

an early stage in the evolution of lay landownership in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms which lie mainly to the east of the earthwork, then they probably were formed before the building of Offa's Dyke. But this is not at all the same picture as that adumbrated by Stenton, who probably saw Berhtel and Emma as pioneering English settlers accompanied by bands of followers, not as thegns who were given a life tenure of border estates by a king of the Magonsæte.

NOTE

- * This is a revised version of the paper given on March 28th, 1982, at the XIVth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies held at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

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'OLD EUROPEAN NAMES' IN BRITAIN*

When I read a paper under this title at the annual meeting of the Council for Name Studies in Bangor (North Wales) in March 1982, I was gently encouraged by a number of members of the audience to summarise my presentation for publication in NOMINA in order to provide a forum for a renewed and informed discussion of an issue which has, in the last twenty-five years or so, had only sporadic attention but deserves a better fate. What follows is my response to that request, a kind of brief 1982 version of a firmly held scholarly opinion which I first offered in 1957;¹ it is not, however, a mere reiteration of facts and findings already expressed in earlier publications² but rather a reaffirmation of my earlier ideas modified by a thorough rethinking of the principles involved, in the light of onomastic research into similar situations at other times and in other places.³ In addition, this response has greatly benefited from Antonio Tovar's fairly recent survey of the subject,⁴ mostly in continental terms, with special emphasis on the relationship between 'Old European' and Indo-European.

The question addressed here is the vexing one of potential toponymic, especially hydronymic, evidence for the linguistic affiliation of pre-Celtic people in the British Isles, particularly in England, Scotland and Wales, or, put somewhat differently: "What language or languages did the people speak whom the Celts encountered when they reached Britain in the first millennium B.C.?" That the answer to this question is not an easy one is indicated by the fact that, apart from the onomastic material, there is no direct linguistic evidence of any kind which might be utilised, while conclusions based on indirect linguistic sources have, on the whole, not been particularly convincing.⁵ As a consequence, points of reference are not easy to find. There can, on the other hand, be no doubt that the pre-Celtic language(s) concerned cannot be thought of as indigenous but must, like the various Celtic and Germanic languages which were to follow, have originated outside Britain and crossed the water from elsewhere. In fact, one can assume as a working hypothesis that, like Celtic and Germanic, it, or they, must have come from the European continent.

In more specific linguistic terms, there are obviously two main possibilities, i.e. the language(s) spoken in Britain before the Celts may have been Indo-European or non-Indo-European. With regard to the latter alternative, it can be said straightaway that, while there are certain place-names in Britain which appear to belong to this category - some of the island names in the Northern and Western Isles, for example - no reasonable suggestion as to their linguistic affiliation has ever been made. All we can say at this point is that there were speakers of non-Indo-European languages in Britain before the Celts but that we do not know what these languages were. There is at present no discernible pattern to the onomastic evidence for them, nor is it possible to provide etymologies. Their systematic examination is therefore still out of the question.

In contrast, there is, I would argue, plenty of onomastic evidence which suggests that, when the first Celts reached Britain, they not only encountered speakers of, to them, unintelligible non-Indo-European, but also speakers of a language which might well have been fairly intelligible to them because it was a development of the same linguistic ancestor which had also produced the Celtic tongues, a kind of western Indo-European not yet itself differentiated into separate languages but containing the

seeds for the individuation of such later languages as Germanic, Celtic, Italic, Venetic, Illyrian and the Baltic languages. This form and state of Indo-European was given the label 'Old European' by the late German scholar Hans Krahe,⁶ and the evidence proposed for it in both Britain and Europe consists almost exclusively of river names, which, on this hypothesis, would date from the Bronze Age and therefore from the second millennium B.C.

