Place-Name Tracing the Wicken

Origin of an Anglian Clan

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ABSTRACT

This paper utilizes place-name tracing to describe the origin of an Anglian clan on the Continent prior to its arrival in Britain. Two technical innovations are applied in this process: first, identifying small, ancient settlements in Britain which may have been established by Anglo-Saxon kinship groups and named after their leaders and second, working backward to see which of these names are also found on the Continent. Together, these two innovations make it possible to identify the names of various Anglo-Saxon clans, such as the Wicken.

Since they are not included in any of the lists of Germanic tribes, it is most likely that the Wicken were viewed and named in Anglo-Saxon as Vikings, either as people from Vikin or as a heterogeneous band of invaders from Scandinavia. The Wicken appear to have affiliated with the Angles, because the name of this clan can be used to trace the migration of the tribe from central Germany to Angeln on the Jutland Peninsula. While most maps of the era show the Angles and Saxons traveling by sea down and over to Britain, the Wicken appear to have traveled south by land and then across the sea to Kent.

By focusing upon the origin and migration of the Wicken on the Continent, this new model for studying the Germanic tribes makes it possible to identify tribal clans, to verify their migration routes, and to foresee the arrival in Britain of a previously unknown group of Angles.

INTRODUCTION

    This article describes an obvious but underutilized technique for tracking the migration of tribal groups. It uses place names to identify the location of tribal settlements, and it treats a series of similar place names found within or across a geographical area as marking a temporal sequence of settlements resulting from the migration of the tribe. Since it is rare that the initial date of a prehistoric or ancient settlement can be determined or even estimated with sufficient accuracy, the dynamics of place-name tracing depend upon the evidence of historical documents to describe the direction in which a tribe may have migrated as well as the general time period during which the migration occurred, including the duration of a settlement as well as the speed with which migration occurs between settlements. If a sequence of similar place names matches this historical evidence, it is assumed that they document the migration of the tribal group. Deviations of a similar place name from the path of a tribal migration must either be explained by other circumstances or regarded as insufficiently supported to qualify as having derived from the name of the tribal group.

    In his article on *Assessing the Anglo-Saxon Invasions*, William Bakken counsels that

> place-name studies can provide additional information regarding the interactions of the
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> people in Britain during the Germanic invasions but must be used carefully. In general,
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> place-name information is used to supplement other data and cannot be used alone to
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> prove early origins. Place-names have passed through many changes from the fifth to
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> the twentieth centuries. In an illiterate society, there is a need for many different place-
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> names to avoid confusion, but names were not written down until at least the seventh

century and a large number of them were first recorded in the *Domesday Book* after the

Norman conquest, thus they were further distorted by French speaking clerics.

Chronologically, place-names are not accurate within less than a fifty-year span (Bakken,

1998).

In this paper, literary, archaeological and linguistic evidence of the origin of a particular place

name, if any exists, will be considered, since it is recognized that similar place names may

originate from different sources, just as different place names may originate from a similar

source. Changes in the spelling and meaning of the names of tribal groups and of place names

that may be related to these tribes may occur through any of the usual processes that impact

names over time, including abbreviation, conflation, convergence, development and

replacement. Consequently, there are over a dozen different spellings of Wicken that can be

found throughout the Continent and England. Place names based upon the Wicken are also

subject to elaboration, typically by adding a description of the nature of a settlement to the

name of the clan, such as Wickendorf, Wickenburg, Wickenford or Wickenden.

The Process of Place-Name Tracing

Interestingly, this technique does not contradict previous toponymic explanations of a

particular place name. In fact, the origin of the name of a tribal group can only be explained by

traditional ethnographic or toponymic techniques. However, place-name tracing is a unique

technique that assumes a two-step or three-step process wherein (1) a kinship group, band,

clan, sub-tribe or tribe may be associated with a name that can be explained through traditional

etymology, and (2) a place which is associated with the settlement of a particular tribal group

may acquire its name from the name of that group (rather than through the same etymology). In fact, a three-step process is also possible wherein (1) the name of a place is derived from some non-tribal source, (2) the name of a tribal group is derived from association with that place, and (3) another place which is associated with the settlement of that particular tribal group may acquire its name from the name of that group. These processes are based upon several assumptions which should be confirmed through further research. However, this paper is focused not on the process by which a tribal name becomes a place name but on what can be learned from the pattern of place names that are derived from a tribal name.

It is also important to clearly identify the limitations of this approach, the major one, as Bakken noted, is that ancient place names by themselves give little indication of the period of time during which a settlement occurred and therefore of the actual sequencing of a series of settlements. For this information, we are dependent largely upon historical documentation that describes the migration and settlement of tribes and, if available, of tribal groups. In this paper historical documents will be used to describe the migration of the tribe of Angles and then place names will be utilized to trace the migration of one clan of Angles, the Wicken, across the Continent.

THE ORIGIN OF THE WICKEN

Historical documents about the Anglo-Saxons have included references to a very large number of different Germanic tribes. The index for Germanic Tribes in the *History Files* lists 101 tribes (Kessler, 1999 – 2020d). Peter Kessler and Edward Dawson note that sixteen of the more obvious major tribes are mentioned in the medieval poem, *Widsith,* along with 29 of the more

obscure or minor tribes, and among the very minor tribes are four others that are linked to tribes that were recorded by Tacitus, Ptolemy, Jordanes, or other ancient authors (Kessler, 1999 – 2020e).   The Wicken are not mentioned in any of these lists, nor are they included in those described by any of the Medieval authors, Gildas, Bede, or the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. So, who were the Wicken? Did they actually exist? If so, how did their name originate?

The existence of the Wicken will be verified here on the basis of numerous place names that are clearly derived from the name of this group. Similar place names can be traced across the Continent and in Britain, so the group appears to be more permanent than is implied by calling them a camp or a band. On the other hand, they may not have been large enough to be identified as a tribe, even a minor tribe (such as a sub-tribe or a client tribe affiliated with a major tribe), except perhaps after crossing from the Continent and settling in the Western Midlands of Britain. Therefore, while early on they may have been a mere kinship group, camp or band and later on they may have expanded and been recognized as a tribe, they will be designated throughout this paper as a clan.

