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River terminology

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the broad tracks traced out by the hoofs of mountain sheep, show that here the wild animals feel secure amid an abundance reserved for their exclusive use. Birds of prey are plentiful. In the rocks just above our house a pair of vultures had their sleeping-place, and we could see them going to bed every evening at six o'clock.

Before our return we paid a short visit to the plains of the Oxus. Dr. Krafft was called home, so there were only my wife and myself. The villages become more and more well-to-do as one approaches the low lands. We pushed on as far as Parkhar, in the beautiful and idyllic plain of the Sayat river, a branch of the Oxus. Here we have a pleasing combination of pasture, park, swamp, and impenetrable jungle. Every pool is the abode of numerous water-fowl, and the reeds swarm with pheasants. The tracks of the tiger are frequently seen, but I waited four consecutive nights without getting a shot: the decoy goat always refused to bleat.

Returning to Safet Darya we found a snowstorm raging in the Yakh Su valley, and the Russian Colony buried in snow. These signs of approaching winter warned us not to delay our start. On 4th November, therefore, we left, following our previous route as far as Akrobat. Here we struck northwards, and travelled by way of Shahr-i-ziabs and Kitab to Samarkand, thus bringing to a close a most enjoyable and instructive journey.

RIVER TERMINOLOGY.

By RALPH RICHARDSON, F.R.S.E., F.S.A.Scot., Hon. Secy. R.S.G.S.

ONE of the first things which attracted and demanded the attention of Man must have been his supply of Water. Sources, streams, rivers must often have been the object of his search, the subject of his study, and they must have determined and defended his habitation, for without them he could not exist.

We may assume, then, that these most necessary objects acquired an importance from the earliest times, and we may reasonably look for the names bestowed upon them by primitive man being handed down to us in ever-changing forms from one generation to another.

As a proof of this, let us, by way of introduction, glance at the origin of the word *Water* itself. Strange as it may appear, it is derived from "the first vocal sound uttered by infants, the first audible sign of human life,"¹ and appropriately forming the first letter in the alphabet. As this vocal sound indicated the first sign of life in animated beings, it became also the first sign of aqueous life in the world which man inhabited. In other words, prehistoric man employed the vocal sound *A* to indicate "a source."

This vocal sound *A* may seem to many a singular one to apply to a

¹ Letter A in *Dictionary of the English Language*. By Charles Richardson, LL.D. New edition (1856).

"source," but it is to this day widely applied to much more than a source, viz., to a "river." The term *Aa* is the name of about forty rivers in Northern, Western, and Central Europe. There are in Switzerland alone no fewer than five rivers each bearing the simple name *Aa*, bestowed upon rivers generally by primitive man. There are also rivers of that name in Germany, France, Russia, and Holland, whilst we have our own *Ae* in Dumfriesshire and *Awe* in Argyllshire.

It is this term *A*, signifying "a source," which is the root term in our English word "water." Whilst the letter *A* signified water in its simplest form, *Aa* signified flowing water, and as we have seen, it is still employed in that primitive sense in the case of many rivers over a wide geographical area.

Our word "water" comes from the Gothic *wato* and Anglo-Saxon *water*, but the original *A*, signifying "a source," is its root term, as it is also that of the Sanskrit *Ap*, the Gothic *Af*, the Persian *Ab*, the old German *Aha*, the Latin *Aqua*, and the Welsh *Aw*, from which "expressive root are derived all words, in Welsh, implying fluidity or the motion or action of fluids."¹

Looking at River terminology in the light of representing an element essential to the life and wellbeing of man, it should not surprise us if we occasionally find instances of terms of rivers which we might classify as having a family resemblance.

As mankind spread over the globe, they would naturally bear with them terms for streams and rivers which they would apply as they discovered new rivers and streams in the course of their wanderings. These terms would necessarily greatly change with the lapse of centuries, just as the original word for "water," known to primitive man as simply *A*, has come down to us in the strangely enlarged and elaborated form "water."

But, just as from one letter which the word "water" contains, we can trace its origin back to the remotest antiquity, so possibly we may be able to classify certain river terms by recognising in their terminology some evidence of a common ancestor.

I shall endeavour in the following article to make such a classification, based entirely on philological and comparative geographical grounds, and I shall submit a few groups of rivers having a terminology which, I venture to think, may, on these grounds, be classified together.