Methodologically, names belonging to such an early linguistic stratum can be tentatively identified if they contain recognisable Indo-European elements or formations which could be Indo-European but which, for one reason or another - phonological, morphological or semantic factors, perhaps, or chronology of record, or a combination of these - cannot confidently be ascribed to either Celtic or Germanic. Their isolation is not an easy task, since both Celtic and Germanic are, according to our hypothesis, cognate with 'Old European'; would be, in fact, at least partially, its descendants. It is therefore always more prudent to assume that a name is Celtic or Germanic, unless there are convincing reasons for an 'Old European' origin. In certain instances, it is by definition impossible to resolve the question, and such a dilemma must be honestly exposed even if it means losing some potential candidates for the earlier stratum. The validity of the 'Old European' theory stands or falls with the acceptability of the evidence, not the other way round.

If we examine the river names of England, Scotland and Wales with these principles and criteria in mind, the following names have offered themselves, among others, as potential candidates for a pre-Celtic Indo-European stratum. The arrangement is by stems, and in each instance recognisable European cognates or even identical equivalents are given. Fuller evidence and arguments for not assigning the following river names to Celtic will be found in the publications mentioned in notes 1, 2, 4, and 6.

- IE. adu-/adro- 'water-course?'
*Adara and *Adaria: Blackadder and Whiteadder (rivers in Berwickshire).
European cognate: Oder (Poland and Germany).
- IE. au- 'spring, water-course?'
Aventio (4th cent.: unidentified river).
*Aventisa: Ewenni (Glamorgan; Euenhi c.1150, Eweny, Ewni 1149-83).
European cognates: Avançon (Switzerland and France), Avançe and la Vence (France), Ohrn (Germany).
- IE. dreu-/dru- 'to run, to rush?'
*Drayina: Drawen (river in Wales; Drawen 15th cent. Drewen c.1700).
European cognates: Drau (Karinthia), Drawa (Pomerania), Drawe (E. Prussia), Drone (Germany), Trionto (South Italy), and especially Drän (Karinthis; Trewina 890).
- IE. eis-/ois-/is- 'to move fast or violently?'
*Isura: Ure (trib. of the Ouse, Yorkshire; Jor c.1140). Compare *Isurion c.150, the name of a Roman castellum.
European cognates: Isar and Iser (Germany), Isère (France), Isarn (France), Iserna (Switzerland; 1002).

