Nodiadau Amrywiol ~ Miscellaneous Notes

Icknield Way

There seems to have been considerable doubt felt for a long time regarding the identity of
the first element of the name Icknield (Way). A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, The Place-Names
of Buckinghamshire & Hertfordshire (English Place-Name Society, vol. III) Cambridge Uni-
versity Press 1926, pp. xi, 4-5, in their clear and informed account of the traverse and docu-
tmentation of the road itself, leave the element of Le(ce)nhilde weg (12th +) unexplained. Later
mentions, e.g. in the Essex volume of the same series, citing earlier mention, take us no fur-
ther. It is clear that we remain uncertain to which stretch the name Icknield (and its
antecedents) originally properly applied.

Roads, like rivers, easily pick up names for their total length by extension from earlier
reference to limited segments of their extent. So, I believe the Danube took on a name
extended from the appellation of ‘rivers’ used by Iranian speakers (with a form *dana-) resid-
ing at its mouth. It therefore would not seem improbably if the Iceni, centred in
Norfolk (see recently Rivet and Smith, *PNRB* 373-5 esp. 375), had given their name to the
Icknield Way, i.e. the slope dominated by the Iceni.

Mawer and Stenton make the point that the Icknield Way is an ancient, pre-Roman fea-
ture. I have suggested, ZCP 45, 1989, 187, that the base is Celtic. If so, that would imply
something chronological about the social history of this ancient track. It would not, how-
ever, necessarily date the laying of the physical path.

My suggestion is that the base le- meant “variegated”; see ZCP 45, 1989, 187. Such a
semantic range for an ethnic name reminds me of the names attached to peoples called
Ped and the like. On the terms Prydyn/Pryden and Pryden and associated names see my dis-
cussion BBCS 30, 1983, 289-90. Is it possible that we have here another reflex of an old
indigenous naming-pattern proper to this insular region?

new ym

Simon Evans GMW 170, § 188 N.2, remarks the probable syllabic form of ym in *Newin
khilenwed, i kwn llawer “Many hounds have surrounded me” BBCS ix, 328.33. This appears
to be the residue of an ancient collocation. Since new reflects the vocalisation *νην- (as in
the well known plural of nouns) of the particle *νυ (=Hitite νο, Gk νυ, μυ), when the
enclitic pronoun was added, schematically *νυν(-νυ) or *νυν(-νυ) this would have
yielded *νυνυν or *νυνυνυνυν. We might then have expected an early Welsh sequence on
the lines of *νυνυν, *νυνυν, or *νυνυν. In accentual proclisis it is hard to predict the most
probable vocalism.

The form new would be generalized from the non-infixed sequences.

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ewasaf

The useful Glossary to Lawyers and Laymen (edd. T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E.
Owen and D. B. Walters, Cardiff 1986) recognizes *ewasaf* (S38) as a compound of
gwasaf, which is in turn called, somewhat inconsistently, a “simplex”. In fact, the latter is
equated with its Irish cognate fielsoon ‘guarantee’, which is segmented as fiel-sonn ‘standing
under’. It would be more accurate to represent the analyzed form as Thurneysen does
(GOI 112 § 179), fo sennam. I also consider the literal gloss incorrect here. Neither the guar-
antor nor the guarantee ‘stands under’. Rather, the sense here must be ‘stands in aid’; cf.
my discussions BCCS 25, 1973, 293 ff.; Indo-Iranian Journal 22, 1980, 141, for the value of IE
*hupu > Celtic *hwe. It is noteworthy that this archaic semantic value occurs with verbs of
position and of motion.

When we consult GPC II, 1551a, we find gwasaf reconstructed as *yo-sessam--; this is
unassailable, mainly on morphological grounds. Thurneysen (GOI 452 § 733) teaches us
that fielsoon = gwasaf belongs to the class of masculine western verbal nouns in *-u-
which we must reconstruct *-vu. Furthermore, even though the reduplication belonged originally only to the present formation, we know that throughout Indo-
European the reduplication for this base was in *i; this is true in Indo-Greek, Greek, Latin,
and therefore likely in Celtic.

I therefore reconstruct *yo-sessam- > *i-o(p)° sosam- > *i-hupu (is)is-H°-vu.

Catraeth

The fate of Al Cataraconi, -e, Ravenna CACTABACTONION has been a riddle. Rivet and
Smith, *PNRB* 302-4, have the form with *-o, but this goes counter to the suffix that Jackson
suggests (Britannia 1, 1970, 70) for the Swale as *Cataracon, which a river deity would
have *-e.

More informative, I think, are the variants of Ptolemy: Kares,kpaktovov, -pp, *-p, *-p
*-*kt. These lead us most plausibly to Catara(kt)ion(i), which may well presuppose *Catara-
tgro. It is difficult to choose between two possibilities: whether the *-t- results from a
*tr-dissimilation between two *t, or was the original on which an analogical *-tgro- was
reformed. No matter which origin is adopted, *Catarta-trgro- would yield *Catraeth > Catraeth
and Catreich. We seem to have here the form *trgro-, which may well appear in British
instead of the Latin trajeto. A name of the type ‘Battle-crossing’, or ‘Battle-bank’, ‘shore’
well seem would not be unreasonable.

Chicago

murddyn mewn enwau lleoedd

‘Murddun, Rudus, rudher, porisierna’, meddai Geiriau John Davies, Mallwyd. Mae'r gair
yn ddioedel ei le yng ngiefra ‘iath lenyddol safonol, ac eto fel ellen mewn enwau lleoedd