The *first* series of river terms which seem to me to be capable of such classification comprises terms which are no doubt derived from a common ancestral form signifying "water," "a source," or "a stream," a form which, although it has now lost almost all resemblance to the *A* of primitive man, is yet as certainly derived from it.

Whilst keeping this essential root term in view, I have formed the first series of river terms by classifying those prefixed by the dentals D, T, and Th, all interchangeable according to Grimm's Law. I do not know the origin of this dental prefix of so many river terms, but it is interesting, is deserving of study, and is a peculiarity which furnishes at least a reasonable ground of classification.

¹ Dr. Pughe's *Welsh Dictionary*, edited by Mr. Pryce, 3rd edition (1866).

As examples of the passage of a non-dental into a dental form I may instance the Anglo-Saxon *ĕa*, signifying a river, passing into *stream* (also an Anglo-Saxon term), and the river term *Avon* (from the Gaelic *av* and Welsh *aw*, signifying "water"), passing into the river terms *Devon*, *Taw*, *Tavy*, *Devern*, *Treveryn*, etc.

As a general illustration of how dental prefixes came into use in terms containing the primitive *A*, and therefore expressive of "a source" or "water," I give the following table, it being remembered that the primitive *A* may, by transmutation, be represented by another vowel:—

A = Primitive term for "water" or "a source."

Ä = Swedish term for "a river."

Aa = River term in common use throughout Europe.

Ae, *Awe*, *Aare*, *Aray*, *Urr*, *Ure* = River terms in Scotland, Switzerland, and England.

Ēa, *Īe*, *Ē* = Anglo-Saxon terms for "a river" or "a stream."

Ab, *Atte* or *Atle* = Persian and Mexican (Indian) terms for "water."

Abh, *Aff*, *Avie*, *Aive*, *Av* = Gaelic terms for "water."

Abhuinn, *Amhuinn*, *Avon*, *Allt*, *Ault*, *Ald*, *Auld* = Gaelic terms for "a river" or a "stream."

Aw, *Gwy*, *Dyfr*, *Dwfr*, *Dwr* = Welsh terms for "water" or "a stream."

Dobur, *Tobar*, *Tiobart*, *Tiobar* = Gaelic for "a source," "a well," "a stream."

Donau (Danube), *Darya*, *Dee*, *Dart*, *Tay*, *Tiber* = Austrian, Persian, English, Scottish, and Roman river terms.

In the following sub-classification of the FIRST or dental series of river terms into nine groups, I have depended chiefly on phonetic and orthographical similarities, my desire being to bring together for comparison those river terms the similarity of which most readily strikes the eye.

The first group of the first or dental series comprises the following river terms, in which the ancestral *A* or an interchangeable vowel are visible:—

Tay, Perthshire.
Tagus, Spain (*Spanish*, el Tajo).
Tavy, Devon.
Taw, "
Tamar, "
Dane, Cheshire.

Thame, Bucks.
Thames, Middlesex.
Temes, Hungary.
Teme, North Wales.
Daer, Lanarkshire.
Darent, Kent.

In the second group of this series the river terms have prominently the vocal sound *ee* contained in the Anglo-Saxon *ĕa*, "a river or stream":—

Dee, Cheshire.
" Aberdeenshire.
" Kirkcudbrightshire.
" County Louth.
Dean, Forfarshire.
Teau, Staffordshire.¹
Eden, Cumberland.
" Fife.

Eden, Roxburghshire.
Tees, Durham.
Teirw, North Wales.
Tweed, Roxburghshire.
Teith, Perthshire.
Teify, South Wales.
Teviot, Roxburghshire.
Tiete, Brazil.

¹ Cf. Teign, Devon; Tyne, Northumberland and Midlothian.

In the *third group* of this series the vocal sound is a short *e* :—

Tet, South France.	Devern, ² Aberdeenshire.
Thet, Norfolk,	Devon, Clackmannan.
Test, Hants.	Derwent, Cumberland.
Ter, Spain.	„ Derbyshire.
Terek, Caucasias.	„ Northumberland.
Tern, ¹ Shropshire.	„ Yorkshire.

In the *fourth group* of the dental series I place the following river terms :—

Ticino, Switzerland.	Tinto, Spain.
Till, Northumberland.	Tiberis, Tiber, or Tibris (English
Tilt, Perthshire.	<i>Tiber</i> ; Ital. <i>Tevere</i>), Italy.
Timok, Servia.	

