

# NOTES AND COMMENTS

## A. NOTES ON SCOTTISH PLACE NAMES

Under this heading, *Scottish Studies* will publish, at irregular intervals, a series of short notes on individual Scottish place-names or groups of names, their elements, derivations, meaning, pronunciation, early references, etc. They will usually deal with one aspect of the particular name and will, naturally, be only tentative and by no means exhaustive. At the beginning, names of rivers and burns will principally be discussed since the author has made a special study of these (Nicolaisen 1955, 1956); gradually, names of other geographical features and of man-made and inhabited places will be included. Elucidating comments and helpful questions are invited.

### 1. *Armaidh*

In his discussion of Scottish place-names containing an *-nt-*suffix (1912-13, p. 239), W. J. Watson mentions a river-name *Abhainn Armaidh* "in Stratherrick, that notable stronghold of Pictish names". He compares it with *Armit*, the name of a tributary of Gala Water. J. Pokorny (1938, pp. 87 and 119) includes this name, with reference to Watson, in his list of possible "Illyrian" place-names in Britain and derives it from an original *\*Armātis*, of a similar formation as *Sabātis* (Liguria and Campania), *Licātis* (Hérault), etc. This derivation is again taken up by H. Krahe (1953, p. 114), who not only relates it to *\*Armit* < *Armentī* but also to a great number of other river-names, like *Armā* in Piemont and *Erms*, tributary of the Neckar, < *Armī(s)a*. Nearer home we find as members of the same hydronymic family *Erme* (Devonsh.) < *\*Armīsā* and *Erfin* (Cardigansh.) < *\*Armīnā*. In this context *Armaidh* < *\*Armātis* would be pre-Celtic, but Indo-European.

Unfortunately, Watson does not give any more detailed geographical information about the name and does not reveal his source. It is not to be found on either the 1 inch or the 6 inch Ordnance Survey maps, and I have not been able to confirm it from anybody with local knowledge of the district. It seems that, quite apart from the problematic derivation of Gael. *-aidh* < *\*-ātis*, *Abhainn Armaidh* is a ghost-name and that that is the reason why Watson did not mention it again in his *History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (1926). Till it

has been confirmed locally, it should be left out of any linguistic discussion of this group of names.

## 2. *Caddon Water*

The modern form of the name of this tributary of the Tweed in Selkirkshire misled W. J. Watson, when he stated that it appears to be the same as *Cadan* of *Inbhir Chadain*, Inverhadden near Kinlochranoch, for an early *Catona*, from *catu-*, W. *cad*, G. *cath*, battle, "the warring one" (1926, p. 431). Early spellings of the place-name *Caddonlee*, derived from this river-name, are *Fantosme Keledenelee* c. 1175 and *Kalndene* 1296, according to J. B. Johnston (1934, p. 119)†. These show *Caddon* to be a compound of an original river-name with Old Engl. *denu* "valley". The first element of this compound has to be equated with *Kale Water* (Roxburghsh.; *aqua de Kalne* 1165-1214 Lib. Melrose) and *Calneburne* (East Lothian; so 1214-49 *ibid.*, now *Hazelly Burn*), which Watson (1926, p. 431) interpreted as *Calona*, "calling one". The underlying Indo-European root is *\*kel-* "to shout, cry, sound", as seen in Latin *calō* "to call out, to call together". The same root forms the basis of the Scottish river-names *Calair Burn* (Perthsh.) < *\*Calarā* and *Calann* (Argyllsh.) possibly < *\*Calava*. In England we have *Colne* (Yorksh. West Riding; *Calne* c. 1180, early Yorkshire charters) and *Colne Water* (Lancash.) with place-name *Colne* (*Calna* 1123-24, Pontefract Chartulary), both < *\*Calona* or *\*Calauna*. The ending *-ona* is well evidenced in Scottish river-nomenclature, cf. *Almond* < *\*Ambona*, *Avon* < *Abona*, *Brown* < *\*Brutona*, *Carron* < *Car(r)ona*, *Devon* < *Dubona*, etc. *Calona* is probably *p*-Celtic. Cf. Nicolaisen 1955, pp. 344-5; 1956, p. 128.

