

‘What’s in a name?’ is an unjustly neglected question to which historians have recently turned their attention. A number of groups are now studying a range of questions, following the evolution of the Germanic one-name system to the two-name system of the central middle Ages and the development of the modern three-name system. Name-giving and its rationale is of great importance in the study of any society, especially one as dominated by the family as the Middle Ages clearly was. The essays collected in this volume range widely from early medieval Ireland through France and Germany to the Holy Land exploring the relationship between families and their name-giving strategies. Most of the papers were presented at two round tables held in France at Saint-Jean d’Angely and in the Institut Historique Allemand de Paris under the presidency, respectively, of Szabolcs de Vajay and Karl Ferdinand Werner.