In the *fifth group* of this series are river terms the prominent vocal sound in which is *Don* or its allied forms :—

Don, Russia.	Dneiper, Russia.
„ France.	Dneister, Austria.
„ Aberdeenshire.	Tone, Somerset.
„ Yorkshire.	Tom, Siberia.
Donau, ³ or Danube, Austria.	Tummel, Perthshire.
Doon, Ayrshire.	Dommel, Netherlands.
Donetz, Russia.	Dombovitz, Roumania.

In the *sixth group* of the dental series the vocal sound *u* (long) is prominent, as in the Welsh *dwr* (pron. *dūr*), “water” or “a stream” :—

Dour, Fifeshire, and Kent.	Durance, France.
Douro, Portugal.	Douze, France.
Adour, France.	Tula, Mongolia.
Adore, „	Tura, West Siberia.
Stour : the name of 5 English rivers.	Twreh, North Wales.

In the *seventh group* of the dental series the vocal sound is prefixed by *Dr*, *Tr*, or *St* :—

Drave, Hungary.	Stolpe, Prussia.
Trave, North Germany.	Stör, Germany.
Dryfe, Dumfriesshire.	Stour, Suffolk.
Drôme, France.	„ Kent.
Dronne, „	„ Oxford.
Drin, Albania.	„ Somerset.
Drina, Bosnia.	„ Worcester.
Traun, Austria.	Stort, Essex.
Trent, ⁴ Staffordshire.	Strule, County Tyrone.
„ Derbyshire.	Struma, Bulgaria.
Treveryn, North Wales.	Stry, Galicia.
Tronto, Italy.	Styr, „
Stiffkey, Norfolk.	

¹ Cf. Erne, County Fermanagh ; Earn, Perthshire.

² Cf. Severn, Wales.

³ *Hungarian*, Duna ; *Slavonic*, Dunai.

„ North Yorkshire.

⁴ Cf. Tern, Devern, Severn, Treveryn, Derwent, Trent.

By means of these seven groups I have attempted to show that there is a large class of river terms which seem philologically allied, although often geographically far apart, a good specimen of this simultaneous propinquity and ubiquity being the term *Don*, which is applied to a river in Russia, to another in France, to a third in Aberdeenshire, and to a fourth in Yorkshire. It is impossible to believe that this frequent occurrence of *Don* as a river term is a purely accidental circumstance.

In the SECOND series of river terms we may perhaps detect the sibilant of the Sanskrit *sru*, signifying "to flow," the Gothic *aquos*, and the Gaelic *uisge*, both signifying "water," the German term for which, *wasser*, is likewise sibilant. I may add, as illustrative of the mutation of terms, that the Latin *aquae*, signifying "medicinal springs," became transformed in modern French, in more than one instance, into *Aix* (pron. *Ex*) as in Aix-les-Bains, etc. The following is a group of sibilant river terms:—

Seine, France.	Exe, Devonshire.
Senne, Belgium.	Esk, Forfarshire.
SVERN, Wales.	„ Dumfriesshire.
„ North Yorkshire.	„ Midlothian.
Saone, France.	„ Yorkshire.
Somme, France.	Usk, Monmouthshire.
Seim, Russia.	Usa, Russia.
Save, France.	Spean, Inverness-shire. ¹
„ Hungary.	Spey, ¹ „
Axe, Somerset.	Spree, Prussia.
„ Dorset.	

In the THIRD series of river terms the particle *ro* or *ri* predominates, and may be derived from the same root as the Greek *ῥέειν*, signifying "to flow," the other derivative forms being the Latin *rivus*, the old French *ru* and Spanish *rio*, all signifying "a river." As examples I give:—

Rhine, Germany.	Garonne, France.
Rhin, North Wales.	Dronne, „
Rhone, France.	Ebro, Spain.
Rion, Russia.	Roer, Germany.

Rhine and *Rhone* are British, as well as Continental aquatic terms. Lord Macaulay in his *History* (Chap. v.) remarks that in 1685 "when Monmouth looked upon Sedgemoor, it had been partially reclaimed by art, and was intersected by many deep and wide trenches which in that country (Somerset) are called *rhines*." Monmouth's army had to cross "three broad rhines filled with water and soft mud" named respectively the Black Ditch, the Langmoor Rhine, and the Bussex Rhine, the last of which proved disastrous. In his *Life of Marlborough* (Chap. i.) Sir Archibald Alison refers to the last as "the stream called the Bressex Rhine."

