NOTES AND COMMENTS

A. SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

22. Old Norse *þveit*, etc.

When I discussed the distribution of Norse place-names in S.W. Scotland in a paper published in this journal four years ago (Nicolaisen 1960), I established three different linguistic strata represented by (*a*) Old Norse (ON.) *bekkr*, and *býr*, (*b*) ON. *fjall*, and (*c*) "Inversion compounds" in *Kirk-*, respectively. For these I provided distribution maps which showed a detailed geographical scatter of these elements on the Scottish side of the border but, in the cases of *bekkr*, *býr* and *fjall*, only covered the adjacent English counties by giving approximate quantitative figures for each county. I also stated that it had "proved unnecessary to plot the distribution of . . . the element ON. *þveit* 'a clearing, a meadow, a paddock' ", as all Scottish examples were apparently found in Dumfriesshire (Nicolaisen 1960:57-8). I now feel, however, that although the arguments put forward and the conclusions reached at the time are still valid, the maps provided were in fact inadequate and that the decision to omit any visual representation of the distribution of place-names containing *þveit* was based on insufficient evidence.

This note and the following which are to be regarded as supplementary to my article of 1960, are therefore intended to remedy these faults and to fill a gap as far as *þveit* is concerned. The maps which illustrate them are not only designed to provide a clear picture of the Scottish evidence, they are also meant to emphasise that the present-day Scottish-English border is practically meaningless in discussions of this kind as it bisects distributional patterns, the two parts of which must be seen, and can only be properly understood, together. In designing these maps it has been possible to include in addition to the areas covered in the 1960 set most of the North Riding of Yorkshire and part of the East Riding. Their southern limit is still artificial and not significant from a distributional point of view, but then this series of Notes in general is primarily intended to present the Scottish material, and when the English evidence is added it is to show the respective relationship between the two regions, in each individual case. It is

obviously more than desirable that, in some other context, the evidence should be presented as a whole, neither stressing the Scottish nor the English point of view but rather emphasising its underlying Scandinavian character and interpreting it as evidence of historical growth and settlement movement; however, this cannot be the place for such a comprehensive project.

It must also be pointed out that the balance between the Scottish and the English material mapped is uneven and therefore possibly misleading. Whereas the source for Scotland has been the collections of the Scottish Place-Name Survey taking into account both one-inch and six-inch maps and early evidence, the English material for the *þveit-* and *býr*-maps has been taken from the relevant volumes of the English Place-Name Society, supplemented by the studies of Mawer (1920), Sedgefield (1915) and Ekwall (1922); here it must be borne in mind that the four counties covered by the last three authors —Northumberland and Durham, Westmorland, and Lancashire—are therefore less exhaustively documented than those included in the E.P.N.S. volumes, particularly Cumberland and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The *fell*-map does not take into account any historical evidence but has been compiled from the one-inch Ordnance Survey maps of Scotland and their quarter-inch counterparts in England; differences in the density of the distributional patterns of the two countries are therefore potentially due to the different scales of the maps consulted. This does not, however, affect the overall picture.[1]

(*a*) ON. *þveit* "a clearing, a meadow, a paddock".

When discussing this word just over seventy years ago Christison (1893:279) remarked that it was "almost unknown in Scotland. *Murraythwaite* and *Crawthwaite*, Dumfries, are the only examples I have noted." His failure to identify more must be attributed to the fact that he was looking for an element *thwaite* which is the form in which *þveit* normally appears on English maps. This is indeed rare in Scotland although *Thorniethwaite* could be added to Christison's examples. The usual modern Scottish spelling is *-that* as in *Cowthat*, *Howthat*, *Lairthat*, *Murthat*, *Slethat* and *Twathats* (plural), or *-what(e)* as in *Butterwhat*, *Harperwhat*, *Robiewhat*, *Thorniewhats*, *Raggiewhate*, and possibly *Dalwhat* although it is by no means certain that the second element in this name is in fact *þveit*. Modern *Branteth* is *Brandthwaite* in 1516-7 RMS, and other earlier forms are *-thet*, *-thweyt* [and *-thweytes*], *-twayt*, *-pheit*, *-weit* and *-wat*.[2]

This variety indicates that the history of the written forms of the Scottish names has not been as stereotyped as the main two modern alternatives *-that* and *-what* might lead one to believe, and the difference between Scotland and England in this respect is also not as great as the fairly consistent Modern English *-thwaite* might suggest, for both earlier spellings and modern pronunciation link the English with the Scottish evidence, where a spelling convention apparently divides it: A name like *Great Crosthwaite* in Cumberland, for instance, shows practically the whole range of the above spellings in its earlier forms recorded between 1150 and 1750, and the modern pronunciation [krosθət] refers it straightaway to our Scottish *-that* group of names (Armstrong *et al.* 1950). Similarly *Curthwaite* in the same county is [kərθət] (ibid. 329), and *Branthwaite* is pronounced [branθət] (ibid. 276).

