NOTES AND COMMENTS

A. SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

26. *Blackadder* and *Whiteadder*

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN .

In two previous Notes in this series we have already hinted that there appears to be an early stratum of Scottish river-names which for phonological, morphological and semantic reasons must be considered to be pre-Celtic but Indo-European. The names in this stratum not only link up with similar—or sometimes identical—types in the rest of Britain but also with a network of early river-names on the European Continent, particularly in Central and Western Europe. We called this stratum Old European, translating the German *alteuropäisch* which was proposed and used particularly by the late Hans Krahe whose special merit in the "discovery" of this stratum on the Continent cannot be overrated. The two names for which we claimed connection with this Old European group of river-names were *Shin* < **sindh-nā*, identical with the German river-name *Sinn* and cognate with *Shannon* (Ireland), *Sinnius* (Italy) and *Senne* (Brabant) (Nicolaisen 1958:192); and *Tain* ROS < **Taniā*, identical with *Tean* (Staffordshire) and *Zenn* (Germany), and, as a member of a very large family of stream-names, cognate with, amongst others, *Tone* (Somerset) < *Tanā* (*Ibid.*:195). In the following, we want to examine whether another Scottish river-name might belong to this category of pre-Celtic Indo-European names in Scotland and the British Isles,[1] a name which forms the second part of the names of two of the most important rivers in S.E. Scotland, mainly in Berwickshire, the Black*adder* and the White*adder*, the former being a tributary of the latter. The documentary evidence for this element **Adder* is as follows:[2]

Blackadder (river rising in the Lammermuirs and joining the Whiteadder near Allanton in the parish of Edrom BWK; length *c.* 20 miles):

Edre c. 1050 (12th cent.) Symeon of Durham (Historia Sancti Cuthberti) Hinde's edition.

Edrae, ibid., Arnold's edition.

Blackadder House BWK (on the right bank of the river in the parish of Edrom):

Blaccedre 1095-1100 ESC.[3]
Blakeder 1296 CDS.
Blacheder 1325 Cold. Corr.
Blakedre 1330 *ibid.*
Blacader 1541 RMS.

Blackadder (surname of local origin, derived from the name of the estate and house):[4]

Adam of Blacathathir (1477), Charles Blakater (1486), Robert Blackader (end of 15th cent.), Rolland Blaykatter (1521) = (?) Roland Blacadyr (1524), Thomas Blacater (1557); also Blakadyr 1503, Blacader 1510, Blacadyr 1524, Blaketter 1542, Blakadir 1544, Blacadur 1550, Blakiter 1563, Blackattir 1575, Blekater 1595, Blaikader 1611, Blackatour 1615, Blackatter 1626, Blacketer 1697, Blackeder 1707.

Whiteadder (river rising in the parish of Whittinghame ELO, flowing into the Tweed not far from Berwick; length *c.* 34 miles):

Withedre 1165-1214 Melr. Lib.
Witedre 1214-49 *ibid.*
Witeddre 1231 *ibid.*
Quhitewatter 1542 HMC (Var. Coll. V).

Edrington BWK (the ruins of Edrington Castle are on the left bank of the Whiteadder about five miles from Berwick; Edrington House is on a small tributary of the same river):

Hadryngton 1095 (15th cent.) ESC.
Hoedrinton 1095-1100 (15th cent.) *ibid.*
Edringtoun 1309 Robertson, *Index*; 1328 ER.
Ederington 1330 ER.

Edrom BWK (village on the right bank of Whiteadder Water; also parish name):

Edrem 1095 (15th cent.) ESC.
Ederham 1095, 1095-1100, 1138 *ibid.*
Edirham 1248 Melr. Lib.
Heddreham 1248 APS.
Hederham 1263 Chron. Melrose.

