

## BRITISH AND EUROPEAN RIVER-NAMES

By P. R. KITSON

*University of Birmingham*

(Received 10 October 1995; revised 11 July 1996)

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines Eilert Ekwall's *English River-Names* (1928) in the light of pan-continental 'Old European' river-naming patterns investigated by Hans Krahe and his followers. Significantly many Celtic-looking names are shown to represent reshaping of older names not specifically Celtic with meanings more frequently to do with water or flowing than Ekwall thought. The Indo-Europeanness of *alteuropäisch* river-names is upheld emphatically, with a critique of Venne-mann's (1994) contrary arguments. Its Common (not just western) Indo-European origin is emphasized, yielding rational explanations for such features as the frequency of the vowel *a*. The kind of reshaping already demonstrated for insular Celtic is seen to have been recurrent in the history of *alteuropäisch* river-names generally, with developments in particular groups conditioned by their wider linguistic development, e.g. loss of the *-nt-* participle in Celtic.

### I

Eilert Ekwall's *English River-Names* is one of the classics of English place-name scholarship. It has been so regarded since it came out in 1928. The archaeologist O. G. S. Crawford, no mean hand at harsh reviews when he saw fit, hailed this as 'as nearly perfect in its way as any work of scholarship can ever be. It is written' (continued Crawford) 'in flawless English by a Swedish Professor who is master of his subject. It is one of those books which record the high-watermark of their subject; sandwiched between dilettanti and pedant, and partaking of the nature of neither. The scope of Professor Ekwall's philological knowledge is almost limitless . . .' (Crawford 1928:197). And so historians and philologists, not to mention onomasts, in this coun-

try have relied on it ever since. In the main rightly; but all scholars work within limits of contemporary knowledge, augment it as they may by their own imagination. The purpose of this paper is to relate Ekwall's work to a field of philology in which his knowledge was not limitless, because, though many of the details were known to him, any whole vision of it has largely been developed since he wrote; and since most of its fifty years' worth of literature is in German (and other exotic languages), it is still largely unknown to the English-reading world.

River-names like other place-names formed within English are typically of two elements, one naming the kind of thing and one qualifying the individual thing, thus Holbrook, Otterbourne. Some combinations, including these, turn up repeatedly in different parts of the country. A no longer productive element may survive as qualifier to a newer one, thus Bournbrook. Some of the bigger rivers have names that mean just '(The) River', Old English *ĕa*, modern names Yeo and Rea or Ray; for some of those, older individual names are on record. Some rivers in England have names not formed within English but taken over by the Anglo-Saxons from their British Celtic predecessors. They are more frequent further west, as famously mapped by Jackson (1953:220), so much so that he felt able to use them as one of the main indices of stages of Anglo-Saxon settlement (Jackson 1953:208–209). Such names if of relatively recent origin have similar patterns to the English ones, late Brittonic and its descendant Welsh using dithematic formations much as English does; thus Candover in Hampshire is equivalent to Welsh *cain* + *dwfr* 'fair water', and Welsh Dulas, Dulais, Dowlais, etc., and Scottish Douglas are all variants on the theme of Blackwater, *du* 'black' + *gla(i)s* a word for stream. The word for 'river' in ordinary speech, Welsh *afon*, whence English Avon, again tends to name large rivers, and again sometimes replaces individual names which are on record. Appreciably many inherited river-names, though, are not formed in this way, but from a single root with a derivational suffix, a process common in earlier stages of all the Indo-European languages. Typically the meaning is not transparent to speakers of modern languages even on the Celtic side. Such are Thames, Severn, Humber, Frome, Derwent, Trent, and Stour. These names like the dithematic ones are found repeatedly across the country. They tend to be thought of as names of major rivers, but not by any means all the rivers so named are in fact big; thus Ekwall has up to fifteen rivers Humber, the most numerous (he lists four as doubtful),

five Frome and similar, four Derwent plus Darwen, Darenth, and Dart, two or three Tarrant or similar etymologically identical with Trent, six Stour (plus two diminutives), Tamar, Tavy, Team, Teme, and four T(h)ame as well as the Welsh Tawe, Taff and Taf, whose cognacy with Thames is well known.

Sometimes in languages words with more particular meanings come to mean ‘stream’ or ‘river’ in general. Thus the Old Norse equivalent of German Elbe, whose original meaning was ‘white’, came into wide use as a substantive element in Scandinavian dithematic stream-names generally. But it is reasonable to think, from the way they are repeated not in enormous numbers, that at any rate most of the extended monothematic British names were meaningful to their first users; perhaps not as fully as ordinary lexical items, but at least with semantic associations limiting the potential applicability of any particular one to a relatively small number of rivers. Who and when were those first users? Ekwall (1928:liv–lv) thought they would be practically always the Celts. He considered ‘pre-Celtic origin . . . a rather remote contingency’, and did not think any individual name positively likely to be pre-Celtic. Even for his least bad candidate, the Coln in Gloucestershire, OE *Cunugle*, oblique cases *Cunuglan*, for which he could not think of a Celtic etymology, I can (\**Cunoglāna*, meaning roughly ‘Houndbourne’,<sup>1</sup> the *n* taken for an inflectional ending as in the majority of Old English river-names, as in Ekwall’s own explanation (1928:137) of OE *Doferle* in the same county). As for when the Celts reached the British Isles, the orthodox view has long been that it was not until the

<sup>1</sup> \**-glāna* feminine rather than the \**Cunoglānos* Ekwall’s and Smith’s (1964:6) presentation seems to imply. The second element is not strictly a substantive element denoting a stream but an adjective ‘pure, clear’ (less likely \**glanna* ‘bank’); but the parallel with *Doferle*, so striking on the English side, would alone justify positing it, and GPC reports that *Glana* occurs as a Celtic river-name on the Continent. The internal semantics of the two names are not parallel on the Celtic side, since in \**Dubroglāna* the first element is substantive – unless it is a replacement-compound like Bournbrook. A probable implication either way is that of the two Celtic names that of the Coln was the older (cf. e.g. Padel 1985:xv on chronology of Celtic place-naming formations), whether \**glāna* was in wide use as a stream-naming substantive in the Dobunnic dialect (if so Tirlle Brook, also in Gloucestershire, Ekwall’s Germanic hypothesis for which is rather insubstantial, would be another candidate) or whether the two names constituted on the Celtic as well as the English side the kind of pair discussed by Coates (1987:329–330).

last few centuries B.C. Most scholars, certainly including Ekwall,<sup>2</sup> seem to have taken for granted that the immediately preceding inhabitants were non-Indo-European-speakers.

Here we meet, I think, two discrepancies not usually commented on. One is linguistic. The minority of pre-English river-names surviving to be mapped by Jackson is quite large. If the Celts had been here for as short a time as this would allow them, substantially less than the English now have, we should expect there to be some comparable survival of non-Indo-European among the Celtic names (and probably in the Brittonic language at large). But no English river-name looks likely to be non-Indo-European. If you scratch around in Scotland you can find some, but it is surprisingly hard; there are a lot fewer than on the orthodox view there reasonably should be.<sup>3</sup> Another book that is a classic in its way, Rivet and Smith's *Place-Names of Roman Britain*, yields just three river-names that don't look fairly definitely Indo-European. All are in north and west Scotland; forms of all are affected, two seriously, by textual corruption in Greek authors.<sup>4</sup> In some eighty distinct names of getting on for twice that number of rivers<sup>5</sup> that is not a large score.

<sup>2</sup> His comments on e.g. Stour logically exclude the possibility of pre-Celtic Indo-Europeans in Britain.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson (1955:154) suggests 'in northern Scotland the Isla, Affric, Liver, Nevis and many others'. Nicolaisen (1976:189) would reject Nevis; Liver belongs with Livet which he rejects too (1976:174), the *i* in both being long; if the *s* of Isla is etymological, that also looks Indo-European, from the same root as Aire and Ure discussed below. I would seek documentation before believing undetailed 'many others'.

<sup>4</sup> The grossly corrupting Ravenna Cosmography must be excluded as a source for this argument. That leaves *Eitis* (? – several variants) in north-west Scotland, *Iena* (? – several variants) in south-west Scotland, *Il(l)a* probably the river Helmsdale in Sutherland, and a pair *Toesobis*(?) and *Tuerobis* in west Wales, sharing either a non-Celtic suffix or a mode of corruption in their common source Ptolemy. But the root of *Toesobis* looks the same as that of the Spey, discussed below, which is Indo-European; *Tuerobis* is probably the Teifi, and is close enough to being a phonetically acceptable etymon to suggest corruption of a real etymon; and the suffix could well be the same British one as in names like Combretovium, with well known late Greek confusion of spellings of *b/w* sounds. A sea-bay *Volas*(?) in north-west Scotland, also in Ptolemy, might also conceivably bear the name of a river flowing into it.

<sup>5</sup> The numbers are inevitably fuzzy because it is impossible to be completely consistent in what one does with gross corruptions, only probably identical name-formations, names of rivers not themselves attested in classical sources but clearly identical with ones that are (like Rivet and Smith's maps I have generally included these), and river-names not attested as such but clearly reflected in places named after them (generally excluded). In one run-through I obtained a score of 66 extra rivers from 10 multiply productive names, but this is certainly an instance where, to para-

Perhaps all were smoothed into Celtic like \**Cunoglāna* into Old English; but it is a point worth bearing in mind, especially if you accept arguments to be advanced below that it is possible to distinguish chronological layers within names Ekwall would have regarded as Celtic.

The second discrepancy is archaeological. The archaeological record fits well enough the testimony of classical writers that in the last centuries B.C. some particular Celtic tribes moved to Britain (the most famous the Belgae); but there is no sign in it of a major influx of population such as should be needed to replace completely a completely unrelated language of people at a comparable level of culture in such a short period of time. Different upholders of the orthodox view cannot agree how to square it with archaeology;<sup>6</sup> archaeological orthodoxy this side of the Atlantic in the last thirty years has been that there was no new population in Britain of the required order of magnitude since at the latest the Beaker Folk in the third millennium B.C. A dissenting minority of Celticists, such as Myles Dillon and Nora Chadwick, always identified those with the Celts. Some archaeologists now even deny the Beaker People ethnic identity (reducing them to a 'directional trading network');<sup>7</sup> then since no-one denies that aborigines of these islands were non-Indo-European they put back the arrival of Indo-European-speakers to the fourth or even fifth millennium.<sup>8</sup>

What Ekwall's etymological predispositions lead to in particular cases can be conveniently illustrated from Rivet and Smith's maps of recurrent river-names. The two of most interest to us are *Alaunos/-a* (Rivet and Smith 1979:243) and *Derventio* (*ibid.* 333). Rivet and Smith (1979:333) are in no doubt that *Derventio* means 'oak-river, river in the oakwood'. In this they follow Ekwall's (1928:123) 'river where oaks grow abundantly', from the root \**derua*, Welsh *derw* 'oak'. Now this is reasonable at first sight. Oak does abound in the valleys of some of the rivers Derwent (though not more than in those of many other rivers); and if Brittonic-speakers

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phrase Padel (1985b:81), if I were to repeat the exercise the figures would come out differently.

<sup>6</sup> So much so that the influential historian Professor Donnchadh Ó Corráin declared recently 'We do not know when the Celts came to Ireland'.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Sherratt and Sherratt (1988).

<sup>8</sup> So Makkay (1992:209).

thought about the meaning of the name this may well be what they thought it meant. But it is not a complete etymology. Neither Ekwall nor Rivet and Smith comment on the derivational suffix. But the suffix *-nt-* which Ekwall clearly intends and Rivet and Smith explicitly invoke was not a versatile suffix like *-no-*, applicable to most parts of speech in a variety of shades of meaning. Its characteristic function, invoked by Ekwall himself elsewhere (1928:70), was to form present participles of verbs. Its use here needs at least to be explained. Anyone for 'Oaking'? Nor do they acknowledge more than one 'similar name' abroad, Drevant in France < *Derventum*. This entails ignoring or denying significance to the similarity of quite a number which *prima facie* are well within relevant phonetic range. The following are all listed by Krahe (1962:8, 322-324):

- \*Dravantia > 1243 Drawanta, Drauzana > Drewenz (East Prussia)
- Dravantī (early India)
- \*Dravant- > s.i (Strabo) gen. Tráentos > Trionto (foot of Italy)
- Druantia (s.i (Pliny)) > Durance (→ Rhône)
- \*Dru(u)antia > Germ. Drewenz, Pol. Drwęca (Poland)
- \*Druantia > Drance (→Rhône)
- \*Druantia > Drance (Savoy)
- \*Druantia > Durance (dep. Manche)
- \*Druantia > Drouance (dep. Calvados/Normandie)
  
- \*Dravena > s.xii (Adam of Bremen) Traven(n)a > Trave (→Baltic)
- \*Dravina > s.xiv Drawen ≡ Drawen (Radnorshire)
- \*Dravina > 890, 978 Trewina > Drän (Carinthia)
- \*Dravonos > s.iv (Ausonius) acc. Drahōnum > 752, 895 Drona > Drone/Drohn/Dhron (→Moselle)
- Dravos (s.i (Strabo)) Drábos, (Pliny) Draus, s.ii/iii (Dio Cassius) Draoùos > Drava (Croatia)
  
- Druna (s.iv (Ausonius)) > Drôme (→Rhône)
- \*Druna > Droune (S. France)
- \*Druna > Dronne (→Dordogne)
- Druna (788) > Traun (Upper Bavaria)
- Druna (788/829) > Traun (Upper Austria)
- \*Druta > Droude (→Rhône)
- \*Druta > le Drot (→Garonne)

That there is no significant connection between the British group and those so similarly formed from a root so productive of river-names on the Continent, and most productive in that land of it just across the Channel also inhabited by Celts, is more than I for one am prepared to believe. I am not saying Ekwall's link with *derw* is completely wrong. It is still needed to explain the metathesis and vowel of the first syllable of the British names and the single Gaulish *Derventum*. What I am suggesting is that the *deru-* formation is but a reshaping, by popular etymology if you like, of a name-form or of names already existing in the root *Drav-* which were no longer intelligible in the Celtic language.