## 3. *Livet*

The stem vowel in this name of one of the main tributaries of the Banffshire Avon is long in local pronunciation [ˈli:vət], and W. J. Watson postulates a Gaelic form *Gleann Lìbheit* (1912-13, pp. 237-8) or *Gleann Lìomhaid* (1926, p. 445) for the name of the glen through which it flows. In the former publication he connected the name erroneously with Gael. *lì* "splendour", Welsh *lliw* "colour", explaining it as a goddess name *\*Liv-entia* "the Glittering one". J. Schnetz (1923, p. 40) accepted this etymology but rejected the concept of a divinity behind the name.—In the second publication, Watson derived

† I would be grateful to hear from anybody who has traced and verified Johnston's references.

both *Livet* and *Lyon* (Perthsh.)—he links these two names in both cases—from the base of “Latin *lima*, a file, Irish *liomhaim*, I smoothe, polish, Welsh *llifo*, grind, whet,” i.e. from the Indo-European root \**lei-* “slimy, slippery, etc.” (Walde-Pokorny 1927, pp. 389 ff.), although Pokorny (1948, pp. 662 ff.) does not list our group of words under this root. H. Krahe (1951-52, p. 158) adopted Watson’s second etymology, which had been repeated by the latter (1929-30, p. 277).—An extended form \*(s)*leib-* of the same root is the basis of the stem \**libo-* “to pour forth, to flood”, suggested by F. C. Diack (1920-21, p. 121), who recorded (?) a Gaelic pronunciation [L’i:vadʃ].

It seems preferable, however, to connect *Livet* with the same root from which Pokorny (1938, pp. 83 and 121) and Förster (1941, p. 647, note 3) derived *Lyon*, as well as the river-names Engl. *Lyme* and Welsh *Llifon*: i.e. \**lēi-* “to pour, to flow, to drip” (Walde-Pokorny 1927, p. 392; Pokorny 1948, p. 664). A Celtic *mo-* extension to this root is evidenced in Welsh *llif*, Cornish *lyf* “flood” (\**li-mo-*), which would provide a perfect appellative basis. *Livet* is to be regarded as an *-nt-* formation \**Limonti*, whereas *Lyon* and *Llifon* have developed from \**Limona*; the basis of *Lyme* is an unextended *ā-* stem \**Limā*.—The meaning would be “the one provided with flowing” > “the flowing one”. Further details in Nicolaisen 1955, p. 402 and 1956, p. 138.

#### 4. *Forth*

Early spellings of this name are *Bodotria* (Tacitus), *βοδερία* (Ptolemy), *Bdora* (Ravenna Geographer), *Foirthe* c. 1150 Rawlinson B 502, 86a 47, *Scottice Froch, Britannice Werid . . . a . 1200* (14th cent.) Colbertine MS., Paris.—The original form of the name seems to have been \**Vo-rit-iā* (> Welsh *Gweryd*) or \**Vo-ret-iā* (> Goidelic *Foirthe*); cf. W. J. Watson (1926, p. 53); J. Fraser (1929-30, p. 138); T. F. O’Rahilly (1946, p. 528); Nicolaisen (1956, p. 133).

The middle portion points to the Indo-European root \**reth-* “to run, to roll” (Walde-Pokorny 1927, p. 368; Pokorny 1948, p. 866), Irish *rith* “race”, *rethim* “I run”. Watson translates the whole as “the Slow-running one”, whereas O’Rahilly compares Old Irish *fo-reith* “succurrit”, Welsh *gwarded* “deliverance”, Gaul.-Lat. *Voreto-virius*, and translates “the helping (goddess)”. Without accepting the mythical meaning implied, we should like to take \**Vo-* to be identical with Gael.Ir. Old Ir. *fo*, Welsh *go*, Old Welsh *guo-* “under” and equate our

name with the nom. sg. of Old Ir. *foirthiu* in *trisna foirthiu ailitherdi*, glossing "peregrina per marmora" (*Thesaurus Palaeohib.* I, 488.26), not with the meaning of "fords", as it is rendered by the editors, but as denoting an "undercurrent", so that the *River Forth* would be "the river with the strong undercurrent", a very suitable name according to local inhabitants.

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