Clans are not generally known outside of a tribe, but within the tribe they are well-known and are often tied to the location where they have settled.   For example, according to the outline of property law in the *Navajo Digest*, the American Indian tribe known as Navajo,

> have always occupied land in family units, using the land for subsistence. Families and subsistence residential units hold land in a form of communal ownership. They establish tenure by way of customary residence where there were traditional winter and summer sheep camps (Jordan, 2009).

The clans within Germanic tribes such as the Angles may have had a similar communal relationship to the land where they settled, which suggests why place names may have been associated with a clan like the Wicken.

The *Wikipedia* article on Anglo-Saxons notes that Anglo-Saxon is a term that was rarely used by Anglo-Saxons themselves. It is likely they identified as *ængli*, *Seaxe* or, more probably, a local or tribal name such as *Mierce*, *Cantie*, *Gewisse*, *Westseaxe*, or *Norþanhymbre* ('Anglo-Saxons', 2020). It should be added that the members of a clan might also have self-identified with, and been known by, their clan name, as distinct from a tribal name. Yet, although the Angles and Saxons settled various areas across Britain which were associated with these tribal names, there is little information about which specific clans settled which of these different areas. The need for additional research should be readily apparent.

Techniques for Identifying Tribal Clans

The Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons, Jutes, etc., were most likely composed of multiple extended families and kinship groups, some of which may originally have acquired identities as clans or as small tribes affiliated with, but clients of, or subordinate to, a larger tribe. The place-names left on the Continent and especially in Britain by the Anglo-Saxon tribes are well-known, but those left by their clans, being so much smaller, are not as well-known. The movement of these clans is therefore harder to track, and the topology of the place names derived from the clans is harder to trace.

Two new techniques are utilized in this paper for the identification of clans. The first is to focus on a small settlement such as a "den" that may have been established by and named

after one clan member or a small family group that was part of a clan, rather than being named

for an entire tribe. A second, related technique is to begin by identifying the root form of

possible Anglo-Saxon clan names in Britain and then to compare them with the root form of

place names back on the Continent in areas from which Anglo-Saxon tribes were reported to

have migrated. Using these two techniques together, the names listed in the table below

describe "den" names found in Kent, England, that have similarities with place names found on

the Continent, primarily in and around Germany. These den names mostly describe the genitive

form of the clan names (where the name is used as an adjective) from which place names might

have been derived (such as *Wicken*), with an occasional use of the singular (such as *Wick*)

where a place is associated with an individual member of the clan. The listing of parallel forms

from the Continent assumes that the root form of British place-names might have be used to

identify something like a *den* ('swine pasture'), while the root form of the Germanic place-

names might have been used to identify something else, like a *burg/berg* ('mountain village') or

dorf/dorff ('rural village'), and that minor differences in spelling might have occurred, such as

sch in German appearing as *sh* in English or *Eiche* in German appearing as *Oak* in English.

TABLE OF POSSIBLE CLAN NAMES

Kentish Place-Name[1]	Continental Place-Name[2]	Anglian Possible Clan Name[3]
Benenden	Bennenberg	**Benen / Bennen**

Village and civil parish in Tunbridge Wells District	Place in Germany, near the Belgian border	
Bethersden Village west of Ashford	Bethen, Bethenberg Place In Marienwallfahrtwort, Germany	**Bethers / Bethen**
Biddenden Village in Ashford district	Biddenburg In Rhine-Erft district	**Bidden**
Borden Village near Sittingbourne	Borden Small town in Central Germany	**Borden**
Chatting Village in civil parish of Hoo	Chattenburg Monumental castle in Hesse-Kassel	**Chatt / Chatten**
Crippenden Manor in Cowden Village	Krippendorff Village in Jena, Germany	**Crippen / Krippen**
Frittenden	Fritten, Fritt In, City Fritt	**Fritt/Fritten**

Village and civil parish in Tonbridge Wells	Places in Viborg, Halle, Eupen, Germany	
Hersden Village and parish east of Canterbury	Hersdorf Municipality in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany	**Hers**
High Halden Ancient parish in Tenterden	Haldenburg Castle from 950 near Schwabegg in Schwab-munchen, Germany	**Halden**
Horsmouths Village in Tunbridge Wells	Horsdorf District of Bad Staffelstein in Upper Franconia, Germany	**Hors / Horsmon**
Newenden Village and civil parish in Ashford District	Newberg Castle, Republic, Capital in Austria, Czech, and Bavaria	**New / Newen**
Oakenden	Eichenbuhl, Eichendorf, Eichenzell	**Oaken / Eichen**

Small village in Staffordshire and Manor in Cowden, Kent	Small towns in Bavaria and Germany (Eiche means Oak in German)	
Otterden Parish in Hollingbourne	Otter, Otterburg Places in Samtgemeinde, Tostedt,and Veldhoven; and a castle, church and city	**Otter**
Rushenden Village on Isle of Sheppey	Rushing, The Rushing Places in Unna, Speicher and Buromeister, Dombin	**Rush / Rushen**
Sholden Village adjacent to Deal	Scholden Municipality in Rhineland-Palantinate, Germany	**Sholden / Scholden**
Swattenden Settlement in parish of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst	Swatten way Near Hamburg, Germany	**Swatten**
Tenterden	Tenter Bach, Tenter Graben	**Tenter**

Town in Ashford District and Village on Isle of Sheppey	Remscheid and Ratingen, Germany	
Wickenden Den in Lewisham Manor and the Village of Cowden	Wickenberg/burg, Wickendorff Settlements in Austria, Bavaria, Germany, Poland and the Netherlands.	**Wicken**

While only some of the den names may derive from the name of a family group or clan, those that do may thus be clan names and may mark the location of the clans as they migrated across the Continent. An examination of historical places and maps of Kent and other English counties and across Continental Europe would undoubtedly reveal more clan names and cognates than are listed here. In addition to the loss of information over time and the inconsistency of place-name formation, there may, of course, be some den names (as well as other place-names in Kent) whose clan name cognates have not been found, and, on the other hand, there may be some den names whose cognates are questionable or simply coincidental, derived from the same source found in different places (such as *Oaken* from Oak trees or *Otter* from that particular animal). Nevertheless, those names for which cognates have been found provide evidence of a possible link, across territory and through time, between families, kinship groups or clans.

These cognates also provide support for the conjecture that the Wicken were a tribal clan that originated or were first identified in central Germany. However, while the Wicken do not

appear in any lists of Germanic tribes, they seem to have been a more memorable clan than most, perhaps because they were larger, more resilient and persistent or more aggressive. For whatever reason, they inspired many place names similar to "Wickenden" across the Continent and the county of Kent.

Wick and Wicken Place Names

In general, the most common types of Anglo-Saxon place names take the form [personal name + settlement/farm/place] or [type of farm + farm/settlement]. Almost all towns ending in *-wich, -ton, -ham, -by, -thorpe, -stoke/stock* are of these types (Place Name Origins, 2020). According to a *Wikipedia* article on Toponomy of England, 'generally, *wich/wick/wyke* indicates a farm or settlement (e.g. *Keswick* 'cheese farm'). However, some of the sites are of Roman or early Post-Roman origin, in which the *wich* represents Latin *vicus* ('place'). These *vici* seem to have been trading posts. On the coast, *wick* is often of Norse origin, meaning 'bay' or 'inlet' (e.g. *Lerwick*)' (Toponymy, 2000).

Note however that these examples place *-wick* as a suffix, at the end of the name, whereas tribal-derived names place the tribal name at the beginning, since in Germanic languages, and thus in Old English and Old Norse, the substantive element is generally preceded by its modifier. Thus, *Whichford* (Warwickshire) means 'the ford of the Hwicce', while *Fordwich* (Kent) means 'the village near the ford' (in this case, a ford over the River Stour). Clearly, the former place name might be derived from a tribe (or clan), while the latter would not. Therefore, this paper will not consider a place name to be derived from a tribal group unless the tribal name precedes the word for a settlement, farm or place.

Etymology of the Wicken Clan Name

While the focus of this paper is on tracing the migration of Angles through place names derived from the clan name *Wicken* (or its related forms) rather than on describing the toponymy of all the place names from which the clan name *Wicken* may have derived, and while the toponymy of these names is therefore irrelevant to the conclusions of the paper, it is informative to speculate on the etymology of the clan name itself and what it might reveal about the origin and nature of the clan.

For the sake of simplicity in referring to this tribal group, it is assumed here that a member of the clan might have been known as *Wick* and the clan itself by the plural or genitive form, *Wicken*. As Guy Ewing points out in his book on *The Parish of Cowden,* an analogy is the singular form of the word *chick*, the plural of which is *chicken*, or the genitive form as *in chicken coop*. It is also assumed that these names might have been subject to various other spellings, which will be addressed as specific examples and discussed later in the paper. Again, for simplicity, the Wicken will be referred to here as a clan, recognizing that it might also at times have split into smaller kinship groups or grown in size and function to resemble a larger group such as a client tribe or sub-tribe. Finally, while the Wicken clan may have been subordinate to, a client of, or possibly just loosely affiliated with the Angle tribe instead of actually a part of the tribe, this paper will refer to the Wicken as a clan of Angles, since they generally seem to have migrated with and settled closer to the Angles than to any other tribe.

If the original name of the clan derived from an early place of settlement named *Wick*, then all of the toponymical possibilities identified in the literature on the origin of that specific place

name would be relevant. However, since many place-names on the Continent appear to derive from the root term *Wicken-*, it is likely that this clan name was quite ancient and arose before the migration of the clan to post-Roman Britain, perhaps even before the migration of the clan from central Germany up to Angeln on the Jutland Peninsula.   As a summary of the possible meanings of the name, the *On-Line Etymology Dictionary* provides a helpful description of three different meanings for the proto-Indo-European root word '*weik-': (1) clan, social unit above the household, (2) to bend, to wind and the Wych elm(Wickenden, 1939), and (3) to fight, conquer. Since there is no way of knowing what the origin of the clan name actually was, we can skip over the 50 related words in multiple languages and explore these three basic possibilities.

First, it is possible that the Wicken were one of the first kinship groups among the Angles that banded together and identified themselves as a 'CLAN OR SOCIAL UNIT LARGER THAN A HOUSEHOLD' (emphasis provided). This would be somewhat similar to the modern Navajo, a Native American tribe who call themselves *Dine*, meaning 'the people.' It is possible that the Wicken had developed the social mechanisms necessary to originate, communicate, and maintain their identity as a clan and that they were known and named for having this skill set. Of course, most of the larger tribes as well as many of their clans must also have developed these social skills, so it would have been unusual for this one clan to be known by these common cultural traits.

Second, the meaning of *weik-* as 'TO BEND OR TO WIND' could have identified an initial settlement of the clan at the bend of a river, or as a weak, cowardly group (unlikely, given the considerations described above), or as a clan known for weaving baskets or wicker mats from

flexible willows, or as a clan named for a flexible tree perhaps believed to embody a spiritual power, such as the Wych elm tree, known throughout Europe and the United States for its soaring height, cathedral-like shape and striking beauty. This third meaning is quite possible, since there were other clan names derived from common trees such *Oaken* from the oak. A clan whose name referred to the spiritual power manifest in a well-known natural object such as a tree might be well-received by others.

Third, if the original members of the clan had a reputation as warriors (or pirates, or Vikings) and were known 'TO FIGHT or CONQUER', the clan itself might have been known as such. This might also suggest the likelihood that in the early days of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain when they were invited to serve as mercenaries, some Wicken may have been among the first warrior bands to fight for, and then perhaps against the British to establish settlements across Kent. When battle resumed against the British, some Wicken may have continued to fight until the crucial battles in the midlands were won.

The Wicken as Early Vikings

It is certainly possible that a group of Scandinavians, who appeared to be a heterogeneous band of warriors, may have migrated to Germany, where they may have camped and the affiliated themselves with Germanic tribes who had also migrated from Scandinavia, like the Angles, while still maintaining a separate identity as a group not ethnically distinct enough and also perhaps not large or independent enough to be considered a tribe. This derivation would also address a number of significant issues:

1. the absence of the Wicken from any tribal lists, since they were not considered to be a tribe;

2. the separation of the Wicken, geographically, from the Angle tribe, since they may have affiliated, but not identified, with the tribe;

3. the similarity between place names derived from the Wicken and those derived later from the Roman vicus or the Vikings, since these names may have similar sources; and

4. the persistence of the Wicken, as indicated by the distribution and persistence of place names, since this kinship group was unique, independent, perhaps with a reputation for aggression.