The *e* of the second syllable might be regarded as secondary in the reshaping and ascribed to a kind of onomastic vowel harmony (*Derv-ent-(io)* versus *Nov-ant-(ae)?*), or even to normalizing by Romans to the morph *-vent-* frequent in Latin words, as the Celtic word for 'silver', which must have been *\*arganton* with an *a* to give Welsh *arian* (not to mention *Lazamon's* Arzante queen of elves), is regularly normalized to match Latin *argentum* in names, such as that of the Caledonian chieftain *Argentocoxos*, which contain it.<sup>9</sup> But I think that the *e* was properly motivated, and its true origin was in the Indo-European suffix *\*-uent-* (Brugmann 1886–92:II §127, Hirt 1921–37:III §119) found in place-names of some other countries (Szemerényi 1954:208–210; cf. Kretschmer 1925:87–92), which actually means 'full of, rich in' so would suit better than Ekwall's choice of suffix both his own etymology and a form *Deruuentio-* (v.l. *Doruuentio-*) found twice for the Yorkshire Derwent in eighth-century manuscripts of Bede. Ekwall puts that down to an 'intrusive vowel' (1928:123); Rivet and Smith however think it 'of exceptional interest because it shows that Bede had it from some source in which a slightly different form of the roots was supposed [for the Yorkshire Derwent than for the other Derwents], presumably by British speakers, i.e. *\*Deru-uent-*' (1979:334). IEur *\*-uent-* does not seem to have been considered in discussions of this name, or, to judge by Rivet and Smith, in discussions of British names at all, presumably because it has not been recognized as occurring in Celtic lexical items. It is not one of the suffixes treated by Pedersen (1913:15–62). Yet it must be presumed to have been available at an early period, especially since it was productive in the neighbouring stock Italic.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Jackson (1955:137).

One other British name famously formed with an identical syllable, *Bannaventa* whose first element means 'peak, hill', naming a hill-fort settlement near Daventry (Rivet and Smith 1979:265), and probably another place in hilly country (*ibid.* 511–512) from which St. Patrick came, is actually compared by Rivet and Smith (1979:264) to *Maleventum* later *Beneventum* in Italy, whose original name probably meant 'mountainous' and was formed with this suffix (Szemerényi 1954:208–209). Also to be compared are *Glannoventa* Ravenglass (which is on the coast, and whose first element means 'bank' or 'shore') and maybe *Venta* famous as name of three *civitas* capitals and nowhere else, and notorious for having 'no convincing Celtic etymology' (Jackson 1970:80). If *-venta* and *Venta* are etymologically identical as seems usually to be taken for granted (though perhaps it should not be), then reinterpretation when the suffix became obsolete (still fairly early) so that *X-venta* names from being 'full of X' were understood as 'place of X', and (perhaps only in place-names) a word *venta* hypostatized as meaning 'place', is in offering an actual visible etymon a considerable advance on any of the murky speculations reported by Rivet and Smith (1979:263–264) or those of van Hamel (1937:106–107) or the phonetically incredible one of Ó Máille (1987). *Venta Belgarum/Silurum/Icnorum* as capitals would be appropriately named 'Place of the Belgae/Silures/Iceni', and this would account better than Sir Ifor Williams' guess 'market', which Rivet and Smith lean toward, Jackson against, for comparable genitive plural tribal names from Continental Celtic lands whose first elements are only known Latinized as *Forum*. A similar conclusion about the meaning of British *Venta* was reached by Coates (1984:1–4) via a process of reasoning from Illyrian place-name material mainly incompatible with, and less convincing than, Szemerényi's.

To return to Derwent, I do not think the derivation offered above would do better than Ekwall's as an *original* etymology. Rivers may properly be called rich in fish or otters, or in alluvial minerals, not in trees. Yet as folk-etymology it is close enough to a decent sense to keep the logical faculties quiet and sound right. There may even have been an element of regional idiom in it, since as Ekwall (1928:10–11) notes the rivers Allen and Alwin (Northumberland), Alwent Beck (Durham), and Allan Water (Roxburgh) are all *Alewent* in the earliest (twelfth- and thirteenth-century) sources, in contradistinc-

tion to other rivers Allen, Allow, etc., with which he connects them. Ekwall describes these as ‘mountain streams with a swift current’. His account of the names as quasi-participial formations on the etymon of Welsh *alaw* as in note 36 below is not very satisfactory. \**Al(u)-uent-* meaning ‘full of flow’ looks a better try, whether some Celtic variety had borrowed from neighbouring north European dialects a word corresponding to Lithuanian *aluōts* ‘spring’ and/or OE *ealu* ‘ale’ (cf. text and note 18 below) or whether the nominal base was hypostatized from river-names in much the same way as the *deru-* of Derwent.

## II

*Drav-* is just one of a more than two dozen quite common roots, and a substantial number of rarer ones, found in river-names recurrent across much of Europe in this way, with formative suffixes which are also recurrent. They have received intensive study since the last war, mainly by German scholars pioneered by Hans Krahe, who dubbed them *alteuropäisch* ‘Old European’. *Al-* of *Alaunos* is another. The suffix *-aun-* there is Celtic, found in Gaulish names some of them duly instanced by Ekwall. *Al-* is the base of some 45 names in Krahe’s 1962 list, many shown by a map by Tovar (1977 map 2; repr. Vennemann 1994:219), which gives an idea of a typical sort of spread of *alteuropäisch* names. More than a dozen roots and some dozen suffixes may be seen in a table by Krahe (1962 opp. 296, 1964 opp. 62; repr. Vennemann 1994:226) set out as a linguistic system, showing combinations that occur of roots and suffixes. (Attested combinations are often multiply attested, so such a table understates the element of patterning in their contrast with those that do not occur.)

The linguistic material of these names is Indo-European. Not only are most of the roots readily etymologized on that basis, but the suffixes also are those that were productive in Indo-European. Quite a lot of single-consonant suffixes are productive in quite a lot of languages, so the most diagnostic are the complex ones, *-st-* forming superlatives and *-nt-* forming participles as already noted. Thus *Drav-* reflects an Indo-European root \**drey-* ‘to run’ (a Greek derivative is the second element in modern English *aerodrome*), and Indian *Dravanti* was a name of transparent meaning, the Sanskrit

equivalent of Tolkien's River Running. The obsolescence of words from that root in Insular<sup>10</sup> Celtic will be one reason for Celtic reshaping on *deru-*. The grammar of river-name formants is looser than that of the language at large, owing to the large scope for analogy in such a relatively closed linguistic subsystem, but it still helps to account for the non-occurrence of some combinations and relative frequencies of those that do occur; thus *-st-* is commoner with substantive bases and *-nt-* with verbal ones, for example. Schmid (1968:256–257) has drawn attention to the greater completeness of the participial system in Old European river-name formation than in any of the historical European languages. He did not I think notice, but we may mention, that it helps explain the internal ordering of combinations of suffixes. Krahe's list contains at least 20 names *Almana*, *Elmina*, *Armenos*, and the like,<sup>11</sup> with the same order as in Greek participles in *-menos*, yet there are not any *\*Elnama*, *\*Arnomos*, etc., with the reverse order. Krahe took such combinations simply to indicate the time-depth within the river-naming system: base and one suffix had been so long so customarily associated as to be felt a single base for new suffixal formation (e.g. table 1962 opp. 298, 1964 before 63; repr. Vennemann 1994:227). This and the frequency of *Alm-* forms, about half of all *Al-*, are why Tovar gave all *Alm-* forms a symbol distinct from all other *Al-* forms on his map. I think there was more control to some of them, and that this is an aspect of *alteuropäisch* which is underinvestigated.<sup>12</sup>

A recent attempt by Vennemann (1994:232) to show that suffixal combinations were not ordered ignores these. The only suffixes he proffers that 'reverse their relative order' are *-st-* and *-r-*. If they did it would resemble variation in double gradations of adjectives in some Indo-European languages,<sup>13</sup> reflecting partly changes in

<sup>10</sup> Its survival at least in the onomastic register of some Continental Celtic until after the Roman conquest is implied by Romance diminutive *\*drauetta* reported by Fleuriot (1991:14) in the Drouette near Paris.

<sup>11</sup> To which others might be added from Trubačev (1985:221) etc.

<sup>12</sup> I have the impression e.g. that it should be possible to get more out of the material of Krahe's long series of papers in *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* in the early 1950s than Krahe himself did (1964:62–70; cf. 1962:294–299). Some of the theories canvassed by Szemerényi (1972:160–161) on the semantic functions of suffixes before their function in adjectival gradation was stabilized would be relevant to the formation of river-names.

<sup>13</sup> Double gradations superlative (or comparative) + comparative in adjectival formations in various Indo-European languages are treated by Szemerényi (1976:408–411). The combination of *-st-* and *-r-* there is probably by haplology

linguistic fashion over substantial periods of time. Vennemann's argument depends on a tacit collapse of diachrony. Moreover nearly every one of his examples is suspect as one or more of: falsely segmented,<sup>14</sup> not 'Old European', or not even a river-name.<sup>15</sup> And with so many corners cut, Vennemann still is not able to show any single root with which two suffixes do occur in both orders. Altogether his argument is fairly trivially invalid, and the second-order deduction [from a maximum of two suffixes!] making the language of the hydronymy an agglutinating one *a fortiori* is.

Suffix-combination, then, is not simply a matter of time-depth. That there was time-depth within the system is, however, demonstrable from several angles. One is variety of distributions. You would not say that the names in *Al-/Alm-* and those on the base *Arg-* 'shining white' (Tovar 1977 map 3) were likely to have been laid down at the same time by the same people. It is obvious on any view of the homeland from which Indo-European spread that the names

from *-isto-tero-* (Szemerényi 1976:410), so there would be a measure of phonetic analogy in the combination with simple *-ro-* in the river-naming system. That would not apply so easily in the reverse order, which makes it the more suspicious that Vennemann does not give convincing examples of that order.

<sup>14</sup> None of the names given as containing these suffixes is in Krahe (1962), and Vennemann does not document them. Of the three examples given for *-r--st-* the *r* in *Acrista* and *Indrista* looks likely to be part of the lexical base (see Pokorny I 21, 774, and *mutatis mutandis* discussion of Thames and Tweed below), that in *Andrista* possibly so (various possibilities Pokorny I 765–766, 36–41).

<sup>15</sup> *Segustero* is not a river but a town, Sisteron on the Durance (Basses-Alpes). \**Wilistra* (*-ust-*) evidently represents the Wilster in Schleswig-Holstein, which there is no cause to count 'Old European' since the form does not recur outside Germany and has a perfectly good German etymology given by Förstemann (1913–16:II 1337) in the elements corresponding to English 'well' and the agent-suffix found in Old English stream-names such as *Medestre* and *Ballestre* (both Gloucs). That there is an *Ulster* tributary of the Werra fits very well an etymology with initial *W-* (hardly with Bahlow 1965:497 '*ul-, el-, al-* sind Wörter der Urzeit für Moder, Sumpf'). The suffix seems to have been an archaism by historical times, so \**Alistra* the (Weisse) Elster tributary of the Saale, early forms *Alstere*, *Alestra* and the like (Förstemann 1913–16:II.i 115, cf. 812–813), is best analysed as early Germanic formed on an 'Old European' root. *Abista* is a Baltic river given by Krahe (1964:41). *Indrista* is one of the attested early forms of the Innerste south-west of Brunswick (Förstemann 1913–16:II.i 1556). For the Aist in upper Austria Vennemann's \**Agista* is in Krahe (1964:54–55, 72–73); the early sources quoted have *-a-* and *-e-*, but normal variation of front vowels in weakened stress makes the reconstruction reasonable. *Andrista* is a river in Lombardy, *Albista* in Calabria, according to Bahlow (1965:10, 109). I have not managed to verify *Acrista* in two classical atlases, two modern ones, or Förstemann, and would not be surprised if it were a starred form hypostatized from a town-name like \**Segusteron*. On the unreliability of Vennemann's augmentation of Krahe's name-stock generally cf. text and note 41 below.

in *Arg-* belong to a later stage in that spread; especially when you spot that nearly two-thirds are *-nt-* formations, and all those mapped are from lands inhabited in late prehistory by Celts whose word for 'silver' was *\*arganton* as aforesaid. These are not the only part of that map to correlate with particular language-groups: blanks in Germany, Italy and adjacent parts correspond to the areas of productivity of *Alb-* 'white'. There is no available map for the latter but it is obvious from a fairly cursory glance at the list by Krahe (1962:308–310) that its distribution and that of *Arg-* are very largely complementary. Chronologically *Alb-* with its relatively central dialect position, productivity in Italy which is supposed to have been relatively late settled by Indo-European-speakers, and continuing productivity in historical Germanic, represents an even later stratum of *alteuropäisch* than *Arg-* does. The three features south-east of the main block, two *Arguna* in Austria and one *Ἀργυάς* in the south of ancient Illyria, all are formed with the vowel *u* like the Greek words for 'silver' *ἄργυρος* and *ἀργύριον*, (a) similar word(s) in Illyrian (Mayer 1959:12) and words from this root meaning 'white' or 'shining' in eastern languages, Tokharian B *ārkwī* (A *ārki*, < *\*argūjo-*), Sanskrit *árjunah*, to which latter the formation of the two Austrian river-names is comparable. The modern form of the Illyrian river is Ergent, which the hydronymists explain dubiously by positing an unattested 'by-form' *\*Argunt-* (Krahe 1962:316 more or less after Mayer 1957:58). A more economical explanation is that *Ἀργυάς* was a consonant-stem with regular Greek simplification of *-n(t)s* to *-s* in the nominative, but that the oblique case-forms are what give rise to the modern name: thus ancient *Tάρας*, modern *Taranto*, and other such pairs. This has the corollary that *Ἀργυάς* was a participial formation, and draws our attention to the likelihood that that is what *Argant-* like *Dravanti-* names in general originally were. It is an attractive thought that the correlation of surviving ones with the Celtic realms represents exactly the same kind of reshaping anciently as Derwent in more accessible historical times. A conditioning factor relevant to both is that Celtic did not preserve the *-nt-* participle (Pedersen 1913:408).<sup>16</sup> There is anyway a possible eastern equivalent,

<sup>16</sup> It might be relevant too to the lexicalizing of *\*arganton*, but that was Common Indo-European: Indo-Iranian, Armenian, and Tokharian as well as Italic had corresponding formations (Pokorny 1959–69:I 64, cf. Buck 1949:610, Mann 1987:col.

Ἀργάντη in what would be now Pakistan,<sup>17</sup> to warn us against supposing the theme *Argant-* purely Celtic.

Another measure is yielded by the lexical connections of the bases. As you might expect, most of the commoner ones have etymologies to do with kinds of water or flowing. A conspectus of those invoked by Nicolaisen (1956:225–263) for British river-names is given in notes 25–38 below; Nicolaisen (1971:94–96) gives another. Ones expressing such things as colour, geology, vegetation, or position, though cumulatively quite numerous, are on the whole much rarer individually. These two levels of frequency correspond roughly to those of the respective functional equivalents, namely substantive and qualifying elements, in names formed in more modern languages. This is an aspect of usage, not of origins, as I shall argue below.

Some lack of congruence must be remarked at the outset between roots regularly invoked by hydronymists and those of standard etymological dictionaries. Partly that is because they have found relevant lexical items that lexicographers have missed, especially in Baltic languages, e.g. Lithuanian *aluōts* and *avuōts* both meaning ‘spring’, regularly cited by hydronymists for their roots *\*el-/ol-* and *\*av-* ‘to flow’, together with *almėti* ‘to flow unceasingly’, *almās* ‘hasty, vehement’, *almēs* ‘lymph? [*Blutserum*]’, *almē* ‘pus or other bodily effluvium’, as cognates of the former. All these words are absent from Pokorny (1959–69) and most of them from Mann

33). The Germanic-Baltic-Slavonic word for the concept is represented in the Celtic realms, as SILABUR at Botorrita; that looks more like Hispano-Celtic inheritance from a non-Celtic Indo-European substrate of north European character than a word anciently current in all Celtic as Fleuriot (1991:33) suggests.

<sup>17</sup> There is the problem with Ἀργάντη that IE *ǵ* normally becomes *j* in Sanskrit, as in *árjunah*; but there is no corresponding root with velar *g*, so it seems right to consider the name as in some way related to our river-names. Ἀργάντη is called a πόλις by Ctesias the rather unreliable source; Karttunen (1989:72) thinks it likelier to have been a region than a town. If so it may plausibly be interpreted as primarily a piece of river-naming; cf. Sind, or Punjab, or India itself. The *-y-* might be explained either as a Macedonian naturalization by analogy with Ἀργυάς or as preserved unpalatalized in this formation in what Nicolaisen (1980) would call the ‘onomastic dialect’ of proto-Indo-Iranian while palatalized in the corresponding lexical items. The latter possibility looks likelier.

(1987).<sup>18</sup> Partly too, though, I think compartmentalization of research has obscured connections; e.g. the hydronymic *\*el-/ol-* is surely not a separate root but a development of the one in Greek ἤλθον 'went', Pokorny's *\*el-* 6 with such vague underlying senses as 'set in motion', 'be in motion', Mann's *\*el-* 1 'come, go; rise, raise'. Ultimate links of this kind suggest an existence for the river-naming system as what Nicolaisen (1980) would call an 'onomastic dialect' semi-independent of the development of ordinary vocabulary in most of the actual dialects since very early in the history of Indo-European.

So does the fact that many, perhaps most, of these watery elements survived as lexical items only in eastern Indo-European languages not in European ones. It follows that the naming-system was in operation since before the eastern languages separated from the western continuum. This conclusion is reinforced by the not sufficiently appreciated fact that a partial version is evidenced in Hittite, the branch of Indo-European generally supposed to have separated from the others earliest.<sup>19</sup> Hittite hydronymy uses also devices like reduplication not found in normal *alteuropäisch* (Rosenkranz 1966:127–128) and about half Krahe's list of elements are not visible there; but enough are to show that a form of the system was already in operation. As you would predict from what has already been said, *Arg-* and *Alb-* are among the roots not seen in Anatolia (Rosenkranz 1966:143). I do not know if any proper names of rivers are attested in Tokharian, the other possible candidate for earliest separation, but Mann (1987:434) cites a Tokharian common noun *išan* 'river' as if etymologically identical

<sup>18</sup> Mann (1987:col. 16) puts Lith. *almė* 'liquor from dung' with MHG *elm* 'yellow clay', LG *olm* 'rotten wood', under a root *\*alm-*(?) 'rot, impurity'; he does not have the river-names, or anything to do with flowing under *el-*, *ol-*, or *al-*. He points out (col. 873) that a Finnish loan-word *olut* 'ale' implies for the etymon of OE *ealu* etc. a vowel *o* not *a* as in Pokorny (1959–69:I 33), excluding Pokorny's rather improbable etymological link with the word for 'alum'. This makes connection of the 'ale' group too with *\*el-* 'flow' attractive, as an archaic equivalent of the 'flowing bowl'.

<sup>19</sup> Trubačev (1985:222–223) is more incisive in his analysis than Rosenkranz (cf. Kitson, forthcoming, note 26). Criticisms by Otten (1969:257–259), to which Watkins (1973:82–83) from an avowedly anti-*alteuropäisch* standpoint drew attention, concern details and do not undercut the main argument. The relative proportion in historical Hittite of *alteuropäisch* river-names to more exotic ones is not material either.

with a river cited as *Isana* by Krahe from eighth-century sources, now Isen a tributary of the Inn.

Writers in English (with the honourable exception of Professor Nicolaisen) when they have mentioned such etymologies at all tend to notice just one or two and dismiss them as incredible coincidence; thus Mallory in his recent book on Indo-Europeans (1989:157, 276-277). So it may be of use to list some in some detail (after Schmid 1968:255-256, 1970:376-377, etc.). One of course is OInd. *Dravantī*, whose relation to English rivers Derwent and others we have already discussed. The etymon of a cognate adjective *dravaráh* 'fluid', having according to Mann (1987:159) Armenian cognates meaning 'marsh', is the base for an East Prussian river-name *Drawerna*. That of OInd. *sindhu-* 'river', name of the Indus, recurs in the Sinn in Germany and probably in the Shannon in Ireland.<sup>20</sup> Hittite *amiāra* 'channel', Homeric Greek *ἀμάρη*, corresponds, says Schmid, to many rivers Ammer in the Netherlands, OPers. *ađu-* 'stream' to Adula in Latvia and Adda in Italy; Nicolaisen's *Scottish Place-Names* (1976:185-186) adds more to these. OInd. *indu-* 'to drop, trickle' has answering river-names in Poland and Lithuania. OInd. *avani-* 'river' corresponds to a river Avena in Calabria; the derivative river-name OInd. *Avantī* is etymologically identical to a French river Avance and several now called *la Vence* recorded in mediaeval texts with forms in *Av-*, and Spanish *la Vansa* (Tovar 1977 map 6). The etymon of OInd. *vār(i)* 'water', OPers. *vār-* 'rain', *vairi-* 'sea', Tokharian A *wār*, B *war* 'water', occurs in the Scottish Farrar, French rivers Vaire, the oldest name of the Dnieper (Tovar 1977 map 5 has missed this), and many others. (This last probably is in fact present in the lexicon of western languages: Mann refers to it OE *wær* (< \*-ǣ-) 'ocean', ON *vari* 'lymph', OE *wōr* 'water, ooze', also *wōrhana* 'moorcock' (= Dutch *woerhaan* 'pheasant!'), Dutch *woerd* 'drake', and Slavonic words for 'boil' and 'brew').<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> So anyway it is routinely said by the hydronymists. Early forms with only a single medial *n* seem at first sight to support rather the competing etymology from the Celtic word for 'old', upheld e.g. by Rivet and Smith (1979:455); but Mr. Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig of the Ordnance Survey, Dublin, assures me that a full conspectus of them in the light of early Irish phonology really does fit the *alteuropäisch* version.

<sup>21</sup> The root \**ūr* in Irish *úr* 'moist(ure)', OE *ūrig* 'dripping wet' may well be related; Mann denies derivation from it of Latin *ūrīna* (Rivet and Smith 1979:486 refs.).

Sometimes the morphology as well as the vocabulary of eastern languages elucidates western names, e.g. not only does the etymon of OPers. *dānu* 'river' occur in British rivers Don, but what according to Schmid (1987:331) is the 'correct adjectival derivation' of an Indo-Iranian *u*-stem *\*daneuio-* explains the forms of Danube, Russian Don, and Welsh Donwy. The etymon of British *\*abonā* > Welsh *afon* > English Avon and of Middle Irish *ab* 'river' is that of OPers. *āp-* 'river', matched in Dacian and Illyrian *Apos*, French rivers *Asse*, Lithuanian *Apse*. Granted the connection and the *p* as primary, the voicing of the labial consonant in British and in Latin *amnis* is odd; the standard explanation of it (Johansson 1894:138–141, whence Pokorny I 52) derives it from phonetic alternation in the suppletive declension evidenced by Sanskrit dat./instr. pl. *adbhiḥ*, *adbhyaḥ*, conditioned by the *d-* extension visible in Greek river-names *Ἀπιδών*, *Ἀπιδανός*.<sup>22</sup> The implication again is that these linguistic materials go back to a continuum of which ancestors of Celtic-, Italic-, Greek-, and Sanskrit-speakers were all part.

Most of these elements are well supported with names recorded in good early sources. Schmid (1970, 1983:405, 1987:331–332) adds as many again, not all perhaps quite so well established. The vocabulary for water, let alone flowing water, in any language is fairly limited. One or, with bad luck, two such resemblances might be due to coincidence; that more than a dozen might be is quite beyond belief. And the picture as I have presented it is probably understated, because Indian river-names as far as I know have never been systematically investigated for their *alteuropäisch* connections. The presentation by Pinnow (1953, 1954) uses a frame of reference (1953:232–234) excluding the possibility of Indo-European inheritance older than Sanskrit (though borrowing from other

<sup>22</sup> Perhaps originally 'water-giving' (Johansson 1894:142). It is possible that Hamp (1988:7–8, 1990:139, 1991:77, 1992:15) and Nicolaisen 1976:177–179) would agree on the main lines of this etymology, though they disagree about the synchronic analysis is Insular Celtic. I would see both their offerings as reshaping of the kind explored for Derwent above. The form of root with voiced consonant is productive in Hittite (Rosenkranz 1966:125–127); this is evidence for the antiquity of the relation in what Watkins (1973:81) calls 'a very ancient lexical item', not cause to doubt its existence as Watkins does (1973:81–82); Watkins' distinct shades of meaning for *\*ap-* "water" ... and *\*ab-* or *\*abh-* "river" are certainly not justified. Even if *\*ap-* and *\*ab-* were to represent ultimately different proto-Indo-European roots, of which it would be possible to believe that *\*ab-* was the older, the dialect geography would still show that Indo-European had systematized them as a single root.

branches is admitted as possible).<sup>23</sup> Krahe (1952a:1–3) treats Sanskrit river-names more perspicuously but very briefly as a developing part of the system. One has the impression that much more could be added. There is, for example, an allegedly Indian river-name *Vēdra*, which if real would be a lengthened-grade equivalent of the earliest form of the Wear; but I lack proper scholarly documentation for it, my source being speculative fiction (Zelazny 1967).<sup>24</sup>

### III

The fact thus established, that river-names in western Indo-European countries could be formed on words not preserved as lexical items in the historical languages of those countries, is the main thing in the findings of *alteuropäisch* hydronymists that calls for modification of conclusions reached not only by Ekwall but by most writers on British river-names. The premiss that such names

<sup>23</sup> Pinnow's hostile predisposition comes out in the rejection of the *alteuropäisch* equation and receptivity to the idea of non-Indo-European substrate borrowing for *Sindhu-* (1954:12–14). The majority of names he treats are compounds, but the large minority ('ein große Anzahl') of suffix-formations (1953:229–230) are at any rate compatible with the idea of development within the particular branch from an inherited *alteuropäisch* system. As presented they seem further away from *alteuropäisch* than Rosenkranz's Hittite material. It is hard to know whether this is just a matter of selection, as to some extent it clearly is (e.g. *Dravanti* is not included, and his dissertation *Untersuchungen zu den altindischen Gewässernamen* (Freie Universität Berlin, 1951) is said (1953:216) to be of over 600 pages) or whether Brahmin linguistic consciousness led to active rejection of names on patterns not productive within Sanskrit.

<sup>24</sup> Length not marked, but deducible from non-levelling to *a* in Sanskrit. Whether *Vēdra* is the etymon of modern Wear is still debatable. Ekwall thought not. Elaborating a suggestion of Chadwick (1913:5–6), he posited a nicely *alteuropäisch* base \**Visur-* to account for what he took, rightly on the evidence presented, to be the normal OE from *Wūur*. Jackson (1953:429) points out that British medial *d* before *r* was weakened to *ġ*, and holds (p. 362) that 'Ptolemy's *Uedrā* appears still not to be ruled out finally as a candidate'. But the usual explanation in Old English words of the kind of fluctuation which occurs between *-īu-* and *-ī(i)-* in the forms for Wear is inconsistent carrying through of breaking before *h* + consonant. British *s* normally becomes *h*, which actually is present in the accepted etymology for Tweed (note 72 below), the only other river in whose name such vacillation occurs. So either British *d* before *r* in the Durham area became something Anglo-Saxons heard as nearer *h* than *ġ* or some version of Ekwall's variant name has after all to be posited, with (presumably on the Old English side) metathesis of the *u* and *h*. Both alternatives seem too contrived to be convincing.

should be formed on Celtic words explicitly underlies the statement by Jackson (1955:154) that Thames and its cognates are more likely than not non-Indo-European, quite the least reliable thing that great Celticist ever wrote. Ekwall was usually aware of the relevance of particular Continental names, even as far as the *Tamasā* flowing in to the Ganges (1928:405), but compared formations of names individually with words that resemble them, not as a system. Thus he follows Holder in interpreting Thames as 'dark river', commenting that 'the name shows the *s*-suffix so commonly found in derivatives from the root *teme*-. Cf. Skr. *tamasā* "dark", *tāmisra*- "darkness", Lat. *tenebræ*, Lith. *tīmsras* "dark red", *tamsūs* "dark" &c.' In Pokorny's presentation of *tem(ə)*- it is quite clear that *temes*- was the normal form of that root. The hydronymists, whom I think we must follow, deny the *s*-suffix more significance here than for other roots on Krahe's list, and derive Thames from a root *\*tā*- 'to melt, dissolve, flow', from which incidentally Pokorny derives a Welsh word *tawdd* that according to my dictionary means as adjective 'molten' or as noun 'dripping' (Evans & Thomas 1963). Either Jackson disbelieved that or he was nodding more than we thought. I take it from the connotations of the Welsh word and from ones in other languages given by Pokorny that this as against other words for 'flow' was specially applicable to muddy rivers! In this instance the referential meaning given by the hydronymists is not very different from Ekwall's, but theirs yields some gain in both internal precision and external accuracy. The Thames where not polluted by industry is not a particularly dark river, but in its lower reaches it is conspicuously muddy. The strategic importance, and difficulty, of finding a good crossing there has engaged the attention of successive conquerors. It conditioned the siting of London. It may well have taxed the minds of those Indo-European-speakers who first named the river.

Ekwall's etymologies for *alteuropäisch* names altogether bear a variety of relations to those of the hydronymists. Of twenty-three numbered heads<sup>25</sup> in Nicolaisen's German article five seem not to generate river-names in England though they do in Wales and

<sup>25</sup> Adopted in the following footnotes to facilitate cross-reference to plentiful early forms given by Nicolaisen (1956:225–263) for rivers which not being English are not in Ekwall.

Scotland.<sup>26</sup> Of the eighteen that are represented, if you define etymologies in terms of what cognates they involve, Ekwall anticipates the hydronymists' for pretty well half. But much less often does he agree with their watery semantics, when he does it tends to be reluctantly, and he characteristically refers fewer rivers to a single root than they do. For one group alone, the English rivers Don,<sup>27</sup> he wholeheartedly shares their view: the etymology from *\*dānu-* had already received its classic statement from Förster (1924). Ekwall is tentatively with them for Deerness (Co. Durham), ending 'Whatever the etymology, there is sufficient evidence of a river-name Ness', and the rivers Soar, for which he thinks Holder's derivation 'may do' but does not take any alternative seriously; Tyne and Till he agrees to have 'the general meaning "water, river"'<sup>28</sup> but gives no hint of the hydronymists' connection with the Thames group.<sup>29</sup> He offers their root as one of two alternatives for the Herefordshire Arrow and for the Wyre in Lancashire,<sup>30</sup> definitely rejecting the link with the latter

<sup>26</sup> 5 *\*av-* 'spring, watercourse' Ewenni (Glam.), the same as *Aventio* of the Ravenna Cosmography (Rivet and Smith 1979:260–261 remark on how much the *alteuropäisch* etymology improves on those previously offered);

8 *\*uer-* Farrar (Inverness);

11 *\*aq̄-* 'to drive' Aeron (Cardigan), Eye Burn (Aberdeen), Eye Water (Berwick), and possibly others in Scotland;

18 *\*ner-* 'to dive, penetrate' Nairn;

21 *\*sindh-* Shin (Sutherland) as well as allegedly the Shannon.

<sup>27</sup> 13 Don (WRYorks), Don (Lancs), Don (Durham). The Wiltshire Don, which Nicolaisen includes with the group, Ekwall appears to ascribe to back-formation from the place-name Donhead, though his phrasing is ambiguous. The Scottish river Don is agreed to be from the stem in rivers Dee *Dēva* 'divine'.

<sup>28</sup> 15 *\*ned-* 'wet' as in Inverness, to which Nicolaisen would add Neden (Gwent);

20 *\*ser-* 'to flow' Soar (Warks to Trent), Soar Brook (Warks), Sor Brook (Oxon), Sor Brook (Gwent), Sark (Cumb.), Sarke (Gloucs);

22a *\*ti-* Tyne (Nhb), Tyne Brook (Herefs), Tyne (East Lothian), Tynebeck (Craven), Tindale Tarn (Cumb.), Till (Nhb), Till (*Lincs*), to which Nicolaisen might add Tiel Burn (Fife);

22 is *\*tā-/tə-*, the Thames group.

<sup>29</sup> Which looks to me to find more support than the general meaning does in the fact that most of the particular cognates quoted are words for liquid filth in various languages.

<sup>30</sup> 4 *\*arg-* 'silvery, shining', to which Nicolaisen adds three rivers Ariannell (Denbigh, Herefs, Gwent) and an Arannell (Gwent) as well as Eiriannell (Anglesey), Ranallt (Glam.), and six (*Yr Annell* (3 Brecon, 2 Carm., 1 Pemb.), whose numerosness presumptively favours this root over Ekwall's alternative *\*(s)perg-* as in Welsh *eira* 'snow';

9 *\*ueis-*, *\*uis-*, given as meaning 'to flow, dissolve', but surely something more specific. With the wider cognates given by the hydronymists, including Latin *virus*, Greek *ίός*,

of rivers Wey and Wye which was standard in his day but which modern hydronymists do not definitely uphold.<sup>31</sup> Aire and Ure he refers both of to the same root as they do (Tovar 1977 map 1) but ascribes it to a different part of speech, and takes the two names' different forms as reason to interpret them differently from each other.<sup>32</sup> Likewise for the Worcestershire Arrow, Earn (Somerset)

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Irish *fí* 'poison', Welsh *gwyar* 'blood', etc., one would guess connotations of suspended sediment and/or poor drinking quality; if Mann's division of cognates is right, disallowing those just quoted but leaving Hittite, Welsh, and German words for meadow or pasture, the connotations would be fairly definitely of *overflowing* into water-meadows. Ekwall's alternative for the Wyre is the root *\*uiǵ-* 'to bend' as in English *wicker*. OE *wīcan* 'to yield', Skr. *vijáte* 'recoils, runs away', on which he adds characteristically 'the Wyre is certainly a very winding river.'

<sup>31</sup> Wey (Surrey), Wey (Dorset), Wye (Derbys), Wye (Wales); Nicolaisen adds possibly Wymott Brook (Lancs), not considered by Ekwall, and Wye (E. Kent), which Ekwall (1928:452) thought 'there is no reason whatever to take ... to be an old river-name', but which may well have been if Nicolaisen (1956:238), following Krahe's (e.g. 1962:10) interpretation of some Continental names, is right to take *Medu-* in Medway as 'middle', since the simplest frame of reference to make it a 'middle Wey' is between the Surrey Wey and Kentish Wye. (But if there was an early tribal division between *Ur-Men* of Kent and *Ur-Kentish Men* it may just have been a Wey that was politically in the middle.) The alternative interpretation 'mead' suggested by spellings OE *Meodu-* etc. might be etymologically genuine referring to texture or colour, or sweetness of water as Ekwall (1928:286) thought, but given the muddiness of the Medway that seems considerably less likely than that Nicolaisen's etymology is right and the OE spellings represent merely folk-etymology. Ekwall refers to the rivers Wey and Wye to the root *\*uegh-* 'to carry', which seems eminently suitable for the famously navigable river Wye (or the Wey in a craft as small as in Kipling's *Just So Stories*, even if it was not 'ten times bigger then') and might also fit one that in spate is conspicuous for flotsam. Ekwall's conclusion that 'the meaning ... would be the general one of "running water" or the like' is both an unnecessary cop-out and implausible.

<sup>32</sup> 10 *\*eis-*, interpreted by the hydronymists 'to move fast or violently'; Aire < *\*Isara* (= Isère etc.), Ure < *\*Isura* (Aldborough on it is *Ἰσοῦριον* in Ptolemy). 'It would be somewhat remarkable if the names Aire and Ure should have the same meaning and yet go back to different forms' (Ekwall 1928:428). The name Aire Ekwall calls 'identical with Gk *ἰερός* "strong, mighty", Skr *isirá-* the same, also "fresh"; Ure he suggests 'should be rather compared with Gk *ἰερός* "holy"', the same word as before taken differently. Nicolaisen suggests that the second elements of Findhorn (Inverness), Auldearn (Nairn), Hernin (Carm.), and maybe Stathearn Burn (Perth) go back to an *-n-* extension of *\*Isara*.

The rivers Exe and Axe, Romano-British *Isca*, and Usk whose Welsh form *Wysg* shows it to have had a long root vowel which could regularly derive from *\*Eisca*, may well represent a different extension from two grades of the same root. (Both grades give rise to formations of the Isère type.) Ekwall and most writers equate short-vowelled *Isca* with OIr *esc* 'water', from a root *\*pid-* 'to gush'; any such association is likely to be secondary, involving the same kind of folk-etymology as the *\*Drav-* and *\*Arg-* names discussed above. The hydronymists' root he allows as a possibility for

and Erme (Devon), he agrees about the first, offers various possibilities of differentiation for the second, and gives the third a different derivation altogether.<sup>33</sup> For Rye there is agreement about meaning but disagreement about roots.<sup>34</sup> He disagrees about Amble (Corn.), ascribing it to the same root they agree on for Amber (Derbys) and Gamber (Herefs), the same as foam-born Aphrodite.<sup>35</sup> For all of Yealm (Devon) (one of the names in *Al-*), Hayle (Cornwall) (one of names in *Sal-* also mapped by Tovar 1977 map 4), Newerne (Gloucs), and names the hydronymists put with them, he both disagrees and invokes a larger number of roots.<sup>36</sup> So he does

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the long-vowelled name(s), though preferring the alternative of irregular phonetic development within Welsh; Rivet and Smith (1981:377) would make that within late British. Either seems preferable to Pokorny's fishy etymology elaborated by Hamp (1984:130–132 etc.); the Usk is not famed as a trout river!

<sup>33</sup> Nicolaisen's 3 \**er-*, Mann's \**or-* 'to start up' (transitive or intransitive); Oare Water (Som) and Ayre are agreed to belong with the Arrow; Nicolaisen would add Armet Water (Midlothian) Arnot Burn (Kinross), Ernan Water (Aberdeen), and following Förster (1941:846) Ore (Suffolk), held by Ekwall a back-formation from Orford. Ekwall thought Yarrow (Lancs) possibly identical with this Arrow or possibly with Garw (Glam), = Welsh *garw* 'rough'. For Arrow he cites cognates including Skr. *árvan(t)-* 'running, swift' and *árna-* 'surging', leaving open which of the two is the sense. For Earn he cites a largely different set of cognates including 'Germanic \**arnia-* "lively, energetic" (in Gothic *arniba* &c.),' English *run*, and Skr. *arṣati* 'runs, flows', whose extended root \**eres-* he thinks likely to underlie the particular form, though 'a derivative with an *n*-suffix from the root \*(*s*)*per-*, on which see FROME, may also be thought of. The possibilities being many, a definite etymology cannot be suggested.' Nicolaisen's definite equation with *árna-* seems preferable; its sense would suit the Arrow well enough, and presumably also the Earn in the days before draining of the Levels, though typically of hydronymists Nicolaisen holds back from such an exact suggestion. The Erme Ekwall held most likely to be English, therefore from *eormen* 'vast', therefore a back-formation from the place-name Ermington. 'I have no suggestion to offer, if the name is pre-English.' That of the hydronymists is very much preferable.

<sup>34</sup> 19 \**reġ-* 'to water' Rye (WRYorks), Rye Water (Ayr) added by Nicolaisen, possibly Ryburn (WRYorks) and Rye (Sussex); Ekwall makes the root \**rei-* 'to flow' in Lat. *rivus*, OE *riþ* 'small stream', Skr. *rití-* 'stream', and the name possibly identical to a Welsh stream Rhiw flowing into the Severn, if that is not named from *rhiw* 'hill'.

<sup>35</sup> 2 \**am-* 'channel' for Amble, with which Nicolaisen puts OE *Amalburna* (Suffolk) more confidently than Ekwall, who is even less enthusiastic about alternatives; Amber and Gamber represent the \**ñbhros* of Latin *imber* 'shower', Greek *ἀψρός* 'foam'.

<sup>36</sup> 1 \**el-* 'to flow, to stream' Yealm (Devon) for which Ekwall, finding nothing in Celtic, guesses an adjective parallel to Latin *almus* 'kindly, bounteous', Allow (Cornwall), Alaw (Anglesey), which he sees as 'sounding' streams, comparing Welsh *alaw* 'music', or failing that 'beautiful' after a sixteenth-century Welsh glossary, and the large group in *Alaun-*, Aln (Nhb), Alham (Suff.), Ayle Burn (Cu./Nhb), Ellen (Cu.),

for Carrant, discussed in detail below, and Nidd; as for the root to which they ascribe that, he denied that it exists.<sup>37</sup> The Norfolk river Ant Ekwall did not think really has a river-name at all.<sup>38</sup> As we have seen, he did not anticipate the hydronymists' view of the Thames group nor my bringing Derwent into their *Dravant*-group.<sup>39</sup>

one Allen (Corn.), four Welsh rivers Alun (Gwent, Glam., Flint, Pemb.), Allan (Stirling), Ale Water (Roxb.), to which Nicolaisen adds another Ale Water (Berwick), Allander Water (Dumbarton), possibly Allan Water (Roxb.), and Ekwall citing divine and personal names as well as place-names similarly formed concludes 'Some meaning such as "holy" or "mighty" would give a suitable starting-point';

7 \**sal*- 'current, stream' Hail (Gloucs), Hail (Hunts), derived by Ekwall from \**sal*- 'dirty, sallow', Shiel (Inverness), Shiel (Ross), Nant Heli (Montgomery), Halai (Mont.), Halen (Carm.) added by Nicolaisen, and a number of tidal rivers explained by Ekwall as from \**sal*- 'salt' which Nicolaisen admits cannot be excluded, Hayle (Cornwall), Hayle (= Camel estuary, Corn.), Hail (= Helford, Corn.) – one would say they are too close together all to have had the same name, and 'salt river' for the large Hayle is the likeliest of the three;

15 \**nebh*- 'mist, spray' Nevern (Pemb.), mentioned but not explained by Ekwall, Naver (Sutherland) added by Nicolaisen together with possibly Newerne (Gloucs.), thought by Ekwall a back-formation from a place-name Newerne and not to be brought into connection with the Pemb. name.

<sup>37</sup> 17 \**n(e)id*- 'to flow', whence \**nidā* 'flowing water', Nicolaisen's etymon for Neth (Cornwall), Welsh Nedd = Engl. Neath (Glam.), and the second element of Glasney (Corn.), that or something similar for Nidd. Ekwall allows IEur \**net*- (Mann's \**notis*) as a possibility for Neth, but would prefer 'to derive the name from a British word corresponding to OIr *necht* "clean" like the Scottish names Nethan (Lanark) and two Nethy, though admitting phonetic difficulties which on the standard view, as he admits, would exclude that; yet Jackson's detailed account of the crucial sound-change (1953:407–411) perhaps leaves the possibility open. He proposes connecting Glasney with Neth, but denies identity of Neth and Nedd irrespective of the etymology. For Nidd he considers several alternatives, bringing in Continental names *Nid(d)a*. 'Sturmfels, Ortsnamen Hessens, derives *Nidda* from a root *nid* "to roar, to flow" in Skr *nadā*, *nadī* "river". No such root exists. Very likely we may derive the name from the root *nei*- "to be brilliant", found with various determinants in Lat *niteo*, *nideo*, Mlr *niamde* "brilliant", W *nwyf* "vivacity". The meaning would be "brilliant river" or the like.'

<sup>38</sup> 12 \**antiā* 'end' (f. adj.), not an important river-naming element. Krahe (1955:1–5) found Continental instances mainly in the Lithuanian hydronym *Ančia*, but its reportedly great frequency does not fit such semantics. Krahe's following discussion overstates the extent to which words meaning 'boundary' occur as or in river-names, although there are some. It seems possible that this as a river-naming element arose by folk-etymological misdivision of some of the many names containing sub-participial *-antia*, and that Krahe's example 3 shows the process in action in the Alpine region in the Middle Ages. Ekwall judged Ant just a back-formation from the place-name Antingham, which seems at least as likely; the OE personal name *Anta* is well attested.

<sup>39</sup> I am surprised that it seems to have been left to me to do this in print (the link was made in lectures at Cambridge in the 1970s by Dr. G. P. Cubbin). Probably that is because of the element of analogy, which the mind-set of hydronymists almost as much as that of laryngealists seems to lead them to avoid.

The Indo-Europeanness of *alteuropäisch* names was obvious to Krahe and his colleagues from the beginning. Occasional attempts to prove otherwise depend on ignoring a lot of the evidence presented above and falsifying some of it. A recent such exercise, that of Vennemann (1994), parades a technical linguistic (specifically morphological) virtuosity that may mislead the unwary but lacks proper control in several directions. The collapse of diachrony already mentioned in the argument about suffix-combinations resurfaces in the guise of addition without documentation of many new items to Krahe's lists of *alteuropäisch* names, ignoring early forms that are documented, and unsignalled use of examples that are not river-names.<sup>40</sup> He thence admits to his stock of roots many that are not ancient substantive elements but German qualifiers, including apparently personal names (e.g. p. 248 and n. 50). I suspect this is commonly, as in one of the most glaring instances it certainly is,<sup>41</sup> a case of closely following Bahlow (1965), who, among

<sup>40</sup> E.g. *Segustero(n)* and probably others in note 15 above. When, rarely, he does document a name, Ammer, earlier *Ambra*, in Bavaria, from late antique and early mediaeval sources (n. 40), consistently attesting the consonant-cluster that shows it to belong to the root mentioned at the end of note 35 above, he arbitrarily rejects their evidence in order to fit a preconceived pattern of vowel-consonant alternation. Yet with names only attested in recent times he insists on projecting the quality of unstressed vowels back onto remote antiquity, not allowing the possibility that some might be phonetically conditioned in particular languages.

<sup>41</sup> The pair *Nagold* and *Singold*, from which he hypostatizes an ancient suffix *-ald-* (pp. 239, 258), even alleging it 'frequent' (p. 239), though the consonant-sequence does not occur at all in Krahe (1962:305–341). It is patent from the *g* in both that they do not contain any such thing but are much more recently-formed compounds. *Nagold*, eighth-century *Nagalta*, is in Baden-Württemberg, *Singold* according to Bahlow (1965:449) is a tributary of the Wertach west of Munich, attested as *Singalta*. They are to be taken with the *Sinkel* in Bavaria, attested in the eleventh century as *Sinckalta* (Förstemann 1913–16:II.ii 736). That compound has *kalt(a)* 'cold (stream)' as its substantive element. Förstemann (I 1628) cites ninth-century *Smalecalt* from Thuringia as a clear parallel, *Nagalta* and eleventh-century *Langalta* as more doubtful parallels. *Langalta* seems clear enough; simplification of velar consonants in a cluster like *-ngk-* is fairly routine. *Nagalta* is odd at first sight, but *Nagal-* 'nail' as first element in stream-name compounds is paralleled in German *Nagalbach* (Förstemann 1913–16:II.ii 364–365) and English *Nailsbourne*, so it is best taken as \**Nagalkalta* with haplogy. Vennemann's basic error is to ascribe 'Old European' date to a formation only found on the territory of one later linguistic group. His deplorable lack of references masks the extent to which, despite his rude words about Bahlow (1965), he freely follows him in taking 'some seemingly recent settlement-names [to] encapsulate old hydronyms' (pp. 224–225). The kind of excess that leads to (apparently his own excess, not apparently in Bahlow) is glaringly visible in *Isaman-ninga* near Munich cited as from a ninth-century source (p. 224). It is a German *-ing*

other flaws for which Vennemann (1994:224) castigates his 'poor philological scholarship', does not use asterisks. All this follows naturally from Vennemann's rejection in principle (pp. 225–235 *passim*) of all consideration of meaning before carrying out morphological analysis. That would at best render the methodology dubious, since (as wiser heads like Szemerényi have not tired of reminding us) semantic links are what justify positing etymological links in the first place; yet granting it for the sake of argument, it is then vital to have control of what is norm and what variation provided by observable frequencies in a large sample. But Vennemann ignores that. The undocumented additions to Krahe's names include ones radically at variance with the phonetic patterns in Krahe's, falsifying the relative frequencies of vowels<sup>42</sup> and the phonology of the suffixes which is central to his argument.

Krahe's segmentation *Al-ma-na* and the like is established by a great number of examples. Instances with a preceding suffixal vowel like *Med-ama-na* are rare and require to be explained as rarities; they do not at all justify Vennemann's systematic segmentation *Med-am-an-a* and the like.<sup>43</sup> On standard accounts of Indo-European,

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derivative much likelier to be from a German dithematic personal name in *-Mann* than from an old hydronym, and the first *a* in his hypothetical *\*Isamana* makes it strongly *unlike* the phonetic sequences presented by Krahe. Such augmentation of what Krahe approved as *alteuropäisch* creates a hybrid Aunt Sally much easier to knock down than Krahe's own version, and is obviously not valid methodology. None of the names in this note is in Krahe's own long lists (1962, 1964), which must be the starting-point of any fair linguistic appraisal.

<sup>42</sup> At least whether that is the reason or not, his statement that 'as Krahe's tables show' *e* and *o* 'are relatively infrequent' vowels and the three-vowel system of 'major suffixal vowels' *a/i/u* he derives from it are flatly false to the large amount of material in Krahe (1962:305–342), where *u* is clearly the least frequent vowel. It only occurs with some suffixes, and in general different suffixes have different vocalic possibilities, some open to explanation from general phonetics and many from Indo-European etymology. This constitutes the evidence which Vennemann (p. 231) denies exists 'to decide whether, e.g., *-an/-in/-un-* are ablaut alternants of the same suffix, three different suffixes, or something else'. It also shows as the complications with nasals do that Vennemann's segmentational analysis is at too high a level of abstraction to be valid anyway.

<sup>43</sup> Nor is his *a priori* assumption about uniformity of VC or CV segmentation across all suffixes justifiable anyway. It is really another Aunt Sally, to aid discarding 'representations such as "*-nā- (-no-)*" and "*tā- (-to-)*" which 'are precisely what Indo-Europeanists are accustomed to'. Custom seems to have dulled his awareness that that presentation is simply shorthand for saying that these *-n-* and *-t-* suffixes are productive in the *ā-* and *o-* declensions and not other declensions. Vowel-segmentation is accidental not essential. Vennemann's argumentation here sits ill with

e.g. Brugmann's (1886–92 vol. II), they are secondary phenomena, deriving from variants with sonant *ŋ*, *ɲ*, etc., which all the liquid and nasal suffixes had beside their consonantal versions. Vennemann's insistence on segmentation of the vowels as a first step rigs the probabilities against Indo-European in a way not acceptable when testing affinities of linguistic material for which Indo-European is known to be a candidate. Even discounting sonants, epenthetic vowels between voiced stops and following non-homorganic nasals are fairly common in languages! Vennemann should have chosen non-nasal suffixes, but then he could hardly have made his case. The purported account (pp. 235–242) of other aspects of 'the language of the Old European toponymy' is largely an elaboration of the invalid initial analysis, with some curious explaining away of similarities to Indo-European and *a priori* rejection of vowel-quantity (pp. 241–242) and of the possibility of historical change in the accentual system.<sup>44</sup> Vennemann is unsure too on the relations of name-systems to languages at large. He acknowledges only in passing, in a subordinate clause, room for doubt 'if the toponyms are indeed characteristic of nouns in general' (p. 235); he argues about accentual systems and root vowel frequencies entirely on the assumption that they are, which in this material, as I shall show, is highly unlikely. Yet he imports (pp. 233–234) strangely restrictive *a priori* notions of what it was possible for ancient people to notice in place-names.<sup>45</sup> Still Vennemann deserves thanks for supplying what

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a rather distastefully repeated insistence that his is a 'linguistic analysis . . . which is in accordance with the methods of general morphology' (pp. 228–229), an accolade he denies Krahe's.

<sup>44</sup> His argument that the hydronymic language had initial accent through its (±pre)-history (pp. 245–246) is circular. The *a priori* assumption of constancy of accentual type over millennia is on the evidence of known languages implausible anyway. Making it again rigs the probabilities against Indo-European, in which the choice is between believing in a minimum of two or three distinct accentual régimes in the long period of the reconstructed language (Szemerényi 1972:141 may insert a third before the two of 138; Lubotsky 1988:181 definitely posits three, following a work of Beekes 1985 which I have not seen). Likewise the 'speculation about word order' (pp. 252–253) betrays ignorance of actual changes in the history of e.g. insular Celtic. Compare particular points addressed in notes 68, 74, and 75 below.

<sup>45</sup> That early peoples made more distinctions than their successors, and more than earlier generations of scholars attributed to them, has been the message of English place-name studies in the last thirty years, epitomized perhaps best by Gelling (1978, 1984). It is all the more extraordinary, and quite unacceptable, for Vennemann (pp. 233–234) to reject *a priori*, as 'modern-feeling' and too specific, etymologies of

had been a gap in the literature and showing us what a seriously worked up attempt to analyse the *alteuropäisch* linguistic material as non-Indo-European would look like. It is reassuringly much less coherent than the traditional Indo-European versions.<sup>46</sup>

General Indo-Europeanness does not exclude the possibility that some particular formations may have been wrongly so ascribed. This is most likely to be true of rare ones. But attempts in the literature to prove even minor *alteuropäisch* elements really non-Indo-European have been conspicuously unsuccessful. Tovar's (1977:18–21) attempts to do so for ones in the Baltic area in his map 8 were refuted by Schmid (1977:315–316), who showed that though the particular etymologies of Krahe attacked by Tovar were not right, the first and third have lexical cognates within the Baltic languages – Tovar's names from Basque etc. are therefore simply not equivalent – and the second does in other Indo-European languages, including Welsh *cadr* 'strong', Celtic *catu-* > W. *cad* 'battle'. Tovar's forms here, or some of them, may just possibly want adding to Continental material used in Rivet and Smith's (1979:302–304) discussion of the name Catterick, earliest attested (in Ptolemy) as *Katouraktónion*.<sup>47</sup>

More interesting to my mind is the possibility that some originally alien words were absorbed as major elements into the Indo-European naming-system. Tovar (1977 map 7) adduced one

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Krahe involving adjectives of colour and position – which are among the commonest qualifiers in Old English place-names (Kitson 1993:34–41), and may well have been so in much earlier times. Compare note 79 below. The fragments of etymology from Basque produced out of a hat as it were by Vennemann at a late stage of his argument (pp. 260–262) are not a convincing substitute, not least because of collapse of chronology again. He does not properly meet the objections of Dr. R. L. Trask in his n. 82 on his 'determiner' suffix, and the derivative suffixes he mainly invokes are usually seen as being at least to some extent borrowed from Celtic in which they do have a convincing internal history (Russell 1988, esp. 165–169, and refs.). Vennemann's phrasing 'always' (1994:261) ignores scholarly debate to which Russell (1988:166) gives references.

<sup>46</sup> This goes too in my opinion for the palaeontological theories which Vennemann reveals (pp. 215, 263, etc.) effectively underlie his linguistic ones – in effect a new kind of autochthony since time out of mind. He propounds an axiom 'Toponyms are rarely changed, they are merely adapted' (p. 264), which known history ancient and modern of migrant conquerors shows to be untrue. 'Since they all spoke closely related languages' (p. 263) begs large questions, made more explicit, if not necessarily answered, in Kitson (forthcoming).

<sup>47</sup> An attractive new etymological suggestion by Hamp (1993:119) would however dissociate these from Catterick.

plausible candidate. This one has plenty of examples in Britain, in rivers Carron, Carrant, and the like, though one must say Tovar's symbols are not very accurately placed. He offered it as non-Indo-European altogether, but that won't do, since Schmid (1977:316) pointed out that there are a whole row of Baltic examples Tovar missed; anyway what would speakers of a Mediterranean language be doing naming places in Norway? Yet it remains true as Tovar (1977:19–20) says that *\*kar(r)a* 'rock, crag, tor' is 'a standard example' of Mediterranean vocabulary; and it is not necessarily true that the root to which Nicolaisen (1971:95) after Krahe assigns it,<sup>48</sup> that yielding English 'hard' which Mann's dictionary gives us IEur. *\*kordhos*, *-us*, ever existed in that sense without the dental consonant. How you evaluate this depends on your idea of Indo-European. If you operate with the loose notion of roots and extensions in the standard dictionary, Pokorny's, the hydronymists' etymology looks acceptable; if you prefer the discipline of exact hypothesis as in Mann's dictionary, which will never be standard partly because he died before he could index it,<sup>49</sup> it does not.<sup>50</sup> The two dictionaries tend to opposite kinds of error; either is a salutary corrective to unthinking belief in the editorial choices in the other. Pokorny's approach on the whole fits better the early stage of Indo-European from which much in the river-naming system must originate, Mann's, the late stage directly reconstructable from descendant languages; but Mann's handling of the evidence is the

<sup>48</sup> 14 *kar-* 'hard, stony'. Rivers listed by Nicolaisen more or less identical with the Gloucestershire Carrant are three Carron (Stirling, 2 Ross), two Carron Water (Stirling, Kincardine), Burn of Carron (Banff), to which he adds Carrot Burn (Renfrew), White and Black Cart Water (Renfrew). Carey (Devon), Cary (Somerset), Ceri (Cardigan), Ceri (Radnor) Nicolaisen derives from the same root via a formation *\*karisā*; Ekwall was less sure whether to posit for them adjectival derivatives of the British etymon of Welsh *caru* 'to love' or of the root *\*ker-* 'to move, run' found in Latin *currere*, Welsh *cerdded*.

<sup>49</sup> Though one must warn to a man whose life's work was 'to avoid the German fault of overloading etymologies with irrelevancies, the French fault of trimming the evidence to achieve a neat pattern, and the Anglo-Saxon fault of being content with approximations' (Mann 1987:viii).

<sup>50</sup> The only serious evidence for it would be if Greek and Indian words in *karkar-* meaning 'harsh, rugged' are as Pokorny thought reduplications of this root; but they and words like Skr. *karkaṭah* 'crow', which he nevertheless would connect with them, seem much likelier to belong as Mann thinks with a separate onomatopœic root *kark-*, to which some 'normal-grade' words in *kerk-* seem also related. The balance of probability thus is that words for 'nut' etc. also beginning *kar-* are as Tovar (1977:20) and Mann take them likewise separate from 'hard'.

more convincing in this case. Personally I am inclined to agree with Ekwall that, for the majority of these river-names which are *-nt-* formations, any nominal root is unlikely. As we have seen, he explained the Gloucestershire Carrant as 'friendly, pleasant stream' from the etymon of Welsh *caru* 'to love' (1928:70). That base is available for Indo-European, but I doubt if it would be used in names so widely. I prefer to see this river-name as being, as so many are, a reflex in *a* of the *o*-grade of a root in *e*, namely here *\*kē-* 'to cut'. The reference in the case of the Gloucestershire stream will be to cutting new channels after flooding. It runs through flat muddy country for which Nicolaisen's etymology is wildly inappropriate, to a confluence at Tewkesbury, the flood capital of England; substantial parts of its length show two or three parallel courses even on the one-inch Ordnance Survey map. The other rivers in *Car-* do seem mostly to be in the kind of rocky country Nicolaisen's etymology envisages; maybe there something to do with cutting gorges or glens would be in order.

#### IV

'Old European' river-names have furnished evidence of a newly direct kind in the long-running dispute about the so-called *Urheimat* or 'original homeland' of the Indo-European-speakers. As is well known, a case to be taken seriously has been made for three, albeit argued often less on evidence than on romantic preference for what one's ancestors should be. An origin in roughly Poland and Germany is preferred by those who like autochthony since time out of mind, in roughly Rumania and Bulgaria by those who like precocious urbanism, in the steppes north of the Black Sea by those who like vigorous migrating tribes brandishing battle-axes at effete sedentary folk. The three candidates are conveniently mapped by McEvedy (1967, map for '4500 B.C.'). The Pontic steppe hypothesis has been most believed in the English-speaking world because of energetic advocacy by two ideologically motivated archaeologists, the Marxist Australian V. Gordon Childe between the wars and the Lithuanian-American feminist Marija Gimbutas in recent decades;<sup>51</sup> but on a dispassionate view of the archaeology it is the

<sup>51</sup> Childe emphatically acknowledged himself an 'exponent of Marxist prehistory' (1949[1979]:93). A late paper of his outlines the part played by Marxist theory in his early reasoning on the 'Aryan cradle'; regrettably I have not been able to verify the

weakest of the three. Evidence of loan-words into proto-Finnish from the very earliest stages of proto-Indo-Iranian tells also strongly against it: were the Pontic steppes the homeland of all Indo-European proto-Finnish should not have been in contact with the easternmost dialects until after however long it took for the rest to complete their migration into Europe.<sup>52</sup> On the traditionally used linguistic evidence, words for flora and fauna reconstructable for the parent language, of which there are surprisingly many (e.g. Thieme 1958:72, 1964:596), the north-central European hypothesis is the strongest and the Balkan hypothesis weakest. Variants of the latter propounded in recent years, in Anatolia by Lord Renfrew who likes precocious farming, and in the Caucasus by Thomas V. Gamkrelidze who likes glottalic consonants as used in Caucasian languages, are not serious contenders.

The contribution of river-names to this argument is that in Europe south of the Baltic and north of the Alps and Carpathians, between roughly the Rhine in the west and perhaps the Don in the east, *all* ancient river-names are etymologically *alteuropäisch*. At least so say the hydronymists, and river-names in the area have been so intensively studied, and attempts to overturn the assertion have been so conspicuously unsuccessful, that I think we must take it as established. Further south and east, as well as west, some names are non-Indo-European. Those who believe in place-names as an index of Viking settlements or Jackson's river-name areas as a guide to that of the Anglo-Saxons<sup>53</sup> will think it a fairly obvious inference that the homogeneously *alteuropäisch* area was inhabited by people of *alteuropäisch*, that is Indo-European, linguistic stock before the surrounding areas were. It agrees pretty well with maps that get drawn from distributions of flora and fauna.<sup>54</sup> This aspect of river-names has yet to receive the general acceptance which is its due,

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documentation while preparing this article. Marija Gimbutas as far as I know did not thus openly admit modern ideology as a factor in her modelling of the (±pre-)Indo-European past. All the same, critics such as Sergent (1982), though not impartial, seem right to have identified it as one.

<sup>52</sup> See discussion of Harmatta (1978) in Kitson (forthcoming).

<sup>53</sup> Or comparable things in most European countries.

<sup>54</sup> Compare Kilian (1988)'s schematic pl. 5, fleshed out in the shading on pl. 66 (repr. Mallory 1989:255) with Mann (1943:76) or the version of that by Kilian (1988 pl. 4), or more schematically Thieme (1958:70).

partly because Krahe himself did not recognize that his etymologies entailed Common Indo-European antiquity for them; partly because W. P. Schmid, who did, has combined that recognition with theories making his own speciality, Baltic, the centre of everything; partly because hydronymists don't deign to produce anything so vulgar as a clear map of the area or a clear list of which names around it they grant as non-Indo-European;<sup>55</sup> partly because of reluctance by general linguists and archaeologists dealing with something so emotive so remote in time to attach as much weight to the evidence of place-names as they do to the kinds with which they are most familiar. I weigh the details of the different kinds of evidence, and their interactions, at length in a companion paper (Kitson, forthcoming); suffice it to say that on available evidence the north-central European *Urheimat* is in my opinion the only reasonable working hypothesis, and that those who would still argue for another need to find convincing explanations why the *prima facie* implications of *both* river-names *and* flora and fauna should be wrong. They are not convincing so far in their attempts to explain away either, much less both.

Granted at least approximately an *Urheimat*, and knowing approximately from linguistic reconstruction the early metal-using, mixed-farming, horse-drawn-wagon-riding, village-dwelling level of culture, then, on the null hypothesis usually adopted of rough correspondence between large archaeological and linguistic groups in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we should be able to identify with fair probability the material culture(s) whose bearers were speakers of Common Indo-European. The only material culture of the required level with a requisite spread across both western and eastern Europe is the one called either Danubian or

<sup>55</sup> Vennemann (1994:266) quotes gossip to the effect that Krahe was actively antipathetic to mapping. This quirk is of a piece with the incongruity between Krahe's inclusion of Sanskrit river-names in his detailed analysis (1925a:1-3, cf. page 89 above) and his theoretical construct of *alteuropäisch* as a product only of western stocks, not Common Indo-European. Of course his followers have produced many maps, including such fascinating constructs as that of Udolph (1981:60); yet the finest cartography, that of Schramm (1973), serves linguistic categories not fully viable, and that symbolizes a curiously negative correlation between good maps and whole vision which still seems to persist in the hydronymic literature. One feels too the lack of any introductory monograph for non-specialists. Krahe (1964) is not fully enough focused on *alteuropäisch* or (despite its title!) even on river-names, and is aimed too exclusively at a German public.

after its ceramic decoration Linear Pottery (or often German *Linearbandkeramik*), lasting for most of the sixth and fifth millennia B.C., and I echo archaeologists who have taken the linguistic evidence seriously<sup>56</sup> in thinking that the material culture essentially corresponding to Common Indo-European. It is possible using their maps of it<sup>57</sup> to construct a proto-dialect map for Indo-European of a higher level of internal consistency linguistically than the constructs of scholars without particular archaeological evidence such as Schwarz (1951:206 + map 3), though it should be stressed that only at the south-eastern end is there positive reason to believe in the essential continuity of the sub-groups concerned as individual entities from these prehistoric times to their historical appearance.

The main successor cultures, Funnel Beaker and Globular Amphora in the fourth millennium and Corded Ware in the early third,<sup>58</sup> would also belong linguistically to Common Indo-European rather than to any particular descendent language-groups, but it seems clear that they do *not* take in all the Indo-European-speakers of their periods. Funnel Beaker and Globular Amphora do not spread as far as Linear Pottery did east, south, or west; Corded Ware and associated groups spread east and south but not west. The first successor culture centred in, or at least overlapping with, the *Urheimat* that does spread significantly west is that of the Beaker People already mentioned, of the late third millennium. Bell-beakers are in fact the *only* archaeological phenomenon of any period of prehistory with a comparably wide spread to that of river-names in

<sup>56</sup> I would mention here János Makkay (1987, 1992), although he goes for a grandiose scheme involving all three *Urheimat* candidates. From the point of view of linguistic origins that is most implausible, and merely represents, as he freely admits (1992:193–194), a regress of one historical stage. His detail (e.g. 1987:174–178, 1992:207–209) implies the north-central European as the ultimate heartland.

<sup>57</sup> Most usefully I think Makkay (1987:74, 1992:195, 216) and Lüning (1988:156). Less interpretative maps include Piggott (1965:51) and Kilian (1988 pl. 12), more interpretative ones Piggott (1965:57) and Kilian (1988 pl. 13); N.B. contradictions between the latter at the eastern end! The map of house types (Clark and Piggott 1970:231) is of striking relevance, as is the very interesting one of early archaeological evidence for cattle by Benecke (1994:96), knowledge of which I owe to Dr. B. Maier.

<sup>58</sup> Funnel Beaker is mapped e.g. by Piggott (1965:63) and Kilian (1988 pl. 25 after C. J. Becker), it and Globular Amphora schematically by Mallory (1989:250); cf. Clark and Piggott (1970:86). Corded Ware groups are mapped by Kilian (1988 pl. 36) and Mallory (1989:247). To these and Linear Pottery the map of early evidence for wheeled transport by Piggott (1983:59) is also relevant.

the western half of Europe.<sup>59</sup> The presumption must I think be that Beaker Folk were the vector of *alteuropäisch* river-names to most of western Europe. Rivers in the base *Arg-*, which we have seen there is cause to think was not already in use at the earliest stage of the river-naming system, and which therefore should be associated with such a vector if one existed,<sup>60</sup> fit their distribution exceptionally well.<sup>61</sup> That they *were* a single-speech community can be asserted more confidently of the Beaker Folk than of most archaeologically identified groups for the very reasons that have caused archaeologists difficulty in interpreting them. As McEvedy (1967:28) put it, 'the *bell-beaker folk* march convincingly in every prehistorian's text, but they do so from Spain to Germany in some and from Germany to Spain in others, while lately there has been a tendency to make them go from Spain to Germany and back again (primary and reflux movements).' One 'firm datum seems to be that the British *beaker folk* came from the Rhine-Elbe region.'

This confirms what the long chronology now indicated for Common Indo-European would suggest anyway, and what to me, as remarked above, the rareness of non-Indo-European names in England suggests, that the old dissenting minority of Celticists were right to see the arrival in Britain of Indo-Europeans, as evinced in river-names whether or not in ethnic proto-Celts, as early as the third millennium. McEvedy's map of Beaker Folk identifies them

<sup>59</sup> Maps include Piggott (1965:101), Replogle (1980:166), Kilian (1988 pl. 38 after V. Gordon Childe), McEvedy (1967 '1850 B.C.'). To these should be compared an archaeological distribution, that of megalithic chambered tombs (Piggott 1965:61) whose linguistic correlates must clearly be non-Indo-European, and for 'directional trading networks' (p. 77 above) the one comparably ancient archaeological phenomenon that is certain to do with trade if any does, amber (e.g. Piggott 1965:138), with its converse Mycenaean finds and influences in northern Europe (e.g. Piggott 1965:136).

<sup>60</sup> Not necessarily exclusively: cf. *Ἀργάνη* in north-west India. If that comparison is valid despite the phonetic difficulty acknowledged in note 17 above, it confirms that the theme *Argant-* became productive in a sub-Indo-European dialect continuum of which proto-Indo-Iranian speakers were still effectively part, i.e. beginning presumably not later than the early third millennium – which would fit the Beaker expansion very nicely. The gap in the Globular Amphora-Funnel Beaker heartland will then be either because *alteuropäisch* river-naming was already complete there or because rivers there that were once called *Argant-* came to be called by the competing theme *Alb-* which remained productive longer as discussed above. The latter looks likelier.

<sup>61</sup> But for the gap mentioned in the preceding note where it overlaps the Funnel Beaker-Globular Amphora heartland.

linguistically with Celto-Ligurians, but in that his admirably tidy mind was, typically, a degree too tidy. Considerations of phonology indicate that more than one linguistic group was involved.

It is normal in reconstructed Indo-European for groups of related words not all to have the same vowel in the root syllable. The commonest vowel gradation is between *e*, *o*, and zero; *e* is the commonest vowel in root syllables, by so much that the *o* and zero of ablaut-related words are supposed to have arisen out of *e* in most instances, by what mixture of accentual patterns and combinative sound-changes is disputed. It will not have escaped readers' notice that the commonest vowel in root syllables of these river-names is *a*. It is routinely explained by the hydronymists as deriving from an Indo-European *o*-grade. That is in principle reasonable, since in many of the descendant languages original *o* and *a* have fallen together, usually as *a*. Another source of *ā* less generally recognized is the zero-grade of original long vowels (Burrow 1979); that is relevant to some of these roots<sup>62</sup> – it accounts for the Thames group for example – but will not do for most. Language-groups that level short *a* and *o* include Germanic and Baltic, Slavonic, Illyrian, Hittite and Indo-Iranian; but Celtic and Italic like Greek and Armenian preserve the original distinction.<sup>63</sup> It follows that Celts speaking normal Celtic sounds cannot have been wholly responsible for bringing *alteuropäisch* river-names to any area. It would seem to follow, as Professor Nicolaisen has consistently urged, that in Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Italy, where the only historically known early Indo-Europeans were speakers of non-levelling languages, they were preceded by speakers of levelling languages not historically known. This hypothesis, pretty well *required* by the linguistic evidence, finds so good an archaeological correlate in the Beaker People that I think it would now be flying in the face of the evidence not to accept those as bearers of the river-names to these countries. Not the first in all parts of Gaul, and not necessarily the first in all parts of Britain, depending on how you relate such archaeological

<sup>62</sup> And notably to more basic words for water, since as Pokorny (1959–69:I 23) points out OE *ægweard* 'ocean-watch', *ēagor* 'river-bore, ocean flood' and ON *Ægir* a sea-god imply \**Ēkuiós* and the like beside \**akuā*.

<sup>63</sup> Meillet (1937:98–100) is fuller on this than Szemerényi (1989 §IV.1). All the levelling is to *a* except in Slavonic to *o*: hence river-names like Oder < \**Adara*, with the occasional early form in *A*- (Krahe 1962:305).

phenomena as the Windmill Hill culture of the late fourth and third millennium<sup>64</sup> to the western end of Linear Pottery earlier; but to the fairly large extent that these river-names over western Europe are a single system implying a single speech-community, the Beaker Folk must be that community and the people essentially responsible for the system.

What the late Professor C. F. C. Hawkes called in British archaeology 'cumulative Celticity', built up by successions of comparatively small tribal migrations, will then have operated on the linguistic side as well. That the predecessors of the Celts proper for so long had in most of Britain been people of similar Indo-European speech explains why there is not a significant survival of recognizably non-Indo-European river-names, and why the few serious candidates for non-Indo-European among recorded place-names all seem to be in Scotland. That the river-names kept their north European non-Celtic phonology will be because the Celts proper took them over *as* names, with denotative not fully lexical meaning. The contrast with a stratum in the names of historical Pictish kings, such as *Usconbut*s and *Bliesblituth* which no-one would dream of trying to etymologize as Indo-European,<sup>65</sup> deserves emphasis. Royal personal names were presumably felt to be bound up with ancestral identity in a way which river-names were not. Island-names and tribal names are likely to have fallen somewhere between the two. Again the candidates for non-Indo-European cluster in Scotland;<sup>66</sup> but their apparent

<sup>64</sup> Mapped e.g. by Piggott (1965:58) together with Chassey-Cortailod. What these cultures were linguistically is very debatable. McEvedy's (1967) map for '2250 B.C.' marks Windmill Hill as Indo-European, Chassey-Cortailod not. The yardstick for judgement there is relation to the material culture of Linear Pottery; not all archaeologists would put the two on opposite sides of the fence. Various kinds of linguistic hybrid might well also be applicable.

This is a convenient place to remark that the dates on McEvedy's maps are not homogeneous. He used historical dates where available, otherwise radiocarbon, but that involves unevennesses not appreciated in his day. '2250 B.C.' means if I have got the calibration right (Pearson 1987) *c.*2900/2800 in most of the map outside Egypt; '1850 B.C.  $\approx$  *c.*2300/2200 in the operative parts, '4500 B.C.' between 5500 and 5000.

<sup>65</sup> Commented on by Jackson (1955:145). The names, with manuscript variants some gross (this similarity to the data of note 4 above may be significant), are conveniently set forth by Chadwick (1949:7).

<sup>66</sup> The tribal names *Taexali* in Aberdeenshire and *Creones* in north Argyll, the island-names *Ebudae* the Inner Hebrides and (*H*)*Aemodae* or *Acmodae* likeliest the Shetlands if not just scribal corruption of *Ebudae*. Of these *Creones* looks Indo-European in form even if Rivet and Smith cannot etymologize it.

phonology is sufficiently close to Celtic to raise serious doubt whether what is in question is not just exotic non-Celtic Indo-European. Rivet and Smith's (1979:463–464) comments on *Taexali* give an idea of the possibilities for several. Nothing in the recorded river-names is of as exotic phonology even as *Taexali*.

These examples make the point that the correspondence between language and ethnicity is not only not the same in names as in ordinary vocabulary, it is not even the same in different name-registers. It would be possible to apply that principle a stage further back and construct hypotheses whereby the bringers of *alteuropäisch* river-names to Britain were after all in their ordinary speech proto-Celts. For this to be true one or both of two things would be necessary. One is that this river-naming was in use earlier among the northern and eastern Indo-European sub-groups that levelled *o* and *a* than it was among the ancestors of Greek-, Celtic-, and Italic-speakers. The relatively high degree of survival of these roots at the Indo-Iranian end would then only partly connote earliness of origin, in addition area of origin within Common Indo-European. The phonetic feature of *a* in *o*-grades in river-names would then have spread dialectally *pari passu* with the river-name types themselves. The other possibility is the phonaesthetic one that the vowel *a* was felt especially suitable for water-words. This is not as silly as it sounds, because it would grow out of what Meillet (1937:99) has said of Indo-European *\*a* in general 'la voyelle *\*a* se trouve notamment dans des mots de caractère populaire, technique, ou affectif.' Popular, technical, and affective: river-names might simultaneously be all three. There is probably a thesis to be written on phonaesthesia in Indo-European water-words. It is notable how not only most of the river-names but also most of the lexical items on relevant roots have vowels other than *e*. Whether your point of comparison in the ordinary vocabulary of Common Indo-European is the word for 'water' in its more flowing manifestations *\*akyā* or the more general substance *\*wodōr*, it is rather full of back vowels!<sup>67</sup>

The possibilities of non-Celts, dialectal mix, and phonaesthesia are not mutually exclusive: you can have various combinations of the

<sup>67</sup> An original nominative *\*wedōr* is assumed in most of the theories canvassed by Szemerényi (1972:159) to explain the variation in this heteroclitic word; but if real its lack of visible reflex in descendant languages is likely to mean it was levelled out of the paradigm early.

three. But I think non-Celtic Indo-European-speakers are likely to have been involved in fact, whether or not they are the whole story, both because that it is the hypothesis which makes best sense of the archaeological evidence (the greater population density of a farming culture than a hunting-gathering one is likely to have led to the linguistic strain of the westmost group of Linear Pottery predominating in the mixed cultures which sprang from that and its mesolithic neighbours) and because it is widely accepted that place-names in the Low Countries imply the existence of at least one group of not historically attested Indo-European-speakers,<sup>68</sup> not the same as the ones we are concerned with.<sup>69</sup> So do names in Spain, another country where the only historically attested early Indo-Europeans were Celtic. Comparing Spanish *alteuropäisch* names with British ones gives a glimpse of the dialectal range that must have characterized the Beaker phenomenon. Either group shares one feature with historical Celtic that the other lacks. The Spanish names like Celtic proper mostly keep Indo-European *o*. There the diagnostic feature is initial *p* (Schmoll 1959:93, 78–80; Rodríguez 1980), lost from Celtic and the *alteuropäisch* of Britain.

Whether the first *alteuropäisch* river-namers in this country were non-Celtic Indo-European-speakers or proto-Celts with a north European cultural package, one would like to be able to discover other names of theirs. Telling them apart from Celtic formations proper may never be a very exact science, except for the names revealed phonetically by *o*-grades in *a*; but there are some plausible pointers for some items. One might well expect the first immigrants to name the biggest southern rivers. The root *Sab-* in Severn forms some river-names in Gaul and Ireland as well as what is now a forest-name Savernake; but Rivet and Smith (1979:51) say 'No clear Celtic etymon is identifiable', so that is a candidate.<sup>70</sup> The *alteuropäisch*

<sup>68</sup> Kuhn (1962); cf. Meid (1984). One or other group of such people would be enough to explain the voiceless fricatives that surprise Vennemann (1994:243) in some names, which he does not exemplify, if any are as he asserts inexplicable from the known history of Germanic (and Gaulish) and their speakers. He is either naughty or ignorant to call his explanation 'the only one in existence' (p. 244).

<sup>69</sup> The common 'Nordwestblock' stream-naming element *\*apa* does not seem to be found in Britain, though the *\*ab-* of Welsh *afon*, Latin *amnis* is related to it as mentioned above, a relation not shared by neighbouring Germanic. The *-st-* suffix productive in 'Nordwestblock' names (at a later period than *\*apa* to judge by their distribution) is also not conspicuous in British ones.

<sup>70</sup> The new suggestion of Hamp (1988:7, 1990:139) is phonetically unconvincing.

etymon of Thames we have seen. That it was a non-Celtic rather than proto-Celtic name may be indicated by the unusual suffix-formation *Tamesis* paralleled in the Spey *Tuesis*, with which goes the Tweed whose name was something like \**Tuesetā*.<sup>71</sup> The *s* in these last two names may well be, as that in Thames may be, a suffix already present in the lexical base, but if so that strengthens the impression of connections with north European languages and Sanskrit rather than Celtic.<sup>72</sup> The geography of surviving names may give useful hints too. Nicolaisen (1976:177–178) lists fourteen different formations in the suffix *-no/-nā* in Scottish river-names, some in more than one river. That is one of the more productive suffixes in Krahe's (1962:296+) table, but it is remarkably rare in English river-names. Most that look as if they might contain it turn out either to have a Germanic etymology, or documentably different suffixes like *Alaunos* which we saw earlier, or to be formed on Celtic lexical items already containing *n*, like Leadon (Gloucs), Lidden and Lodden (Dorset) corresponding to Welsh *llydan* 'broad', or Teign derived by Ekwall from \**tagnā* etymon of Welsh *taen* 'a sprinkling'. When those categories are excluded the likely residue are only Devon (Leics/Notts), one of whose two possible etymologies would make it the same as the Scottish Devons; Lemon (Devon), Leam (Northants), Lymm (Lincs), Lympne (Kent) identical with the Scottish Levens; Olchon (Herefs); Roden (Shropshire); Seven (NRYorks); and Severn.<sup>73</sup> That there should be less than half as many in England as in Scotland is remarkable. This is not a function of Anglo-Saxon replacement of older names; the rareness is as striking within a purely English context. One would expect that for some considerable time in prehistory pre-Celts relative to Celts in Britain would have had a fringe position roughly like the Celtic lands relative to England now, or perhaps better the king's territory to Parliament's territory during the Civil War. Replacement at that

<sup>71</sup> Adapting the quite adequate etymology given by Ekwall (1928:423) slightly in an *alteuropäisch* direction.

<sup>72</sup> The base given by Ekwall's is \**teuā-*, \**tu-* 'to swell, be powerful' as in Sanskrit *tavās* 'powerful', *tavisi* 'power', ON *þjóstr* 'violence', Gothic *þús* (in *þúshundi*) etc.; cf. the Sanskrit and Lithuanian words cited in connection with Thames above.

<sup>73</sup> Also possible would be Duddon (Cu/La), whose etymology is not known, but it looks suspiciously like many Old English formations with qualifying elements *Duddan* and *Dudding*. Correspondence of Leen (Nt), Leon (He) with Welsh *lliant* 'flood(s)', and of Loddon (Ha/Brk), Loddon (Nf)?, Lodon (He) with Gaelic *lòn* 'marsh', suggests that *n* was in their etymons.

stage might produce the observed distribution. There may be other explanations that would work here, some perhaps better, but I draw attention to this as a phenomenon that at any rate seems to need explanation, and to the mode of argument as one that may uncover chronological distinctions in some cases. Most of the formations in question have adequate Celtic roots, but most would have been available in neighbouring dialects as well, and some of the formations are paralleled on an *alteuropäisch* scale. The Lymne group, commonly etymologized from the Celtic word for elm, are one of them. Some may individually be so formed, but I think the Celtic tree-meaning is likely to be as secondary with that group as it is with the Derwents.

## V

Some typologically minded linguists (e.g. Vennemann 1994:244–252 and refs., Kuiper 1995:72–76) have used the great frequency of *a* as compared to *e* in the river-names as a pretext for holding them not Indo-European at all. That without examination of possible causes is not a reasonable objection, especially given the similar frequency in relevant lexical items, and in linguistics as in other subjects people who operate on that level of abstraction, whether motivated as structuralists or deconstructionists, tend not to be convinced by anything so mundane as detailed evidence; yet I think the hydronymists' failure to address the objection even if the objection is unreasonable is one reason why they have made so little impact in English-language scholarship.

The prevalence of *o*-grades over 'full' or 'normal' *e*-grades has in fact a perfectly rational explanation. One is accustomed to think of names as nouns; and perhaps this has been assumed for *alteuropäisch* river-names by the hydronymists as well as by their opponents. But from an Indo-European morphological point of view the most economical explanation of them is as not nouns but adjectives. The simple consonantal suffixes are all and only those productive in Indo-European adjectives; the complex ones are those used to form participles (which of course are a kind of verbal adjective) and superlatives. This is a decisive point against Vennemann's view (1994:33) that 'the suffixes themselves do not look particularly Indo-European', even on his premiss admitting to

the argument only ‘their phonetic substance – the meanings are unknown’. Indo-European explains which suffixes do not occur as well as accounting for those that do.<sup>74</sup>

Stress in adjectives as in other parts of speech was levelled variously according to the accentual types of the descendant languages (Lubotsky 1988:15 etc.), but it is likely that all the main kinds of adjectives, including all those represented in river-names, were originally accented on the suffix (Hirt 1921–37:V §§173–177). So in an adjectival subsystem operative since early in the history of Indo-European the vowel-grades appropriate to reduced stress would have been normal.<sup>75</sup> Zero-grade is less common than *o*-grade, but it is represented, e.g. in the *Is-* of names like Aire, Ure, and Isère.

Suffixal stress in adjectives may well have been a function of the suffixes not of the adjective category as such (Lubotsky 1988:1–2), so that explanation for the vocalism could still apply, though less tidily, if the river-names were after all primarily nouns, with suffixes like *-nt-* which become exclusively adjectival only in a secondary stage in their development. Adjectival origin is still indicated by other aspects of them for which it offers rational explanations where the previously existing hypotheses as far as I can see do not. Adjectival nature explains why variants with *-i-* occur freely, indeed preponderantly, with the two suffixes that are solely participial, and only those: they are not nouns directly formed from participles but derivative adjectives analogous to Greek *ἰσοούσιος* ‘being of one substance’ besides feminine participial *οὔσα*, just ‘being’. It explains<sup>76</sup> why despite the well-known fact that Indo-European used

<sup>74</sup> Either Vennemann’s Finnish inventory (p. 233) or what he more seriously argues for, the Basque one (pp. 255–262) should generate suffixes that do not occur, e.g. surely a voiced *-g-* (p. 260) if the hydronymic language were seriously related to Basque on his account of it. Additional weaknesses of his argument are that he does not present (or point the reader to) a whole picture of the suffixal inventory of any one language, nor of the group he argues for as a whole, nor does he discuss what in his favoured language-group the suffixes actually observed in the river-names would mean. Nor of course does his hypothesis yield any explanations for observed frequencies such as those furnished by Indo-European participles (p. 82 above).

<sup>75</sup> It is again naughty of Vennemann (1994:244) to call his laryngealist explanation ‘the only kind of explanation that I know’. At least he does not quite go so far in his laryngealism as to posit a proto-Indo-European in which the vowel *a* never existed, as Kuiper does.

<sup>76</sup> If explanation is needed. The preponderance of dithematics in early recorded personal names is well known. I do not know a frame of reference of early enough

dithematic forms in proper names from the beginning, as well of course as in lexical items including adjectives, the river-names are always monothematic with derivational morphology confined to extensions. The absent second theme is a noun always implied, never expressed.

The implied noun meaning 'running water' would be normally \**akwā*: that even explains the great preponderance in the hydronymy of feminine *-ā* over masculine *-os*. Lines of explanation starting from theories of the origin of the *ā*-declension as such fail to carry conviction;<sup>77</sup> nor is help to hand from ancient mythologies, in which masculine river-gods as well as feminine nymphs are prominent. Adjectival derivation using these suffixes explains why the river-names are restricted to these two declensions to an extent that would be surprising in a random sample of Indo-European nouns this large; the only exceptions acknowledged by Krahe (1962:296) seem to be the rule-proving ones of consonant-stems in *-nt-*, though there are *i*-stems in Britain.<sup>78</sup> All this tends incidentally to strengthen the view expressed in connection with names like Thames above that the great number of roots translated more or less interchangeably 'flow' by the hydronymists originally meant distinguishable kinds of flowing.<sup>79</sup>

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recorded geographical names other than river-names to make it quite certain that the restriction to extended monothematic form is an aspect of river-names as such not shared by geographical names in general. That the class of names with which, in the absence of other early enough recorded geographical names, river-names are most often compared, divine names, did from earliest times include dithematic formations (whether or not close compounds) is however demonstrated, by Jupiter; and the balance of probability must be that geographical names did as well.

<sup>77</sup> Of those canvassed by Szemerényi (1972:153–154; cf. 1985:9–20) the only one the river-names would fit is that of Gagnepain (1960) that nouns in *-ā* were originally substantives formed from adjectives.

<sup>78</sup> *Tamesis* Thames, *Tuesis* Spey, perhaps *Tuerobis* (?) Teifi and *Toesobis* (?) – see note 4 above. Krahe's (1962:329) *Māpis* alias *Māpissos* in Illyria looks a good candidate to be put with these. That pair of forms and the relation of *Tuesis* to \**Tuesetā* Tweed might raise possibilities of consonant-stems being reinterpreted as *i*-stems; *n*-stems, if there ever were any, might like *-nt-* stems have had their stem-consonants reinterpreted as suffixes, and there might be rare *u*-stems not possible to tell from *o*-stems with the extant material. But reinterpretation of *-nt-* stems if early and of the others if real presupposes a sense that river-names ought to be restricted to the *o*- and *ā*-declensions; and however much one explains away the other declensions the preponderance of *ā*-stems can do with explanation.

<sup>79</sup> As one would anyway suppose on general grounds. 'People of a more primitive period have a richer and more varied vocabulary for the natural objects with which

Names that aren't nouns but adjectives are not an unparalleled concept. Krahe (1964:24–25) actually pointed out some German monothematic river-names that are formally adjectives. He thought them a more recent stratum than ones that are nouns, but no compelling reason for belief in such a chronological distinction is apparent. One at least of his names, Low German *Lude*, dates back as a type to before the Anglo-Saxon settlement of England, since it corresponds to OE *Hlyde*, name of some dozen known streams in England. Ekwall (1928:273) following earlier writers thought fit to 'assume an OE common noun *hlyde* with the meaning "torrent, swift stream".' Were it really a common noun attestation only as a river-name would be unlikely. This is another place where Krahe's analysis improves on Ekwall's.<sup>80</sup> Conversely *i*-mutation consistent in the Old English modifies Krahe's for this name, showing it to be not identical with the lexical adjective *hlūd* 'loud' but an *i*-derivative of it in the manner of the ancient names. I should prefer to see Krahe's adjectival names as just the most recent of a stratum continuously present in the onomasticon since ancient times.

Be that as it may, their mere existence clinches the illegitimacy of ignoring overwhelming evidence for Indo-Europeanness of river-names because they do not fit preconceptions about phonetics of Indo-European nouns. The linguistic material of the *alteuropäisch* river-names is Indo-European, and they must be analysed rationally on that basis. I trust that I have somewhat advanced that analysis in the above.

*School of English,  
University of Birmingham,  
P.O. Box 363,  
Birmingham B15 2TT*

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they come into contact, than people of a later era. The various words probably denoted streams of different size, swiftness &c.' as Ekwall (1928:1) put it. Compare note 45 above.

<sup>80</sup> In Ekwall's favour it should be said that several charters use phrasing 'the *Hlyde*' with definite article, unusually for Old English river-names. But they are concentrated in the south-west midlands, and a more likely analysis than Ekwall's would be that Hwiccean dialect was reinterpreting the inherited river-name as a noun. A real possibility too is phonaesthetic fashion: a stream-name *Hyle* in Gloucs S414(i) also has the definite article.