- IE. el-/ol- 'to flow, to stream?'
*Alava: Alaw (Wales), Allow (Cornwall; lost as a stream name but preserved in the place-name Porthallow, pord alaw 967).
*Alaventa: Alwent Beck (trib. of the Tees, Durham; Alewent 1235); Alwin/Alwyn (trib. of the Coquet, Northumberland; Alewent 1200); Allen (trib. of the Tyne, Northumberland; Alwent 1275); Allan Water (trib. of the Tweed, Scotland; Aloent 12th cent., Alewent c.1160).
*Alma: Yealm (Devonshire; Yhalmam 1309, Yalme 1414).
European cognates: Alma (Etruria), Lom < Almus (Bulgaria), Alme (Lithuania), Almo (Italy), Alme < Almina (Germany), Almone (Lithuania), Alme < *Almara (Germany), Aumance (France).
- IE. er-/or- 'to cause, to move?'
*Ara: Ayr (trib. of the Clyde; Ar 1177, Are 1197, Air c.1300), Oare Water (Somerset; Ar 1279).
*Arva: Orwell (Suffolk; into Arwan 1121), Arrow (Worcestershire/Warwickshire; Arwan stream 11th cent.).
*Armisa: Erme (Devonshire; Irym 1240, place-name Ermentona 1086).
*Arna/-os: Earn (lost river name in Somerset; Earn 762).
European cognates: Ahr, Ahre (Germany), Aar, Are (Flanders), Aar (Netherlands), Ara (Spain), Erms (Germany).
- IE. kar- 'hard, stone, stony?'
*Karantia or Karenti: Black and White Cart (Renfrewshire; place-name Cathcart is Kerkert 1158).
*Karantos: Carrant (trib. of the Avon, Gloucestershire; Carent 778/9).
*Karīsa: Carey (Devonshire; Kari 1238); Cary (Somerset; Kari 725); Ceri (Cardiganshire; Glan Keri 16th cent.), Ceri (Radnorshire).
European cognates: Chéran (Savoy), Horund (Norway), Charente (France), Charentonne (France), Chiers (Luxemburg), Cher (France).
- IE. nebh-/nobh- 'wet, water?'
Nabaros: Naver (Sutherland; c.150).
*Naberna: Nevern (Pembrokeshire).
European cognates: Nabalia (Tacitus), Nablis (now Unstrut, Germany).
- IE. ned-/nod- 'wet, flood?'
*Nedta or Nedtos: Ness (Inverness-shire; Nesa, gen. Nisae c.700, Nis 1300); Deerness (Durham; Diuerness c.1200).
European cognates: Νεστος (Thracia, Illyria), Νέδα (Arcadia), Νέδων (Messenia), Nedao (Pannonia), Nette (Germany).
- IE. neid-/nid- 'to flow?'
*Nida: Neth (old name of the Strat in Cornwall; Neth, Net, Nehet, Neht 13th cent., Straetneat 880-85); Nedd, English Neath (Glamorgan; Nido, ablative of place-name, c.300); Nidd (Yorkshire; Nid c.715).
European cognates: Nidda (Germany), Nied (Lorraine).
- IE. sal- 'brook, flowing water, current?'
*Salia: Hail (old name of Kym, Huntingdonshire; Haile c.1180), Hail (old river name in Gloucestershire; Haylebrok 1256); Hayle (Cornwall; place-name Heyl 1265); Hayle (Cornwall, old name of the mouth of the Camel; Hehil, Heil, Heyl c.954, Haegelmuda c.1025); Shiel, Gaelic Seile (two rivers in Scotland; Sale c.700).

European cognates: Seille (France), Salia (Spain), Saale (Germany), Sala (Pannonia), etc.

IE. ser-/sor- 'to flow, to stream?'

*Sartina: Hathren (trib. of the Teifi in Carmarthenshire).

European cognates: Saar (Germany), la Serre (France), Sarnus (Campania), Sarthe and Sarthon (France).

IE. ueis-/uis- 'to flow, to dissolve?'

*Visera: perhaps Wyre (Lancashire; Wir 1170-84).

European cognates: Vézère (France), Weser (Germany), Wiesaz (Germany), la Vezouse (France).

IE. uer-/uor-/ur- 'water, rain, river?'

*Varar: Farrar (Scotland; Varar c.150).

European cognates: Vara, Varus (Liguria), Vaire, Veyre (France).

This is deliberately a very conservative list containing mostly river names which in their nominal stems do not preserve the Indo-European short o as Celtic would have done but rather show a development o to a as, for example, in Germanic. They cannot be Germanic, however, mostly for morphological and chronological reasons, but also because of the geographical distribution of their continental counterparts or identical equivalents. This list does not contain names like Rye (Yorkshire; Ria 1134), for example, although it is tempting to derive it from *Regia and place it with Rionzi (Switzerland) and Regen (Germany). Also omitted, because the phonological evidence is not unequivocal, are Soar (trib. of the Trent; Sora 1147, Sore 1247), Soar Brook (Warwickshire); Sor Brook (Oxfordshire), Sôr (Brook) (Monmouthshire), probably from *Sora and therefore cognate with Saar (Germany), la Serre (France), etc. (see *Sartina above). The British names are more likely Early Celtic but also have close 'Old European' affinities. Another name for which 'Old European' origin may possibly be claimed is Aire (trib. of the Ouse, Yorkshire; Yr 959, place-name Airton 1086). The generally accepted explanation is that it is a replacement of Old English ēg 'island' by Old Norse eyjar, plural of ey 'island'.⁷ Its earliest form Yr (959), however, and the fact that an Old Norse plural is supposed to have replaced an Old English singular of a word which, in the first place, is presumed to have arisen out of a misunderstanding of Old English ēa 'water', make such an explanation at best speculative. An original *Isara or *Isera would be a morphological parallel to *Isura (Ure), a phenomenon not at all unusual in early names of associated rivers, in this case tributaries of the same larger river. The whole family of river names represented by Thames, Thame, Tame, etc. may also be pre-Celtic Indo-European, although, because of the absence of parallels on the Continent, they would then perhaps be secondary insular 'Old European' developments.