There is also evidence available from several sources to support the view that the Wicken may have received their name because they were considered to be *Vikings* – not part of the Viking invasions of Britain but part of the earlier formation and migration of the Germanic peoples. These sources include several medieval glossaries, an Old English poem, and the *Anglo Saxon Chronicles*:

1. *Épinal, Erfurt and Corpus Glossaries* - According to Richard Coates,

    > The first Old English record of the word *w_cing* is not in its simplex form, but in the compound **uuicingsceadan, uuicingsceadae, w_cincsceaðan** (glossed 'piraticum, piraticam, piraticam' i.e. 'pirate, piracy, piracy') in the Épinal, Erfurt and Corpus glossaries respectively. These related documents are today believed to have a common archetype dating from the early eighth century at the latest

(Coates,1999).   The author also notes the corresponding word ***wîsing, wîzing*** attested in Old Frisian.

2. *Widsith* - These early vikings were also mentioned in the Old English poem Widsith, considered by some to be from the seventh century. In this poem we find the following line: 'With Vandals I was and with <u>Varni</u> and with **Vikings**' (emphasis added). The name is spelled variously in the Old English poem, depending upon the case, as ***Wicingum*** and as ***Wicinga***. The Vikings are not found in Kessler's article on *Widsith'*s list, however, perhaps because the term generally referred to Scandinavian pirates or raiders and was not employed as a name for any specific people or culture or tribe (Kessler, 1999-2020e).

3. *Anglo Saxon Chronicles* - The word seems to have been used in Old English through the 9th century, because the *Anglo Saxon Chronicles* briefly mention the story of Scandinavians, mostly Danes, settling in England in the reign of King Alfred (871-899). Catherine Hills notes that these groups are referred to as ***wicenga***, once in an entry for 878 and in two other entries for 884 (Hills, 2003).

Various theories have been offered as to the origin of the name, which first appeared on some Swedish runestones. In Sweden there is a locality known since the Middle Ages as *Vikingstad*, and there is an historical Norwegian district named <u>*Víkin*</u>. Coates points out a natural feature with a similar name: Viken, the great arm of the sea reaching from the Skagerrak up to Oslo. In fact, he notes that a word ***wykeng*** is found in the Middle English calendar of patent rolls of Edward I (1281 $\times$ 1292) precisely in the sense 'man from Viken' (Coates, 1999).

In distinguishing the etymology of this word from that for the Roman word *vicus*, Coates states that 'the Anglo-Saxons had an ancient word of their own which came to mean 'pirate, marauder'; they may even have been accurately so called themselves when they left the coasts of Jutland and Angeln in the fifth century heading for Britain' (Coates, 1999). In this paper we need not address the question of how the word came to acquire this meaning prior to its application to the clan referred to here as Wicken. The claim here is just, as Coates notes, that OE *w_cing* antedates all known Scandinavian contacts in Britain. Therefore, it is not restricted to referring to those whom are presently called *Vikings* but could refer instead to members of the Wicken, thus supporting the conjectures of researchers such as Coates and Hills concerning the existence of this ancient Anglo-Saxon name.

While the third of the meanings of the original clan name *Wicken* seems the most likely, they are all possible, and each would appear to have some relevance to the striking persistence of the clan. Moreover, it appears from the proliferation of place-names derived from the root word *Wicken,* that regardless of its origin, the persistence of this clan name over time, even amidst turbulent circumstances, makes it possible to trace the migration of the clan as part of, or alongside, the Angle tribe. This paper will track the Wicken Clan through place names that indicate settlements on the Continent. Other papers will track the Wicken Clan through settlements in Kent and in the Western Midlands.

Place-name Tracing the Wicken Clan

In the following analysis, the migration of the Wicken clan will be traced through place names that appear to follow historical movements of the Anglo-Saxons. The three stages of

these movements overlap with, but differ from, the three phases of the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain. Starting with Bede, historians have often divided the settlement of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons into three phases, such as the exploration and mercenary phase, the migration phase, and the establishment phase, as described in the *Wikipedia* article on the 'Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain' (2020). However, for the purpose of tracing place names, as in this paper, it is more logical to analyze the process of settlement in terms of different geographical locations and the migrations of tribes within and between these locations. This means adding a new stage to the beginning of the process by describing migration and settlement of Anglo-Saxons on the Continent. This change represents a modification of the traditional model of the Anglo-Saxon Settlement of Britain, which typically begins with the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain.

   Anglo-Saxon Settlements - In order to understand the identity of Anglo-Saxon and other Germanic tribes who settled in Britain, it is important to back up and first to explore evidence for the origin and migration of these tribes on the Continent. This is also an important part of the new model of migration proposed in this paper, for it helps to identify more clearly the role of clans like the Wicken in the settlement process. The geographical movement of the Wicken on the Continent will be analyzed in terms of two legs of migration:

1. The first leg of the Wicken migration will trace the movement of the clan from Central Germany up to Angeln on the Jutland Peninsula.

2. The second leg will trace the movement of the Wicken from the Jutland Peninsula down and over to the Netherlands.

The description of each leg of the migration will begin with a summary of the history of that stage of settlement, followed by description and analysis of the pattern of relevant place names. The direction and goal of each migration and the sequencing and timing of the steps in each leg of the migration are derived from the historical evidence regarding the movement and settlement of the tribe, while the place names themselves provide specificity regarding the location of the clan during their migration.

FIRST LEG OF THE WICKEN MIGRATION (NORTH TO ANGELN)

This article will not delve into the prehistoric origin of the Germanic tribes. It begins with the settlement of the Angle tribe in central Germany and their movement northward to Angeln. As the *Wikipedia* article on 'Anglia' notes, Angeln is a small peninsula within the larger Jutland (Cimbric) Peninsula in the region of Southern Schleswig, which constitutes the northern part of the northernmost German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, protruding into the Bay of Kiel of the Baltic Sea. The German word *Angeln* has been thought to originate from the Germanic proto-Indo-European root *h_2eng^h-*, meaning 'narrow', meaning here 'the Narrow [Water]', i.e. the Sly Firth ('Anglia (Peninsula)', 2020).

<u>**Anglo-Saxon History**</u>

   Migration south and west from Poland - According to the Peter Kessler and Edward Dawson in an article on the 'Germanic tribes' in *The History Files*, starting about 150 AD many of the East Germanic tribes begin to migrate southwards from Poland, led by the Goths. The migration could have been caused by pressure from the Baltic tribes, early segments of the later Old Prussians and Lithuanians who are expanding back into territory they had lost to the Germanic

tribes in the first century AD. The Goths drew with them the neighboring Gepids and Scirii, along with the Rugii, who are part of the Suebian confederation. So it is likely that the Angles, who were part of the Suevi, gradually migrated west from what is now Poland about the second century AD. There, over the next century, the Suevi formed a wide-ranging confederation of tribes, which continued to include the Angles (Kessler, 1999-2020b).

Migration north from Germany to the Cimbric Peninsula - Beginning around 270 AD, there were large-scale population movements in northern Europe, including the movement of the Huns, who swept into Europe from the Asiatic steppes in the latter half of the fourth century. Kessler and Dawson believe it is probably that these movements forced the Angles and Jutes to move northwards into the Cimbric Peninsula, where they settled over the course of the next century. By the end of the fourth century they had settled in modern central Denmark, replacing the Germanic Cimbri and Teutones who had existed there in diminished numbers since before the first century BC. The region gradually gained the name of the new settlers, becoming *Angeln, Angel*, or *Angulus*. By the fifth century, this region covered the territory between the River Eider in the south (now in Schleswig-Holstein), bordering the Old Saxons, to the River Kongeaen in the north, bordering the Jutes. Angle settlement also extended further southwards into Germany and along the Frisian coast of the Netherlands. The Angles were still part of the general Suevi confederation of central Germany throughout much of the Roman period. King Alfred of Wessex was careful to note this himself, suggesting a wide-ranging area of settlement of the Angles, and a relatively large population (Kessler, *1999 – 2020b*).

Wicken Place Names[4]

The Wicken are evidenced on the Continent by many place names but most commonly by compound names such as *Wickendorf* and *Wickenburg*. There are also numerous individuals or families whose names derives from such place names. For example, according to Guentner Ofner, founding president of Familia Austria, the Austrian Society for Genealogy and History (personal email message), there are nearly a dozen von Wickenburgs mentioned in German history databases, and Henry Wickenburg came to Arizona from an area near Essen, Germany, where his family worked a coal mine. Because of their prevalence on the Continent, these two names will be utilized as a geographical framework within which to explore the migration of the Wicken clan, although other Wicken-based names will also be listed. We begin with *dorf,* which means a (rural) settlement in general, according to the *German Language Wikipedia* article on 'Place Names'. This name seems appropriate to begin with, insofar as the early locations of the Wicken might have been primarily in areas that were quite rural.

Wickendorf is reported in the *German Language Wikipedia (2020,)* (accessed in June 2020), to be the name of the following five locations, where the larger city or town within which Wickendorf was a village or district is given parenthetically:

1. Wickendorf (Witków), village in the Gmina Jaworzyna Śląska in the powiat Świdnicki in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship in south-western Poland
2. Wickendorf (Wolfern) , place near Wolfern , Steyr-Land, upper Austria
3. Wickendorf (Teuschnitz) , district of the city Teuschnitz in the district of Kronach in Bavaria (southern Germany)

4. Wickendorf (Probstzella) , hamlet of the municipality Probstzella in the district of Saalfeld-Rudolstadt in Thuringia, central Germany

5. Wickendorf (Schwerin) , part of the city of Schwerin in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, northern Germany

According to the Anglo-Saxon history described above, the Angles may have migrated down into Austria and central Germany. Then, under pressure from tribes invading from the east, they may have then moved slowly to the north until they located on the Jutland Peninsula. The locations of the Wickendorfs have been numbered in the map below to indicate the first leg of this possible migration.

Source: Wickenden using Google Maps

Detail on the history of each of these locations is provided from the *German Language Wikipedia*:

1. Witków - Wickendorf is a village in the Gmina Jaworzyna Śląska (German for *royal tent*) in the powiat Świdnicki in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship in Poland. Wickendorf was founded in the course of the Eastern colonization of German settlers. In 1392 the place appears in a document as *Wittchindorff* . In 1497 the Schweidnitzer patrician Georg Ungerothen was lord of Wickendorf. With the takeover in 1945 by Soviet troops and Polish administration, Wickendorf was renamed in *Witków.*

2. Wolfern - Wickendorf is a place near Wolfern, a market town with 3,163 inhabitants (as of 1 January 2019) in Upper Austria in the district of Steyr-Land in Traunviertel . The competent judicial district is Steyr . The colonization of this area goes back far into the dark past, as finds of whole stone axes and flat axes from the Stone Age report. But in 777 we find the first documentary mention of this area in connection with the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III. The Kremsmünster Abbey, founded by the Duke, donated the forest between Dietach and Sierning. In 871 Emperor Charlemagne confirmed this donation.

3. Teuschnitz - Wickendorf is a rural village, which lies in the valley Frankenwald. Through the town flows the Teuschnitz, a river which flows at Wilhelmsthal - Gifting in the *Kremnitz* . The first appointment of the village was on July 18, 1361.

4. Probstzella - Wickendorf is located east of the road from Großgeschwenda to Lichtentanne. On March 19, 1454 the hamlet was first mentioned in a document

5. Schwerin - Wickendorf is part of the city of **Schwerin,** which is

the capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Schwerin was first mentioned in 1018 as

Wendenburg and received city rights in 1164, granted by Henry the Lion . This makes it

the oldest city in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern today. The Germanic Wikipedia also

mentions a canal called the Wickendorf Canal in Germany.

The dates when these settlements were first mentioned, are as follows: 8th Century

- Wolfern (#2), 14th Century - Witkow (#1), 14th Century - Teuschnitz (#3), 15th Century -

Probstzella (#4), 11th Century - Schwerin (#5). Unfortunately, these dates do not tell us much

for several reasons:

1. The dates relate to larger settlements of which Wickendorf was a part. The larger

    settlements may have been established much later than the Wickendorfs.

2. The Anglo-Saxon settlements were most likely established in the first four centuries of

    the millenium and certainly by the middle of the fifth, when members of these tribes

    began to migrate to Britain. So written documentation of these Wickendorfs clearly

    lagged the actual settlements by at least three centuries.

Origin of the Wicken (in Poland or Austria) - The Wicken may have first been identified as a

clan somewhere around the first century and prior to entering Germany, perhaps near **Location**

#1 in Poland described above. However, according to the *Wikipedia* information included

above, there is a history of eastern migration of tribes out of central German which began in

the 6th Century and ended by the 14th, so it is also possible that the Polish location for

Wickendorf was not indicative of the origin of the Wicken but was founded later, in the course of the Eastern colonization of German settlers.

The second location for a Wickendorf is in Austria, and the history of the town appears to be quite ancient. So, **Location #2** may well be one of the first places in Central Germany where the clan settled at a time when the name *Wicken* originated and where it was first known as the *Wicken*.

Growth of the Wicken (in Bavaria and Thuringia) - The third location is in Bavaria and the fourth is in the southern-most part of Thuringia, just north of Bavaria, so **Locations #3 and #4** are also likely near the area into which the Wicken first expanded, both in terms of the area where they settled and, perhaps, in the size of their population.   Additional evidence of the growth of the Wicken in this general location is provided by additional place names in Bavaria that may have been derived from Wicken. These names were identified using *Google Maps* for Bavaria, and they include the following:

a. **Wickenhof**, a now vanished hamlet near Kirn, a town in the Bad Kreuznach district in Kreuznach Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany. The town of Kirn can look back on a very long history. On 20 May 841, Kirn had its first historical mention in a document from Fulda Abbey. Archaeological finds from Celtic and Roman times (the remnants of a villa rustica were unearthed in the part of town known as *Über Nahe*), however, point to a considerably greater age than that.

b. **Wickenreuth** is one of 76 districts in the town of Kulmbach, which is located in the Upper

Franconian district of Kulmbach and the seat of the district office. It is located on the Main ,

about 20 km north of Bayreuth.

c. **Wickenricht** is a village in the town of Vilseck, which is located in the Upper

Palatinate district of Amberg-Sulzbach.

d. **Wickenrodt** is located in the Hunsrück on a plateau above the Hahnenbach

valley between Idar-Oberstein and Rhaunen . The place was first mentioned in 961 as

"Uuickenrodero" in the Nahegau . The population in 1815 was 162, so the village was small.

e. **Wickenrodt** is an *Ortsgemeinde* – a municipality belonging to a *Verbandsgemeinde*, a kind

of collective municipality – in the Birkenfelddistrict in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. It

belongs to the *Verbandsgemeinde*Herrstein-Rhaunen, whose seat is in Herrstein.

f. **Wickersdorf** is village in Regen, which is a town in Bavaria, Germany, and the district town

of the district of Regen.

g. **Wicklesgreuth** (colloquially: *Graid*) is a district of the municipality Petersaurach in the

Ansbach district in Middle Franconia.

h. **Wickery** and **Zwicklod** were also identified as hamlets in Bavaria, but no further details are

available.

Northern Movement of the Wicken (near to Angeln) - The fifth Wickendorf described above

as **Location #5,** is situated in Schwerin, in the northern Mecklenberg district of Germany (which

can be seen in the map below to the right). This location is only 127 miles south of the town of

Schleswig, which is the largest city of Angeln/Angel, thought to have been settled by the Angle

tribe. As the Germanic tribes were pushed to the west and then north by the Huns, the Wicken

may have moved from the location in Upper Austria northward through Bavaria and Germany into Northern Germany, fairly close to Schleswig, which can be seen on both maps below. As a collectivity, the Angles apparently settled here for a while. If Schwerin was the northernmost location of any Wicken-related place name, then perhaps it indicates the location of the Wicken prior to their migration south and eastward in preparation for crossing to Britain.

Source: MarGrete2 for *Wikipedia*

Source: Wickenden using *Google Maps*

This may indicate something significant about the Wicken clan that appears to be related to their persistence, namely that the Wicken clan always appears to locate somewhere between the Angles (usually to the north of the Wicken) and the Saxons (usually to the southwest of the Wicken). Of course, the Angles and Saxons crossed over to Britain and occupied areas to the north and south, respectively, which may have resulted from each tribe taking the shortest route across the sea to the island of Britain. Each of these tribes appears to have settled along

the closest shoreline or to have moved inland along the closest river. While the Wicken may have been affiliated with one or the other of the tribes, place-name evidence suggests that throughout the migrations, they maintained their identity as a clan distinct from, but close to, both the Angles and the Saxons.

It should also be noted that the Danes and other Scandinavian tribes are thought to have occupied territory along the Baltic Sea (actually the Bay of Kiel) which begins to the southeast of the Angles. The Wicken may thus have been located adjacent to the Southern Danes, and therefore have been especially familiar with their sea-faring culture and their oral legends (which were referenced in the Old English epic poems, such as *Beowulf*), and perhaps even have been a part of the original explorations of the Danes across the Bay of Kiel, around the Jutland peninsula, and down the coast to the Frisian islands.

SECOND LEG OF THE WICKEN MIGRATION (SOUTH AND WEST TO THE NETHERLANDS)

Anglo-Saxon History

The map below shows where the Angles were located prior to their migration to Britain.   According to Blair, 'the evidence of *Widsith* combined with that of Tacitus, Bede and Alfred, justifies the belief that the English lived in the southern part of the Jutland peninsula before they migrated to Britain' (Blair, 1977, 9). The Saxons were thought to be situated south of the river Elder, while the Jutes may have been located north of the Angles or may have moved further south to the Frankish Rhineland. While the general location of the Germanic tribes on the map is not incorrect, the arrows on this map are somewhat misleading. As Fisher points out, rowing a small boat on the open sea would have been dangerous, so tribal members

would have stuck as close as possible to land (Fisher, 1973). Crossing in small, open boats, few

of the tribal groups would have ventured out and across the North Sea, as this graphic shows.

In particular, it is perhaps because of the distance between the Jutes on the north end of the

peninsula, and the coast of Britain that they made their way down the coast and over to the

southeastern part of the island, settling in what became known as Kent, to the south of both

the Angles and the Saxons.
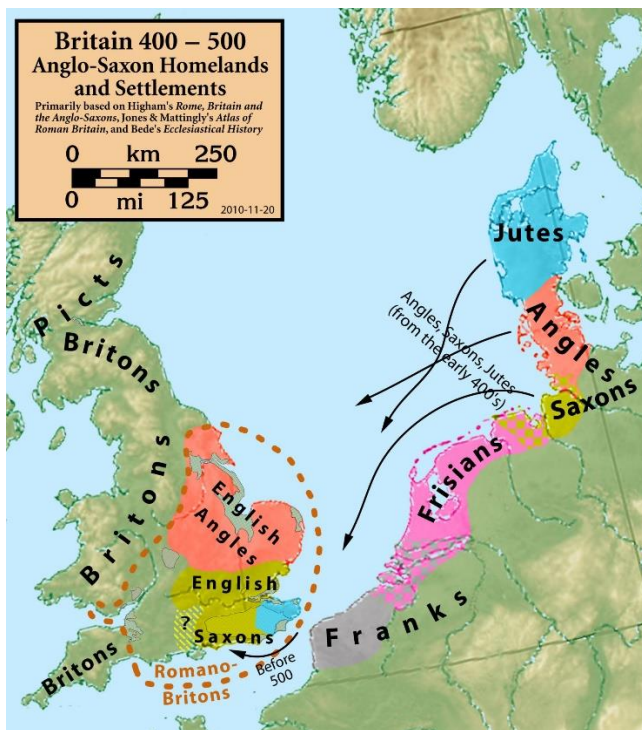
Source: Mbartelsm

Although some Angles probably worked their way down the from the North Sea coast, or down

the Elbe or other rivers to the Coast and then down, others might have traveled up around the

Jutland peninsula from the east and then south along the Frisian coast to the territory of the

Franks before crossing the Channel, which at that point is approximately 20 miles wide. In

addition, while the first small groups of warriors who ventured across the Britain, perhaps to

serve as mercenaries, might have come down the coast in small boats before crossing, once

they sent word back for their colleagues and families to follow, these larger groups of women,

children and elderly may have traveled down from the Jutland peninsula by foot (with their

possessions and animals), passing the Saxons and Frisians to West before cutting to the east

and arriving at the coast, just north of the Franks. From there they could have traveled the

shortest distance possible by boat.

Wicken Place Names

For this portion of the migration of the Wicken clan, a different name will be used as a

framework for the narrative. For some reason, most of the place names which add the

description *berg* or *burg* seem to trace a different route from the one found by following the

Wickendorfs. This route appears to follow a path that may have been taken by the Wicken as

they migrated from near the Jutland peninsula down to a place from which they could cross to

Britain. In German, *berg* means a settlement on a hill or on a mountain, while *burg* means a

hill, fortified settlement, or in early medieval terms, also a city (Place Names, 2020). As

compared with places named *Wickendorf*, which could indicate a rural village, the Wickenbergs

might be expected to be in more mountainous terrain and the Wickenburgs in boundary areas

between cultures where one or another group might want to fortify the location. Compared to

the first leg of the Wicken migration, this second leg, if it were in response to a call from fellow

Wicken and other Angles already in Britain, may have (a) occurred somewhat later in time when

rural areas were already fairly settled, (b) followed boundaries between various other tribes

which were contested and therefore fortified over time and (c) kept to trails along the high

ground and ridge lines between more settled areas. Otherwise, the difference in the names which trace these two routes may just be coincidental.   Further research is needed to determine why these different names appear to be associated with different legs of the migration and whether there are other Wicken place names on the Continent which would tell a different or more complicated story. Of course, it would also be useful to know whether it might be possible to trace other clan names and what their migration stories might reveal.

The map below, generated through the use of *Google Maps*, shows and describes places named *Wickenberg* (or *Wickenburg* or related*)* as follows:

A. **Wieckenberg (**Wietze**)** - a district of the municipality Wietze in the Lower Saxony district of Celle, in the eastern center of Lower Saxony, Germany

B. **Wicken-Berg (**Seegebiet Mansfelder Land) - a settlement in the municipality Seegebiet Mansfelder Land in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany.

C. **Wickenberg (**Amoneburg) - a settlement in Amöneburg**,** a town in the Marburg-Biedenkopf district in Hesse, Germany. It lies on a mountain and is built around the castle of the same name, *Burg Amöneburg*.

D. **Wickenburg (**Eindhoven**)** - a settlement in Eindhoven**,** the fifth-largest city and a municipality of the Netherlands, located in the south of the country. Eindhoven was originally located at the confluence of the Dommel and Gender.

E. **Wickenburg (**Vlissingen**)** - a settlement in Vlissingen**,** a municipality and a city in the southwestern Netherlands on the former island of Walcheren. The fishermen's hamlet that

came into existence at the estuary of the Schelde around AD 620 has grown over its 1,400-

year history into the third-most important port of the Netherlands.
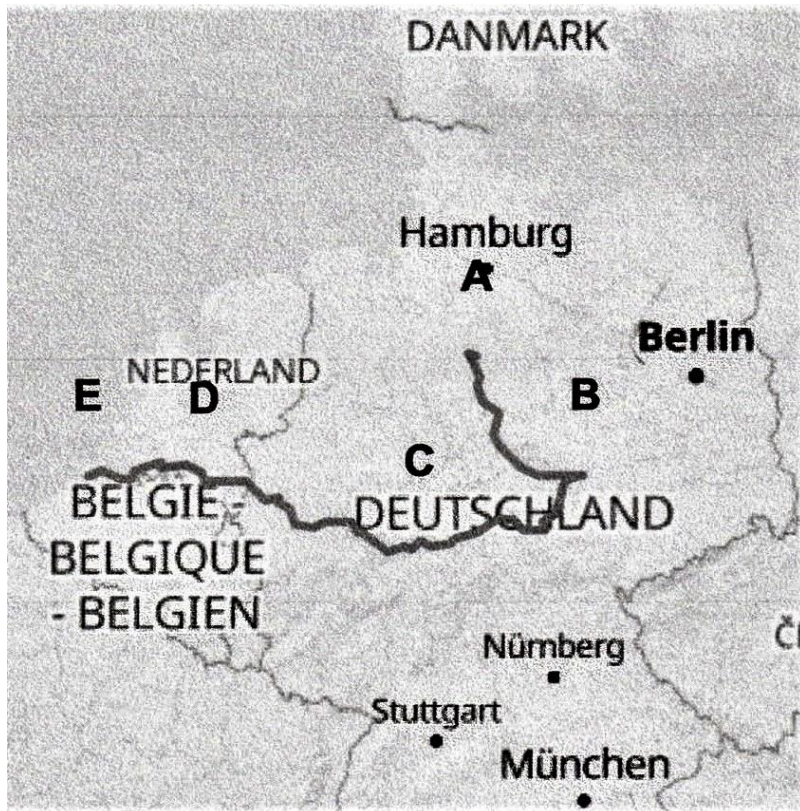
Stops Along the Way - Apparently the Germanic tribes began to seek better land for raising