The linguistic unity of the Scottish and English evidence becomes even more obvious on the lexical level. If one examines the significant words which feature as first elements in the Scottish compound names containing *þveit*, one discovers that the majority of them appears in the same combinations in England, i.e. many of the Scottish *þveit*-names have identical equivalents south of the present border. This applies to names like *Murthat* and *Murraythwaite* in Dumfriesshire and *Moorfoot* (*Morthwait*, *-thwayt*, *-thuweit* 1142 ESC) in Midlothian for there are two *Moorthwaites* and two *Murthwaites* in Cumberland and an additional *Murthwaite* in Westmorland, all of which derive from ON. *mór* or Old English (OE.) *mōr* "moor". *Slethat*[3] (*Slachquhat* 1459-60, *Slaithwait* 1516-17 RMS) is identical with *Slaithwaite* ['slauwit] in the West Riding of Yorkshire; these two names have as their first element ON. *slag* "blow", with the whole compound meaning something like "clearing where timber was felled" (Smith 1961:II, 307-8).[4] *Butterwhat* is also paralleled in the West Riding where we have *Butterthwaite* which Smith (1961:I, 245) explains as "clearing with rich pasture", from OE. *butere* "butter". *Thorniethwaite* "thorn clearing" repeats the Cumberland and West Riding *Thornthwaites* all of which might well contain ON. *þorn* "thorn-tree" rather than its OE. equivalent, as the Old Danish name *Thornthwed* shows (Lindqvist 1912:125). Even the plural *Thorniewhats* (*Thornythaite* in 1583 however!) occurs in England as *Thornythwaites* in the West Riding of Yorkshire (Smith 1961: IV, 249), similarly recorded in the sixteenth century as *Thornethwayte*. For the two *Howthats* (*Holthuayt c.* 1218 HMC

Drumlanrig) we have a parallel in Hoathwaite (*Holtwayt* 1272-80) in Lancashire (Ekwall 1922:215), both from ON. *holr* (or OE. *hol*), meaning "clearing lying in a hollow"; and it is just possible that *Heithat* is identical with *Haithwaite* in Cumberland and *Haythwaite* in the North Riding. In those the first element could be either OE. *heg* or ON. *høy*, *hey* "*hay*" which would give them a meaning like "clearing where hay is cut".

Three "lost" names, too, have identical equivalents in England: (1) *Appiltretwayt* of 1317 (RMS) which is compounded with ME. *appel-tre* "apple-tree" also occurs in early Lancashire documents as *Apiltretuait* and *Appeltrethwayt* (see Sedgefield 1915:132 under *Applethwaite*); here the English word may have replaced an earlier ON. *apaldr* of the same meaning. (2) *Brakanepheit* (1194-1214 HMC Drumlanrig), also *Brakansweit* (*post* 1275 ibid.) is the same as several *Brackenthwaite* in Cumberland and one in the West Riding, as well as *Brackenfield* (*Brakenthwait*, etc. in 1269) in Derbyshire (Cameron 1959:217), "bracken clearing". (3) *Langesweit* (*post* 1295 *ibid.*) is the "long clearing", like *Langthwaite* in the North Riding and Cumberland, and *Lanthwaite* (*Green*), also in the latter county.

In other instances again which have no identical equivalent in England, the first part of the compound occurs in conjunction with other generic terms of Norse origin, in English place-nomenclature. *Carthat*, for example, which apparently contains ON. *kjarr* "brushwood, marsh", can be compared with Kirkgate (*Kergate* 1275), a street-name in Wakefield, *kjarr*+ ON. *gata* "road, street" (Smith 1961:II, 164). *Lairthat*, a compound of ON. *leirr* "clay" and *þveit*, has the same first element as *Lear Ings* (*Leyrynge* 1439) in the West Riding (Smith 1961:III, 193). Similarly, both the Scottish *Raggiewhate* (*Ragaquhat c.* 1544 Dumfries Commissariot Record) and the Yorkshire *Ray Gill* (Smith 1961:VI, 173) contain OE. *ragu* "moss, lichen"; *Cowthat* and *Cow Gate*, again in Yorkshire, share the OE. word *cū* "cow" as a first element; and the "lost" *Blindethuayt* of *c.* 1218 (HMC Drumlanrig) has a parallel in the Lancashire *Blind Beck*. In these last two names the first part could be either ON. *blindr* or ME. *blind* "blind, hidden". Another thirteenth-century "lost" name, *Litelsweit* (ibid.) shows the same hybrid formation as the Yorkshire *Littlethorpe* and possibly the Cumberland *Little Dale*.

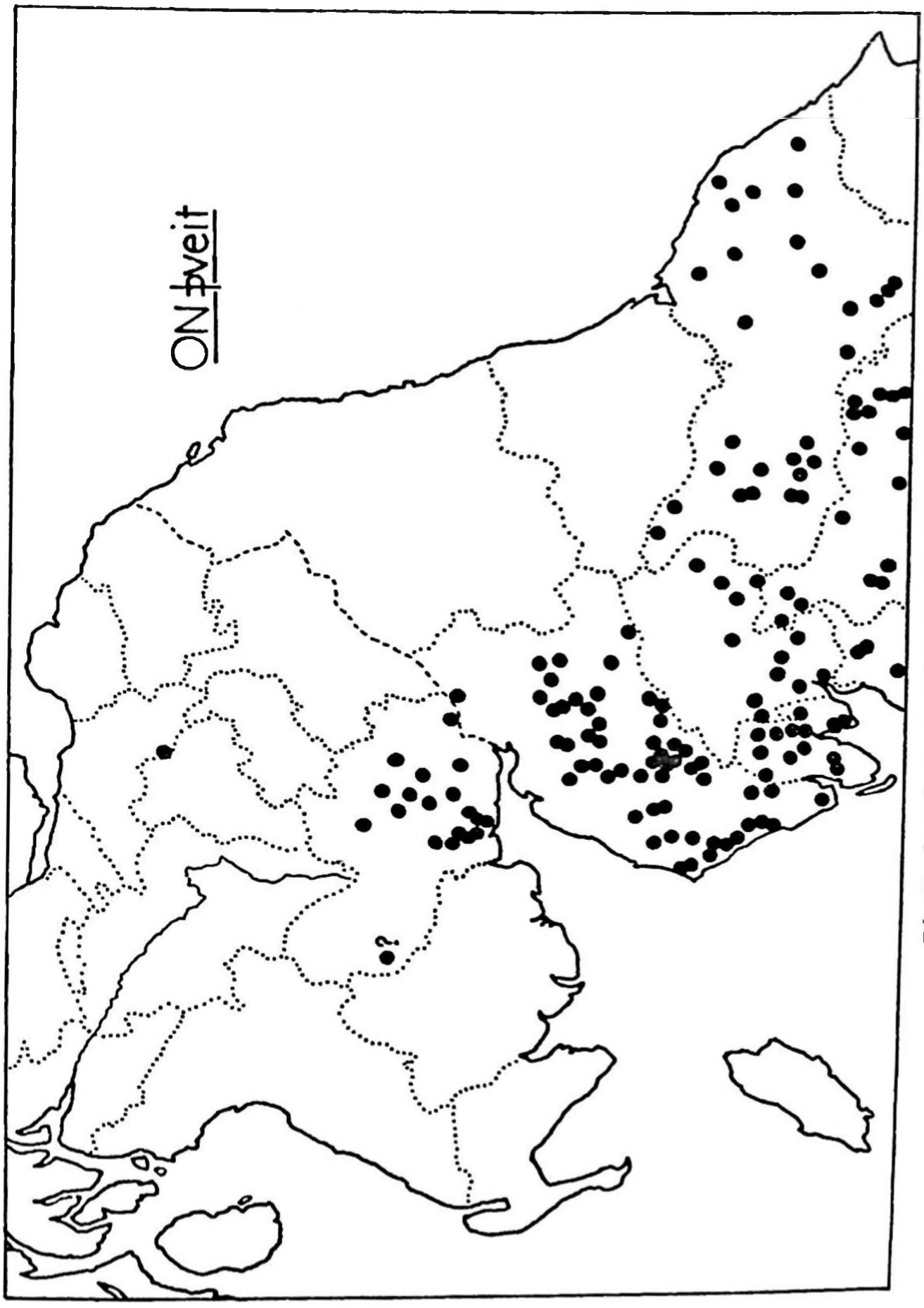
This leaves us with a handful of names like: *Branteth* (*Brandthwaite* 1516-17 RMS), possibly containing ME. *brant*