In this list the estate name *Blackadder* is obviously a secondary development from the river-name, and the distinctive epithets *black* and *white* must have been previously added to an existing name applying to two water-courses joining each other to form one. This does not necessarily mean that the water of the Blackadder is indeed blacker than that of the Whiteadder as the usual reference to definite colours in these two adjectives may not be intended here. They simply serve as two opposing distinguishing marks as, for instance, also in *Black* and *White Cart* RNF, or *Black* and *White Esk* DMF; this kind of distinction may also be made when two rivers bearing the same name flow quite near each other, as in *Findhorn* and *Deveron* which contain as first elements the Gaelic colour adjectives *fionn* "white" and *dubh* "black" as later additions to identical original names. The surname *Blackadder* is even one stage further removed from the river-name as it is derived from the secondary estate name and not direct from the name of the river. Because of its detachment from the locality from which its stems, and its migrations, it is perhaps not admissible as the same type of evidence as the river and settlement names. Presumably the name Whiteadder never produced a surname because it never applied to a settlement.

Edrom, as most of the old forms testify, is a compound of the river-name and Old English *hām* "homestead", a word which became obsolete as a productive place-name element not long after the Angles first reached Scotland. It is therefore one of the earliest English place-names in Scotland and may be translated as "village on the [River] Adder" (see Nicolaisen 1964:162-3). In *Edrington* the river-name is compounded with Old English *-ingtūn*, a combination of the connective particle *-ing* with *tūn* "enclosure, enclosed place". Meaning "farm associated with [River] Adder", it is another very early English name in this area (Nicolaisen *ibid.*:161-2). Both these names must have been coined before the distinctive adjectives *black* and *white* were added to the river-name(s).

As far as etymologies so far advanced for the name of the water-course are concerned, we can dismiss Johnston's derivation from Gaelic *eadaradh* "a division" (1934:79; 1940:21) and Mackenzie's suggestion that it perhaps simply means English *water* (1931:90), as irrelevant. Not only would it be wrong to expect a Gaelic river-name of such importance in this region, but the word *eadaradh* is also phonologically and semantically unsuitable; and the equation of *Adder*, or the like, with *-water*

is a late medieval invention as the *Quhitewatter* for 1542 shows. The two derivations which must be taken seriously both take our river-name to be of English, i.e. Anglian, origin. Watson (1926:467) holds that the earliest form *Edre* is the same as OE. *ǣdre, ēdre*[5] "a vein, a water-course". Ekwall (1928:156) objects that this word is "not probable for a stream so relatively important as the Adder" and suggests himself that the name, if English, should be derived from an adjective found in Old High German *ātar* "quick"—he erroneously has *atar*(!)—and in the adverbs OE *ǣdre*, Old Saxon *ādro*, Old Frisian *edre* "quickly, at once".[6] This would translate the river-name as meaning "the swift one", but the objection in both these cases must be that there is no justification for assuming an original English long vowel. The occasional *-dd-* spellings in the early forms, like *Whiteddre* and *Heddreham*, decisively point to a short stem-vowel as our point of departure. It is also most unlikely that our river-name is, in fact, of English origin, and we would rather suggest that it, like Tweed, Teviot, Yarrow, Lauder, Kale, Ale, Ettrick, Tyne, Almond, etc. (see Nicolaisen 1964: 144), is pre-English and was adopted by the earliest Anglian settlers. It must have been one of the very first Scottish rivers whose native name they learnt and on whose banks they settled.

Assuming, then, that the name is pre-English, we must first deal with two further suggestions made by Watson and Ekwall. The latter mentions an alternative etymology in his discussion of the Cheshire stream-name *Etherow* (*loc. cit.*) which he tentatively equates with **Edder-* in the Cumberland names *Ederlangebeck* 1294, *Edderlanghalf* and *Edderlangtirn* 1322, and—even more tentatively—with our *Adder*, linking all three with a Gaulish *Edera*, apparently the older form of both the *Hyère* in Brittanny and the *Eure* near Namur. Taking **Edder* to be the name-form underlying such spellings as *Edre, Edrae, -eddre, -eder, Edir-*, etc., this is a very plausible suggestion, even if the meaning of *Edera* is not known. Unfortunately, however, Holder, who gives *Ed-ĕra* for *Hyère* (1896:1407), does not mention any source for this form, and it is by no means impossible that this is simply his own conjectured etymology. If his reference is, on the other hand, to a form from documentary evidence, it is probably the eleventh-century *Edera* which Dauzat (1946:165) identifies with *L'Yères* or *Yerre*, a tributary of the Loire west of Chateaudun, and which (together with its other form *Era*) he sees as a development from

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an earlier *Atŭra or *Atŭrus, a hypothesis borne out by the name of the main locality on this river, Arrou < Aturavus. Dauzat mentions another Edera < Atŭra as the older name of l'Yerre(s), a tributary of the Seine in Seine-et-Oise, but his third example, Edera 1235, for the river Eder in Hesse cannot be supported because the same name is Adrana in Tacitus, Annales I 56 (Krahe 1949-50:247-66; etc.). I have not been able to check Ekwall's second Edera > Eure near Namur; this reference is from Förstemann's Altdeutsches Namenbuch, and if correct and original, would be the only continental parallel. We are therefore, unfortunately, not on very firm ground with regard to this suggestion, and apart from the absence of a suitable etymology, it is not clear whether Edera actually exists.

Dauzat's *Atŭra and Aturavus lead us to Watson's alternative derivation which is based mainly on the later and present forms of the name like -ader, adder, -adir, -adyr, -adur, -ater, -atter, -attir, and the like, comparing such names as Atur[7] (now l'Adour) in Gascony, Aturavus (now l'Arroux) a tributary of the Loire near Digoin, or, as Dauzat has it, "qui arrose le Morvan" (loc. cit.),[8] and Aturia, now the river Oria in Spain.[9] In addition to Dauzat's two Edera < *Atura, we must consider in this context Atyras, a river in Thracia (Mela II 24), and a hill-name Ἀτύριος λόφος in Illyria (Cass. Dio fr. 49, 7). These, together with the source references, are both given by Krahe (1949-50: 254). When only the examples from southern France, Spain and the north of the Balkan peninsula were known, the root *Atur was, because of its geographical distribution, thought to be "Iberian" (Gröhler 1913:62), but Krahe argues that these names cannot be ascribed to any ethnic group, especially in the absence of a suitable etymology. Similarly Dauzat, especially in the light of his two *Atura > Edera further north within a 60-mile radius of Paris (if these are acceptable), speaks vaguely of "une racine préceltique et préibère". Indo-European connections are not envisaged by anybody which means that, if our Adder is cognate, we would reach a pre-Celtic, non-Indo-European stratum of river-names in Scotland.

Assuming that the Celts came across a name *Atur- when they reached Berwickshire, it would follow that they gave it one of the two feminine endings which we also noticed on the Continent, and we might therefore start with something like *Aturā or *Aturįa. In the case of *Aturā we would expect late British ā-affection (*Atorā), lenition (*Adorā) and loss of the final syllable (*Ador), all in the fifth or early sixth century, and

therefore before the arrival of the Anglians in the same area (Jackson 1953:694-5). *Ador* would be borrowed as such into English, under the strong initial stress the *-o-* of the second syllable would be weakened to *-e-* (*Ăder*) and, in the twelfth century, the initial short *Ă-* would be lengthened to *Ā-* in an open syllable in a bi-syllabic word (*Āder*). Our eleventh-century reference *Edre* should therefore have been *Ăder*, everything later, *Āder*. *Aturiā*, on the other hand, would show late British lenition (*Aduriā*), *i-* affection (*Adĭriǎ*), probably even "double affection" (Jackson *ibid.*:591) (*Edĭriǎ*), and loss of the final syllable (*Edĭr*). In English this would become *Ēder* and subsequently *Ēder*, similarly as above. As in the cases of *Āder/Adder*, the length of the initial *Ē-* in *Ēder* puts an obstacle in the way of equating it with the post-twelfth-century forms *-eddre*, *Heddre-*, etc., which, for the reasons given above (p. 81) are likely to have a short stem vowel.[10] The most likely explanation is that the form which became normalised is to be derived from an oblique case of the feminine declension, like the genitive, or a dative functioning as a locative, i.e. *Ădre* or *Ĕdre*, in which lengthening of the stem vowel would not take place.[11] If this is acceptable, and if we really do have two different stem vowels, *Edre*, etc. could theoretically be from *Aturiā*, and *Adder* from *Aturā*. Does that mean that we have to reckon with a pre-Celtic, non-Indo-European, largely Mediterranean, stratum in Scotland and in Britain, a stratum for which we have no prior evidence so far?

