
How to do things with place-names

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Place-names are a vital source of information in early Celtic texts, but are often misunderstood. This lecture discusses five of them. *Din Guoayroi* is the Old Welsh name of Bamburgh, Northumberland, in *Historia Brittonum*. It is often said to be pre-English and of obscure meaning, but can be shown as a late form, and as referring to an auditorium of the English kings. *Arclut*, birthplace of the British historian Gildas, is routinely taken as Clydesdale in Scotland: but the evidence suggests it was actually near Chester. St Patrick's birthplace was *Bannaventa Taberniae*; new arguments locate it south-west of Bath. *Barkloughly Castle* is a puzzling reference in Shakespeare's *Richard II*; simple emendation lets us take it as Haverfordwest, Wales. Finally, *Rosnat* was an early Celtic monastery, formerly located at Whithorn in Scotland, and more recently placed by David Dumville in Wales. But a newly-discovered Cornish manuscript allows us to place it in Cornwall, near Truro, and suggest it was where David, the national saint of Wales, was educated.