Be that as it may, I find it difficult to ignore the cumulative evidence of the basic list, especially in the many cases in which identical equivalents are found in both Europe and Britain, and the case for a close relationship between this type of river name on both sides of the Channel is therefore a strong one. On the basis of this hydronymic evidence, it can be argued that Britain has considerable traces of a pre-Celtic Indo-European stratum that deserves the label 'Old European' in Krahe's sense.

Although, from a British point of view, the exact nature of this stratum and its

relationship to Indo-European are not especially relevant, certain points nevertheless have to be made. (1) It is not to be envisaged that the people who introduced 'Old European' into Britain all settled there at one time. (2) This means that, as continental Old Europe must have continued its development towards individual languages over centuries, several 'earlier' or 'later' varieties of 'Old European' must have reached Britain sequentially, the earliest perhaps not yet far removed from Indo-European, the latest quite close to Celtic or some other individual 'Old European' dialect. (3) Since it cannot be assumed that 'Old European' was the same wherever it was spoken in Europe (otherwise the individual languages would not have developed out of it), it is quite probable that different 'Old European' dialects infiltrated Britain on different occasions. (4) 'Old European' must have continued to develop in Britain, perhaps somewhat differently from continental 'Old European', and it is likely to have formed new dialects there. (5) It is possible that while 'Old European' developed in Europe (and later also in Britain), it may have absorbed certain non-Indo-European features which may have contributed to its own special character and may have helped to separate it from other kinds of Indo-European.⁸ What these features may have been and what the donor languages were is, of course, difficult to say.

It would be erroneous, therefore, to regard the 'Old European' stratum, either in Europe or in Britain, as spatially or chronologically homogeneous and to deny it the kinds of tendencies towards change which languages have displayed everywhere at all times. With this in mind, research can now be directed at discovering the nature of these changes, the extent of discernible dialect areas, the influence of potential non-Indo-European substrata and adstrata, and - this is particularly important for Britain - other evidence which has so far eluded us. Because of the distance in time, this task is not an easy one but the opportunities for further research are nevertheless intriguing and enticing and should not be neglected.

NOTES

- * This is a revised version of the paper given on March 28th, 1982, at the XIVth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies held at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.
1. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Die alteuropäischen Gewässernamen der britischen Hauptinsel', Beiträge zur Namenforschung 8 (1957), 209-268.
 2. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'The Semantic Structure of Scottish Hydronymy', Scottish Studies 1 (1957), 211-240; 'Notes on Scottish Place-Names: 5. Shin, 6. Tain', Scottish Studies 2 (1959), 189-196; 'Scottish Place-Names: 26. Blackadder and Whiteadder', Scottish Studies 10 (1966), 78-87; 'Great Britain and Old Europe', Namn och Bygd 59 (1971), 85-105; [and see p.11 above - Ed.].
 3. I am thinking particularly of the naming of places in North America, as examined, for example in Celia Millward, 'Place-Name Generics in Providence, R.I., 1636-1736', Names 19 (1971), 153-166; 'Universals in Place-Name Generics', Indiana Names 3, no.2 (Fall 1972), 48-53; Janet H. Gritzner, 'Seventeenth-Century Generic Place-Names: Culture and Process on the Eastern Shore', Names 20 (1972), 231-239.