The present writer prefers to connect our river-name(s) with a group of names for which we do have other examples in Britain, not only *Shin* and *Tain* but also a considerable number of others (Nicolaisen 1957:225-68) for which we have identical or near-identical equivalents in the "Indo-European" part of the Continent, i.e. the above mentioned Old European stratum of the second millennium B.C. The main strength of the argument lies in the fact that we do have a suitable Indo-European root to fall back on, i.e. *ad(u)-/*adro-* "water-course" (Pokorny 1959:4). As an appellative, the *u-*stem occurs as Avestan *adu* "water-course, stream, canal", and in onomastic usage in *Adua* (since Polyb. II 32, 2), now *Adda*, a tributary of the Po in Northern Italy; *Adula*, a tributary of the Tirza in Latvia, *Adula*, now *Odla*, a river near Odelsk (Poland), and *Adulia* (*Attula* 807), now *Attel*, a tributary of the Austrian *Inn*. The corresponding formation in *-ro-*—a parallel well known in Indo-European morphology—is only found in *names*, like *Adra* in *Attersee* and

Attergau (*in pago Adragaoe* 788) in Upper Austria; *Adrana* (Tacitus) and *Adrina* (800), now *Eder*, a tributary of the Fulda in Hesse (see above p. 83); *Adrina, later *Ederna, Ethrina*, a lost river-name near Gandersheim (Germany); *Adara (*Odera* 940, *Adora* 968), now the river *Oder* which flows into the Baltic on the German-Polish border (Pokorny *loc. cit.*; Krahe 1954*a*; *passim* 1964:41; for further related, although not necessarily Old-European, names see Krahe 1949-50:255).

As far as Adder is concerned the oldest form of the last mentioned name, the *Oder*, would provide the most suitable starting-point, for *Adara would presumably become known to the Anglian seventh-century invaders in its Primitive Cumbric form *Aðar, subsequently becoming Old English *Ader with initial *A*-remaining before the *a* of the following syllable, substitution of -*d*- for -ð- (Jackson 1959:76) and subsequent weakening of the—in English—unstressed vowel in the second syllable. Similarly a feminine *i̯ā*- stem *Adari̯ā would undergo lenition of the -*d*- (*Aðari̯ā), show final *i*- affection (*Aðeri̯d), loss of final syllable (*Aðer), and internal *i*- affection (*Eðer). As such it would be borrowed into the Anglian dialect in which substitution of -*d*- for -ð- would take place as in *Aðer > *Ader. From then onwards the story would be the same as that for *Ader < *Aturā and *Eder < *Aturiā, i.e. lengthening of the stem-vowel in open syllable in the nominative, and no lengthening in the oblique cases of the singular, resulting in *Adre and *Edre, from where the short initial vowel also spreads to the nominative, giving us *Edder and *Adder*. It would therefore be impossible to tell from the phonological history of the name whether the starting-point had been *Atur- or *Adar-, but the geographical distribution of cognate names on the Continent which, together with the plausible etymology based on an Indo-European word meaning "water-course", the formation from well-known Indo-European morphological material, and the fact that other names belonging to this linguistic stratum have been found in Britain, seems to weigh heavily in favour of the latter, and the present writer, for one, would feel justified in regarding *Adder* as an identical equivalent of the name of one of Europe's most important rivers, the *Oder*, both deriving from *Adarā. It is difficult to decide whether *Edre, Edder-*, etc. are the result of a parallel formation *Adari̯ā—perhaps for the Whiteadder, whereas *Adarā originally meant the Blackadder,[13] or simply two slightly different formations for the same name— or whether the *E*- should or must be explained differently.[14]

Not all the problems concerning this name are therefore solved but perhaps this note has made a beginning by providing an acceptable etymology.

NOTES

1 A comprehensive survey of this early group of river-names in the British Isles was presented by the author in his paper "Die alteuropäischen Gewässernamen der britischen Hauptinsel" in *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* **8** (1957) 209-68. Since then, however, more Continental evidence has come to light and Krahe's proposal has been examined and accepted by many scholars. A re-appraisal of the situation in the British Isles as a whole and a detailed study of each name involved has therefore become necessary. I intend to present the former in a different context in which the archaeological material will be examined in a parallel study; the latter, i.e. the interpretation of individual names, will be carried out, as far as the Scottish contribution is concerned, in a number of short articles in this series of Notes.

