitkin, as well as to her nephews and nieces.

Table 27.2: John's and his widow Elizabeth's wills

In the 1851 Census return for Hermitage Lane, carter George Plant (25) from Birley Moor is shown as a visitor (married but without his wife) in the household of cow keeper George Armitage. Hermitage Lane is near *Plant's Yard* in Little Sheffield, which had been in the late 18th century the base of this George Plant's probable grandfather, the bricklayer John Plant (Figure 27.1).

George Plant is shown as a filesmith at his marriage in 1852. This marriage is recorded as that of George Plant, filesmith, son of Samuel Plant (married at St George's church Nov.1852). George may well have been influenced by the trades of the Armitages whilst he was in Hermitage Lane as it can be noted that, a year earlier, George Armitage's stepson was shown as a file cutter in the 1851 Census returns. Furthermore the 1851 Census entry shows George Armitage as a cow keeper and there is an 1856 Trades Directory entry:

- George Plant, cowkeeper, 60 Jessop Street (*W.White's 1856*)

This suggests that the filesmith George Plant was apparently, at that time, (also) a cowkeeper in Jessop Street which adjoins Sylvester Street which, as has been already described, had been the home a few years earlier of the shoemaker William Plant (1803-48).

The 1861 Census return for Powel Street, in St George's Ecclesiastic District of Sheffield, shows the family of (this) file cutter George Plant (35) from Beighton—this family included George's wife and offspring as included in Figure 27.1.

Though the 1860 will of George's father (the farmer Samuel Plant) fails to mention George, it seems clear that it was this George who was still alive by the time of the 1861 Census. It also seems that this George Plant may have become involved with his brother John's coal business by 1876, as there is a Sheffield Trades Directory entry:-

- George Plant, coal dealer and cowkeeper, 44 Freedom Street (*White's 1876*)

There is an 1863 deed in the name of a John Plant for property at Freedom Hill, Walkley. This might be taken to suggest that the John Plant in the deed was George's brother John such that the Freedom Street address in the above 1876 Directory entry could have been near his brother John's 1863 business property at Freedom Hill.

Table 27.3: Various information about Samuel's son George