pigs, sheep, cattle and crops than what they found on the Jutland Peninsula. There may also

have been a significant drought in the region at this time. And, of course, the historical

evidence describes a call from Anglo-Saxon mercenaries for their family and friends to come

join them in Kent. Place-name evidence related to *Wickenberg* suggests, as shown on the map

above, that most of the Wicken, may have traveled south by an inland route, skirting around

territory settled by other tribes and then turned west to the coast in the lower end of what is

now the Netherlands. From there they may have responded to calls from the British, the first Anglo-Saxons or even from other adventurous Wicken to join them in what would soon be known *as Angle land*. There may be other places under different Wicken names related to this leg of the migration, but it turns out that all but one of these appear to be logical places for the Wicken to stop and camp or settle for a while, especially since they were traveling with children, women, older folks, all their belongings and, perhaps, even some animals. However, considering that they were on their way at this time to Britain, the clan may not have camped for more than a month or two at each location. So, these camps must have been fairly large and well-fortified for the place names to have survived.

First Stop: Weickenberg is 130 miles southeast of Schwerin. It would take about a week for a kinship group to walk, and if they were starting out, they may have needed to settle for a while, to wait for other Wicken to join them and to recover from the journey.

Wrong Stop: Wicken-Berg, Seegebiet Mansfelder Land is 140 miles south*east* from Weickenberg - not in the desired direction! It is actually in line with the first leg of the Wicken migration northwest from Wickendorf in Probstzella. Unless the Wicken ran into other tribes as they moved south from Weickenberg and had to deviate to the southeast, this location should probably be considered part of that first leg, since it is directly in line with the original route north.

The map on the left below shows this route, while that on the right shows the revised route south. As part of the first leg, this location is 100 miles north of Probstzella, which is 200 miles south of Schwerin, which may have been the final stop on the First Leg of the Wicken Migration.

Leg #1 with Wicken-Berg

Leg #2 without Wicken-Berg

Second Stop: Wickenberg, Amoneburg is about 180 miles southeast of Weickenberg, which

would be in the desired direction of the clan. This would be another march of a week or more,

so it seems logical as a place to settle again for a while.

Third Stop: Wickenburg, Eindhoven is about 220 miles and almost directly east from

Wickenberg in Amoneburg. It represents an abrupt move to the east, toward

Britain. Moreover, it is situated in the Netherlands, only 100 miles from Wickenburg,

Vlissingen, their final destination on this second leg of the Migration. It would take several

weeks for the clan to move here, so it is again a logical place to rest, recuperate and recharge

for the final step on this leg of the Migration. This route also takes the Wicken between the

territories of the Frisians to the north and the Franks to the south, allowing for safe access for the clan to the channel and from there to Britain.

Final Stop: Wickenburg, Vlissingen. Vlissingen in the Netherlands is 180 miles distant from Dover in Kent, England, assuming that the clan traveled south to Bruges in Belgium, then past Dunkirk and on to Calais in France, and then across the Channel to Dover. Of course, the clan may have loaded onto small boats and launched right from Vlissingen, travelled 75 miles by sea down the coast to Dunkirk and crossed the 41 miles from there to Dover by sea, or if the sea was calm enough, crossed 60 miles to land directly on the island of Thanet at Ebbsfleet on the southern shore, or perhaps traveled several miles around the Stonar Spit and up the Wantsum channel to land near the Stour River, at the crossing from Saare . These place names provide evidence that the Wicken migrated by land to the coast just north of modern-day Belgium, putting them into a position to cross to Thanet, the nearest point of land in Britain.

CONCLUSION

This paper has introduced technical innovations into the process of place-name tracing. The first innovation was to identify small, ancient villages in Britain which may have been established by small Anglo-Saxon family groups and named after the leaders of those groups. In this case, the villages were dens established around the seventh century in and about the Weald of Kent. The second innovation was to work backward to the Continent to see which of these den names were also found there to be the source for village names. Together, these two innovations have made possible the identification of the names of various Anglo-Saxon

clans. The rest of the paper was devoted to tracing the migration of one of these clans, the

Wicken.

The fact that the Wicken are not included in any of the multiple lists of Germanic tribes

suggests that they may have been viewed and named as early Vikings, a heterogeneous band of

Scandinavian warriors. The Wicken place names located on the Continent were used to map

two legs in the migration of the clan.   Based upon historical documentation of the migration of

the Angle tribe, the Wicken were first tracked through place names as they moved in stages

from central Germany up to the Jutland Peninsula where the Angles were thought to have

relocated under pressure from the Huns. This first leg of the Wicken migration depends upon

but also provides support for this historical documentation and suggests that the Wicken clan

was affiliated with the Angle tribe.   Then the Wicken were tracked from the Peninsula down to

the southern coast, as they prepared to join their comrades by crossing to Britain in search of

better living and farming conditions. This place-name evidence suggests that while most maps

show the Angles and Saxons traveling by sea down and over to Britain, the majority of Wicken

appear to have traveled south by land and then across the sea to Kent, with various stages of

the journey marked by settlements in large camps, some of which gave rise to place names

derived from the name of the clan.

By focusing upon the origin, settlements and migrations of an Anglo clan on the

Continent, it is now possible to foresee the arrival of a previously unknown group of Angles in

Britain. This new model for studying the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain not only has

provided supporting detail and supplementary evidence for the origin of the Angle tribe but

also has prepared the way for tracing settlements and tracking members of an individual tribal clan as they arrive in and move across the landscape of Britain.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The primary source for den names in Kent is Wikipedia's *List of Place Names in Kent*, <https://en.wikipedia.org /wiki/List_of_places_in_Kent>.

[2] The primary source for Continental cognates is *An Interpretive Map of Austria*, <https://www.austria.info/us/basic-facts/interactive-map-of-austria#/z6/46.3924112,8.6682129/toursprung-terrain>, and the German Language *Wikipedia,* accessed in June 2020.

[3] Kentish den names for which no Continental cognates were found include the following: Chillenden, Cowden, Culverden, Hoaden, Horden, Lydden, Rolvenden, and Smarden.

[4] Information about Wicken places and place names throughout this paper is generally taken from *Wikipedia* which, of course, cites this information from a wide variety of primary and secondary sources and is continually open to correction and improvement. Information about German names is taken from the *German Language Wikipedia*.

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