"steep", or OE. *brand* "place cleared by burning", or even ME. *brame* "bramble" which has been postulated for the two Cumberland *Branthwaites*, pronounced [branθət) (Armstrong, *et al.* 1950:276, 366); then *Twathats* (*Twathweytes* 1304 CDS), apparently Middle Scots *twa thwaytes* "two clearings" (Williamson 1942:293); *Harperwhat* "Harper's clearing", *Robiewhat* (*Roberquhat* 1542 RMS) the first element of which may have developed from a Norse personal name like *Hróðbiartr* or *Hróðbiorg* (Williamson 1942:294); also *Crawthat*< (?)OE. *crawe* "crow" (Johnson-Ferguson 1935:91), and the strange, now "lost", *Panthawat* (1516 RMS), *Panthuat* (1516 HMC Drumlanrig). In these instances the first element is either difficult or obscure, or it is a personal name or significant word which is, to the best of my knowledge, not on record with any Scandinavian generic term in English place-nomenclature. These exceptions by no means spoil the picture; their small number rather emphasises the strong link between the Scottish and English *þveit*-names which we postulated on lexical and morphological, as well as phonological grounds.

From a distributional point of view, place-names containing *þveit* are strongly associated with those in *bekkr* and *býr* although their scatter is not identical with that of either of the two (for further details see Nicolaisen 1960:58). In Scotland, the county of Dumfries is the obvious centre and even here the distribution is limited to the so-called "Norse parishes" (Johnson-Ferguson 1935:VI), as *þveit*-names occur almost exclusively in its eastern half.[5] An interesting outlier is *Moorfoot* in Temple parish in the county of Midlothian, better known probably in conjunction with the Moorfoot Hills. Its early forms are very conveniently set out by Dixon (1947:296), and from these it becomes clear that the substitution of *-foot* for *-thwaite* or the like is not older than the seventeenth century, with a form *Morfat* of 1559-60 (RMS) paving the way. Not shown on our map are the two or three examples from the Northern Isles. In Orkney there are two farms called *Twatt*, one in Stenness and one in Birsay (Marwick 1952:113, 138), and Jakobsen (1936:9, 45) mentions *de Gērdins o' Twatt* in Aithsting, Shetland. The word does apparently not survive in the place-names of the Hebrides or of other parts of the Scottish mainland where Scandinavians are known to have settled.

If our maps were extended to the southern parts of Lancashire and of the three Ridings of Yorkshire, as well as into Nottingham- and Derbyshire we would have a complete

picture of the English evidence. As it is, we are missing only a very small percentage of our English *þveit*-names in this



Distribution of place-names containing Old Norse *þveit*.

way, names which would in no way invalidate our contention that our southern Scottish names do not form a separate

entity but must be seen and studied together with the English material. What is really significant is that Northumberland and Durham are completely empty of names in *þveit*, as far as the evidence at present available goes. One wonders, however, whether a detailed examination of the place-names of these two counties along the lines of the English Place-Name Survey might not produce some minor name or field-name just north of the Tees, containing this element; but even if such names are found the borders of the *þveit*-country as it emerges from our map will not be substantially altered.

The revised maps of names containing *býr* and *fjall* will be published in the next issue of this journal.

NOTES

[1] I have refrained from re-drawing the *bekkr*-map of the original article because of the difficulty of obtaining, on this scale, a lucid distributional pattern in the graphic representation of geographical features varying considerably in length and importance. It was also apparent that such a map would have been approximately congruent with the *býr*-map. For the inversion compounds in *Kirk-* a comprehensive map was already provided in 1960 (p. 62).

[2] For a detailed account of the phonological development of the Scottish forms see Williamson (1942:291) who also deals with many other aspects of our group of names very satisfactorily.

[3] This and all the following Scottish examples are from Dumfriesshire.

[4] This seems to be preferable to Ekwall's derivation from an Old Scandinavian word corresponding to OE. *slāh* "sloe" = "clearing where sloes grew" (Ekwall 1960:426).

[5] It is doubtful whether the most north-westerly example shown on the map, *Dalwhat* (*Dalquhot* 1511 RMS), does in fact belong here. Williamson (1942:293) thinks that it stands for ON. *dalr-þveit* "thwaite in the valley" but Johnson-Ferguson has Gaelic *dail chat* "field of wild cats" (1935:46). Much depends on the present-day pronunciation of the name.

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B. NOTES ON COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

An Oil Painting of a Highland Shinty Match

Some years ago Professor J. H. Delargy, Honorary Director of the Irish Folklore Commission, drew our attention to a reproduction of an old painting of a Highland shinty match. This had been published in 1932 by the late Father Ninian Macdonald, O.S.B., of Fort Augustus Abbey, by way of frontispiece to his little book on the history of shinty (Macdonald 1932).

Through the kindness of Mr. Basil Skinner, of the Scottish