2 The writer is very much indebted to Dr. May G. Williamson's typescript Ph.D. thesis on *The Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties* (University of Edinburgh 1942), in which the early forms for Blackadder (apart from the personal name), Whiteadder, Edrom and Edrington have been reliably and conveniently collected (pp. 7, 14-15, 163-4).

3 The source abbreviations used are those recommended in the "List of Abbreviated Titles of the Printed Sources of Scottish History to 1560" (*Scottish Historical Review* **42** (1963)). This list is also available as a separate reprint.

4 All the forms in question are found in Black 1946:78 to which reference should be made. Black only lists the sources for those names for which the Christian name of the bearer is also mentioned. Apart from the dateable spellings Black has *Blakytar* (Workman's MS.), *Blacatar*, *Blaikater*, *Blaiketter*, *Blakatar* and *Bleakader*.

5 Watson actually has *ædre* and *édre* with a short vowel, or rather, indifferent vowel length. Perhaps this misunderstanding is at least partly responsible for his suggestion.

6 This is also accepted by Williamson (1942:164) who argues that the Old Northumbrian "form *ēdre* would give the persistent *e* of the early spellings. Later there was confusion with *adder* 'snake' ".

7 According to Dauzat (1946:164, note 2) *Atŭr* and *Atŭrus* are the Latin forms and "*Ador*, avec accent sur l'*a* (et *o* fermé >*u*) en ancien gascon". Ptolemy has the genitive Ἀτούριος ποταμοῦ (see Krahe 1949-50:254).

8 See also Lebel (1956:348) who has collected the following older forms: *fl. Aturavum* 924; *Adro* 957; *Arrou* 1171, 1243, 1279; *Arroux* from fifteenth century onwards.

9 The information comes again from Holder (1896:79); the more precise location of the water-course in question appears to be in Guipúzcoa in the very north of Spain. Watson also lists the *Adur* in Sussex but in a footnote shows that he is aware of this being a late antiquarian creation. This name is irrelevant in this context.

[10] *Hadryngton* 1095 and *Hoedrinton* 1095-1100 for *Edrington* are dubious (Williamson 1942:7) and can unfortunately not be used in determining the quality of the stem vowel.

[11] This is also assumed by Ekwall for *Alen* and *Alne* from *Alaunā* (1928: 6-7), and a similar process has, of course, produced such Modern English words as *saddle* (ME. *sādel*).

[12] Significantly enough, both Old High German *ātar* "quick" and *ādara* "vein, water-course" have also been suggested for the *Oder* but have had to be rejected for exactly the same reason as Old English *ædre* "quickly" and *ædre* "vein" for Adder, i.e. the long stem vowel (see Krahe 1954*b*:238-9).

[13] If this was so, it might be argued that the adjectives *black* and *white* later fulfilled the same function, when the distinction between *ā*-stem and *iā*-stem had become blurred in its application to two different rivers.

[14] It seems to be highly improbable to the present writer that the difference in the stem-vowel is merely due to later development and that it can be accounted for by association with the word *adder* alone. See note 6 above. Not far away *Lauderdale* with the river *Leader* poses a similar problem.

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B. COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Women Coal-Bearers in a Midlothian Mine
(A Contemporary Drawing of 1786)

B. R. S. MEGAW

Unusual only as the subject of an early drawing, the bearing
system whereby coals were carried from the underground pits
on the backs of women and girls continued in parts of Scotland
up to the passing of Lord Ashley's Bill of 1843.

When Sir John Clerk of Penicuik informed the mining
engineer of a Newcastle colliery in 1724 about the methods in
use in his own

> coal works at Lonhead . . . that part of them which related to
> the bringing up coales on men & womens backs surprised him
> much because no such custome is used in England. But as we
> discoursed about the strikes & dips of ye Newcastle coals & mine
> at Lonhead he began to be convinced that a Remedy would be
> very difficult . . . The coals of Lonhead lye all dipping exceed-
> ingly . . . so that it is not easy to command them by an Engine.
> (Clerk of Penicuik Muniments no. 2106, quoted in Atkinson
> 1965:531.)

Gangs of women were commonly employed in similar tasks
in the Middle Ages (for example, the raising of the earthen