¹ Cf. Spa or Spaw.

These rhines were contiguous to villages of which, says Macaulay, "the names seem to indicate that they once were surrounded by waves," viz., Zoyland, Middlezoy, etc. Now, Zeeland is the Dutch province at the principal mouth of the German Rhine, and is divided by all England from Somerset, yet both it and Zoyland are the same term.

With regard to *Rone* or *Rhone*, it is defined in Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary* as "a spout for carrying rain-water from the roof," and is derived by him from the Swedish *raenna*, having the same meaning, and the modern Saxon *ronne*, a canal.

Finally, in order to explain my FOURTH and concluding series of river terms, I return to the statement with which this article opened, viz., that the earliest term for "a source" or "water" was simply *A*, and for "flowing water" *Aa*. Based upon this well-established proposition, I present the following list of river terms as probably derived from the term used by primitive man for all rivers, or for water in any form:—

Aa: about forty rivers in Europe bear this name.	Adour, France.
Ae, Dumfriesshire.	Adore, „
Awe, Argyllshire.	Adda, Italy.
Aare, ¹ Switzerland.	Alde, Suffolk.
Ayr, Ayrshire.	Alt, Lancashire.
Aire, Yorkshire.	Alt or Aluta, Hungary.
Aras, Armenia.	Almond, Perthshire.
Aray, Argyllshire.	„ Midlothian.
Aran, France.	Amoor, Siberia.
Aragon, Spain.	Alma, Crimea.
Araglin, County Cork.	Almo, Italy.
Arrow, Radnorshire.	Ale, Roxburghshire.
„ Worcestershire.	„ Berwickshire.
„ County Sligo.	Aln, Northumberland.
Avon, Wales.	Alne, Warwickshire.
„ Devonshire.	Alyn, North Wales.
„ Monmouthshire.	Alwen, „
„ Wiltshire.	Alwyn, Roxburghshire.
„ Gloucestershire.	Allan, „
„ Banffshire.	„ Stirlingshire.
„ Clackmannan.	Allen, Cornwall.
Avon, Lanarkshire.	„ Dorset.
Adige, Italy.	„ Wales.
	„ Northumberland.

I may add that the term *Almond*, for the rivers of that name, is a corruption of the Gaelic *Amhuinn* or *Avon*, derived of course from the primitive *A*, signifying "water." This *A* became the Latin *Aqua* and Spanish *Agua*, and hence we find the following Spanish river terms (the preliminary *A* being excised):—Guadalaviar, Guadalete, Guadalimar, Guadalquivir, Guadiana, Guadiaro, Guadiato, and we also observe the *agua* in Tagus, which is akin to the Scottish *Tay*.

¹ Cf. Urr, Kirkeudbright; Ure, Yorkshire.

In attempting to classify certain rivers on purely philological grounds and with the aid of comparative geography, I regret to have differed from the theories advanced by some well-known and justly celebrated philologists.

Thus, Professor Rhys derives the river term *Dee* from the Sanskrit *devi*, Welsh *dywyf* or *dywy*, and Irish *dé*, all signifying "a goddess," to whom, he is of opinion, the river was dedicated,¹ a theory which assumes that the name of "goddess" was bestowed on rivers found so widely apart as Cheshire, Aberdeenshire, Kirkcudbright, and Ireland. Full of Pantheistic enthusiasm, Professor Rhys exclaims:—"Every locality had its divinity, and the rivers were specially identified with certain divine beings: witness the streams that still bear the name of Dee, and kindred ones." Our poets especially invested the Cheshire and Welsh Dee with supernatural attributes. Milton referred to it as a "wizard stream," whilst Spenser apostrophised it as the

"Dee which Britons long ygone
Did call divine, that doth by Chester tend."

That the Welsh river term *Dee* should be derived from a word signifying "a goddess" is the more remarkable, as there are Welsh words signifying "water," which seem to have a prior claim. The Welsh terms *Dwfr*, *dyfroedd*, *deifr*, *dyfr*, or *dwr* signify "water," and are akin to the Armorican *dour*, the Old Gaelic *dobhar*,² and the Greek *ἵδωρ* (*hydōr*), all signifying "water." The town of *Dover* stands at the mouth of the rivulet *Dour*. *Dover* was the *Dwffyrtha* of the ancient Britons, the *Dubrae* of the Romans, and the *Dofra* or *Dofris* of the Anglo-Saxons,—all terms derived from the original *Dour*=water, which is represented phonetically better by the French *Doures* than the English *Dover*. The Kent *Dour* is synonymous with the Portuguese *Douro* and the French *Adour* and *Adore*, the two last containing both the primitive *A* and the Celtic *dour*.

Turning to another well-known river term, we find that the late Professor Veitch derived the term *Tweed* from the Cymric *Tywi*, signifying "a boundary,"³ and stated that he preferred this etymology to that of Colonel Robertson, who derived it from the Gaelic *Tuath-aid*, signifying "the river flowing to the north side."⁴ The latter also derived the river term *Dee* or *Deva* from two ancient Gaelic words, *Da-abh*, signifying "the double stream," that is, a river formed by two streams joining each other, adding:—"This old name *Dera* very strongly confirms the contracted use of the Gaelic word *Da* along with *eva*, that being the corrupted part of the word *avon* (properly *abhuinn*) for 'a river.'"

¹ *Hibbert Lectures* 1886, p. 117. *Lectures on Welsh Philology* (1879), p. 307. *Celtic Britain* (1884), p. 67. The Rev. James B. Johnston takes all the divinity out of the river term *Dee* by deriving it from the Gaelic *Dàbhadh*, signifying "draining."—*Place-Names of Scotland* (1892), p. 86.

² Hence *dobhran*, an otter.

³ *Letter to the Author*, and "Border History and Poetry" (1878), p. 50.

⁴ *The Gaelic Topography of Scotland and what it Proves* (1869).

Whilst the influence of his study of Celtic paganism may perhaps be detected in Professor Rhys's derivation of the term *Dee* from "a goddess," the fact that the Tweed separates two kingdoms may account for Professor Veitch translating it "a boundary," and Colonel Robertson "the river flowing to the north side." The proximity of the Don and Dee at Aberdeen perhaps makes the latter's derivation of *Dee* recognisable.

Again, Professor Veitch derived the river term *Teviot* from the Cymric *Teifi*, which, he said, signified "the spreading stream," although this is not an attribute peculiar to, or particularly characteristic of, the Teviot. Colonel Robertson objects to Cymric terms being employed to decipher Scottish river terms, and derives *Teviot* from the Gaelic words *Taobh-aite*, signifying "the river flowing at the side, that is, of the ridge or hill next it," which is not a very luminous description.

According to the theory which I have advanced in this article, terms such as *Dee*, *Tweed*, and *Teviot* belong to a large class of river terms found over a wide geographical area, and are all capable of being traced back to the root term *a*, signifying "water" or "a source," used by primitive man. That this vocal sound *a* may change into *ee* is proved by e.g. the Latin *canis* becoming the French *chien*, *pax* becoming the English *peace*, etc. In the leading Anglo-Saxon term for a "river" or "stream," *ea*, we find a blending of the original *a* and the long *ē* contained in such dental river terms as *Dee*, *Dean*, *Tees*, *Teau*, *Tweed*, *Teviot*, etc.

Thus taking six British rivers, and tabulating their variations, we may observe how, although their terminology varies in different localities, their common ancestry is apparent:—

Tay.	Aire.	Erne.	Dee.	Tern.	Tean.
Thame.	Aray.	Severn.	Devon.	Trent.	Dean
Thames.	Arrow.	Treveryn.	Devern.	Derwent.	Eden.

It appears to me that, except under exceptional circumstances, the origin of river terms must be looked for neither in religious nor political spheres. It must be based solely on philological and comparative geographical grounds; and if we recognise over a wide geographical area a number of river terms having a marked resemblance, then I submit we may conclude that these terms contain some primitive root term for "water," "a source," or "a stream."

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

MEETINGS HELD IN MAY.

On the 8th May, at Dundee, Mr. W. S. Bruce delivered a lecture entitled "Spitzbergen: Voyages with H.S.H. The Prince of Monaco." He also gave a brief account of his proposed Scottish Antarctic Expedition. Professor D'Arcy W. Thompson presided.