4. Antonio Tovar, Krahes alteuropäische Hydronymie und die westindogermanischen Sprachen, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1977, 2. Abhandlung (Heidelberg, 1977).
5. Over the years the Phoenicians, the Basques, the Berbers and an Eskimo-related circumpolar culture have been proposed with varying degrees of (im)plausibility.
6. Especially significant among his extensive writings on the subject are: 'Alteuropäische Flussnamen', Beiträge zur Namenforschung 5 (1954), 201-220; Sprache und Vorzeit (Hedelberg, 1954); Die Struktur der alteuropäischen Hydronymie, Mainzer Akademie der Wissenschaften, Abhandlung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1962, Nr. 5 (Mainz, 1962); Unsere ältesten Flussnamen (Heidelberg, 1964).
7. A. H. Smith, The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire 3, English Place-Name Society 36 (Cambridge, 1962), 119.
8. This is a point especially emphasised by Tovar, 21-23.

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NUGAE ANTHROPONYMICAE III

Donning once again my Beatrix Potter headdress, I devote myself to your service - albeit with damned little help from you, my should-be contributors: of all the harvest-mice urged forth to glean in socio-onomastic fields, few (apart from our devoted Editor) have sent back grist for the mill; and, of those that have, one is, as shall hereinunder appear, a topo. Should any reader devoid of anthroponymical titbits be none the less desirous of showing appreciation, cheese (French preferred, but only one kind unacceptable) may be sent, c/o The Editor.

Now, let's get up to date. On determinism, nothing fresh; but the Sunday Times Magazine republished, as a trailer for the book Twins by Peter Watson [Hutchinson: London, £6.95], the 1980 piece on separated identical twins [13. ix. 81, pp. 22-37; cf. NOMINA IV, p. 14].

As a pendant to last year's John Doe redivivus, this year has brought forth a different aspect of the entity-creating power of names: a pluvality of Weal Woy Jenkinses - aliases assumed by parliamentary candidates hoping to disrupt the polls; the laws bearing on such tricks were summarized in The Times by Marcel Berlins [8. vii. 81, p. 16]. The same cause can, in any event, be almost as well served without plagiarism: witness the case of the Cambridge University Raving Loony Society (otherwise, SDP) candidate whose adopted name the local mayor refused to read aloud, it being Tarquin Fintimlinblinwhinblin Bus Stop-F'tang F'tang Ole Biscuit Barrel [Guardian, 8. xii. 81; collected, like all other items from that source, by the Editor].

On zoonyms this year has produced little. The ever-helpful Field, as well as offering a technical disquisition on 'dog-affixes' (i.e., breeders' trademarks) [1. ix. 82, p. 441], gave practical advice on choosing everyday names for dogs; these should be 'ear-worthy', preferably disyllabic, and so framed that the willing creatures, believed to distinguish consonants less well than vowels, cannot confuse them with commands [7. x. 81, p. 803]. As for applied hipponymy, one day at N*wm*rk*t your very own reporter picked up this tasty crumb: 'I'd've done that last winner [Perang Tejam], only I was put off by the bl**dy awful Indian name.' A propos, if I may, for those following the fortunes of the Moss dynasty [NOMINA V, p. 78], momentarily deviate from pure onomastics, a profile and portrait of the matriarch appeared in The Times [1. xii. 81, p. 20] and the birth, in Lexington, Kentucky, of a grand-daughter, 'daughter for Pushy', was announced under MOSS, the father's name (Irish River) being as usual omitted [ibidem, 10. iii. 82, p. 30]. Meanwhile, there's a promising 2-y-o (of 1982), son of Tower Walk, called Krayyan - etymology unknown (I warn you, though, I'm not replacing any lost shirts . . .).

Sympathetic Magic

One theme of last year's to find ampler echoes was the character-forming power of names. One story indeed possesses, despite its ephemeral source, academic potential. When a university lecturer enquired as to the characteristics evoked by certain Christian names, his informants reportedly showed remarkable unanimity: