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WELSH *CHWANT* 'DESIRE' AND *TRISANTONA* 'RIVER TRENT' IN TACITUS

The article deals with the ancient name of the longest river solely in England, the Trent, flowing past Stoke-on-Trent and Nottingham to the North Sea. In a passage that has raised debate and led to a number of misinterpretations in literature, Tacitus recorded it as (emended) *Trisantona*, which has been explained from Old Irish *sét* 'course' and Welsh *hynt* 'path' as 'trespasser, one that overflows' (of a stream liable to flood). *Trisantona* or the like would be the name of other rivers, including the Tarrant in Dorset and Tarannon or Trannon in mid-Wales. Yet the interpretation 'trespasser' has grave phonetic and semantic defects. They are removed by a new etymology on the basis of Old Irish *sét* 'treasure' (Modern Irish *seoid*) and Welsh *chwant* 'desire' from hypothetical Common Celtic **suanto-*. The paper provides textual, historical and linguistic arguments supporting this etymological interpretation. *Trisantona* or (preferably) reconstructed **Trisuantona* (from **Tresuantona*) would thus (instead of 'trespasser, flooder') mean 'she of great desire, she who is much loved.' The implication is that the Trent (like the English rivers *Dee* 'goddess' or *Brent* 'she who is exalted') was regarded as a Celtic female deity, a passionate and perhaps dangerous entity.

Key words: Latin language, Welsh language, Celtic languages, *Historia Brittonum*, place-names, etymology, Tacitus, river Trent.

1. *Trisantonam*: Textual Critics

Compared with Russian rivers like the Volga (3,530 km), the Trent (298 km) is a minnow. It is nevertheless the longest river entirely in England. It rises in Staffordshire and passes Stoke-on-Trent, Burton-on-Trent, Nottingham, Newark, and Gainsborough to meet the Ouse, at which point the two become the River Humber. Although few poets have noticed the Trent (unlike the Thames), it figures in English novels. It is the “Floss” of George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), with Gainsborough as “St Ogg’s” and the river portrayed as a transport link for freight and people (including the protagonist and her suitor). In D. H. Lawrence’s *Son and Lovers* (1913), the same Trent (at Nottingham) features in an extended expressionist passage on the hero after his mother’s death. But what matters for place-name scholars is a far older literary reference, by the Roman historian Tacitus.

In book twelve of his *Annals*, Tacitus described events in 47–52 CE, when P. Ostorius Scapula governed south-east Britain. (The rest of the island was still independent.) Chapter 31 has an opaque reference to rivers, the passage appearing in the Oxford Classical Texts edition as “castris Avonam [inter] et Sabrinam fluvios.” Here “Avonam” is an emendation by Konrad Mannert (d. 1834) of the (unique) manuscript’s “antonam”; there are notes on a further emendation *ad Trisantonam* from F. J. Haverfield (d. 1919), and the use of obelisks by H. Furneaux (d. 1900) to denote corruption [see Fisher, 1906, 247].

Comments in the second edition of Furneaux make the above intelligible. Editorial “inter” is an addition proposed by Nicolaas Heinsius (d. 1681). *Sabrina* is the River Severn and *Avona* was formerly taken as its tributary, the Avon (of Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-Avon). But that yielded to another reading, with the manuscript’s “castris antonam” emended to *cis Trisantonam* ‘on this side of the Trent.’ Suggested by the Swedish numismatist C. G. Heraeus (d. 1725), it was cited in Franz Ritter’s edition of 1864; vigorously supported by Henry Bradley in two papers of 1883 for *The Athenaeum*; and again strongly approved by Furneaux and his editor H. F. Pelham [Furneaux, 1907, 97–98].

So one might think the problem solved. Scapula will have controlled territory south of the rivers Severn (flowing south-west) and Trent (flowing north-east). Yet new ideas always encounter inertia. A standard French edition merely reproduces Fisher’s text and the variants of eighteen years previous [Goelzer, 1924, 327]. Sir Ronald Syme (pointing out that “the Trent fits the military and geographical postulates admirably”) cited “cis Trisantonam” after Heraeus and Bradley, but also the texts of Haverfield, H. Fuchs, and H. Koestermann, all retaining “castris” [Syme, 1958, 394]. A Mexican editor now prints “castris <cis> Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluvios,” with *Trisantonam* identified as probably the River Trent, described as a tributary (originally called *Avon*) of the Severn [Tapia Zúñiga, 2007, 50, 109]. But the Trent is not the Avon; it was never called Avon; nor does it flow into the Severn. The text’s “castris” is a ghost, due

to misreading of *cis Tris-*. The correct reading is *cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluvios* ‘on this side of the Rivers Trent and Severn.’

2. Historical Comment on *Trisantonam*

The words of Tacitus made plain, we move from textual critics to historians. Despite (on the whole) following Bradley, some of them devise errors of their own. The context is this. Scapula on arrival in 47 CE took firm action (it was to help provoke Queen Boudica’s rebellion of 60 CE) within “the lands bounded by the Severn and the Trent”; an expression translating Henry Bradley’s emended *cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluvios* [Lloyd, 1911, 52]. That in mind, Collingwood devised a theory on Fosse Way, the Roman road running from Seaton (on the English Channel) via Bath, Cirencester, Leicester, and Newark to Lincoln. He took the highway as constructed to “hold down the entire country up to the Trent and Severn” after the tribes south of them had been disarmed [Collingwood & Myres, 1937, 91–92].

Bradley’s emended *Trisantonam* hence occurs on a map of Romano-British archaeology, which includes Fosse Way [Phillips, 1956]. Another map underlines the role of Severn and Trent as a political frontier in 47 CE [Rivet, 1958, 161]. A further map, of early medieval Britain, shows not only *Treonte* as by then the name of the East Midlands river, but *Tarente* as the old name of the River Arun, Sussex; *Terente* of the Tarrant, a stream in Dorset; and *Trente* as formerly used of a brook east of Evesham, Worcestershire [Phillips, 1966]. The last, unnamed even on large-scale maps, passes the village of Bretforton. Differing widely in character, these four water-flows have or had the same name. An intriguing fact. It has implications for meaning and form. The *-on-* of *Trisantonam* would not, for example, be an augmentative (as in Modern Welsh *gwrn* ‘great man’ and so ‘hero’), because the Worcestershire stream is tiny. If the Britons called it *Trisantonam*, that would be an adjectival form with no augmentative suffix.

As for Tacitus, his comments shed light on Roman strategy and military planning. Frere cited Collingwood on Fosse Way as a military *limes* or fortified boundary-line, relating it to Bradley’s “famous” emended “*cunctaque cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat*” or ‘he made preparations to occupy everything this side of Trent and Severn.’ Frere also noted Graham Webster’s criticism of Bradley and Collingwood, whose conclusions were hard to reconcile with the “temporary stage of consolidation” likely in Scapula’s time [Frere, 1967, 76]. Elsewhere are statements on reinforcing a frontier along the Severn and Trent in the year 47, the Fosse Way being “a line of communication in the rear” [Stevens, 1970].

Webster himself, clarifying the “serious repercussions” of Scapula’s decrees in 47 CE, gave the “famous, much disputed, passage” as “*detrudere arma suspectis cunctaque cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluxios <sic> cohibere parat*” or ‘he disarmed those suspect in the areas on this side of the rivers Trent and Severn’ [Webster, 1978, 59]. It compares

with a comment on the “inspired guess” of Bradley’s “cunctaque cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam” for the manuscript’s “cuncta <*sic*> castris Antonam et Sabrinam” [Jarrett, 1980, 23]. Bradley’s emendation was, however, the result of coherent reasoning, following arguments by Heraeus and Ritter. It was not a “guess.” Described later (and falsely) as the unemended original, “castris Avonam <*sic*> et Sabrinam fluvios” appears with citation of Collingwood on Scapula’s delineating a frontier by means of Fosse Way [Salway, 1981, 100]. Thereafter are comments on how Scapula “consolidated the country this side of Trent and Severn” and its results. Amongst them were the construction of Fosse Way; the revolt of subject tribes; and the granting of estates to Cogidubnus, philo-Roman king of Celtic peoples in what is now Sussex [Morris, 1982, 62].

On the original passage, one translator (speaking of a “small emendation” of the text) has “Ostorius prepared to disarm all suspects and reduce the whole territory as far as the Trent and Severn” [Grant, 1996, 265]. Another has Scapula preparing “to disarm suspect tribes and to hold in check the whole area between the rivers Trisantona (Trent) and Sabrina (Severn)” with a remark on this as “one of a number of possible interpretations” of the original Latin [Ireland, 1996, 53, 72]. Here “between” makes no sense. It represents the *inter* of Heinsius in the 17th century. It must be dropped. We say again, after Hereaeus (who examined the unique manuscript, in Florence) and Bradley, that “castris Antonam et Sabrinam fluvios” should be read *cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluvios* ‘on this side of the Rivers Trent and Severn.’

In a different setting, *Trisantona* and its equivalents are stumbling-blocks even now. Della Hooke, citing an archaeological paper of 1994 by Bryony Coles, takes *Trisantona* and *Trent* as perhaps meaning ‘a way through’ and thus indicating “non-local routes” for long-distance travellers. She admits the difficulties here for the minor brook formerly called *Trente* on flatlands east of Evesham, Worcestershire [Hooke, 2007, 39]. One sees why. It was scarcely a “way through” for anyone. Nor is this sense known from other Celtic river-names. Ten years later, in a paper which (one fears) is utterly unreliable on anything Celtic, she repeated the interpretation ‘strongly flooding one’ for *Trisantona* [Hooke, 2017, 44]. That ill-suits the Worcestershire stream. Detailed maps show it as little more than a ditch on a lowland plain. This slow brook could not flood anything strongly. Such are the dangers of defective place-name scholarship.

3. Philologists on *Trisantona* and Related Forms

We now turn from historians and archaeologists to philologists, whose concern is form and meaning (not events). We begin with Sir John Rhÿs of Oxford. He commented on how Henry Bradley of Cambridge in 1883 “happily conjectured” an emended “cunctosque <*sic*> cis Trisantonam et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat,” with Scapula keeping in check “all those who dwelt <*sic*> on his side of the Severn and the Trent.” In support of his argument Bradley had adduced the Trent’s Old Welsh name, given as *Tre(h)anta* [Rhÿs, 1904, 80].

On etymology, a first proposal came from Ekwall. He took the form as British *tri-* ‘through, across’ plus *santōn*, relating the latter to Old Irish *sét* ‘journey’ and Welsh *hynt* ‘road’; the sense would be ‘trespasser’ used of a river known for flooding [Ekwall, 1928, 417–418]. The derivation recurred in his influential dictionary [Ekwall, 1936, 457]. Despite criticism, it has been repeated ever since. There has been comparison with other English or Welsh hydronyms. In north Powys is the Tarannon or Trannon, a namesake of the Trent, so that Sir Ifor Williams derived *Tarannon* via hypothetical *Traeannon* from *Trisantona* [Williams, 1945, 36]. Also linked to Old Irish *sét* ‘path’ and Welsh *hynt* ‘course’ are the Gaulish tribal name *Santonī* and the divine name *Sentona* in a Roman inscription (at Rijeka, Croatia), the latter being understood as ‘wayfarer’ and allegedly denoting a sun-goddess [O’Rahilly, 1946, 295]. The mythology cannot be taken seriously. Nor is *Sentona* relevant to *Trisantona*. It is hardly Celtic, Istria not being (for one thing) a region settled by Celts.

Kenneth Jackson discussed *Trent* in detail. He related *Trisantona*, as also (genitive case) Ptolemy’s *Trisantonis* (the Arun of west Sussex, flowing past Arundel and entering the sea at Littlehampton), to Bede’s *Treanta* (the Trent) and the Old Breton personal name *Treanton*. He further linked the Arun’s later name *Tarrant* to that of the Tarrant in north-east Dorset (where it flows eleven kilometres to join the Stour near Blandford Forum), attributing the difference between *Trent* and *Tarrant* to metathesis, with *Tir-* for *Tri-*. Jackson added that *Tri-santona* is certainly a compound, as argued by Ekwall. On its meaning, he cited Ekwall’s comparison of the second element with Gaulish *Santones*, and an alternative explanation by Sir Ifor Williams. Jackson gave no details on the latter (indicating lack of confidence). Quite separately he discussed the development of British *su-* (in the 6th century CE) *hw-*, ultimately giving Modern Welsh *chw-*, as in *chwedd* ‘tale’ [Jackson, 1953, 524–527]. He further described the first vowel of *Trisantona* as a low and indistinct semi-reduced *i*, represented by the Romans as *i*. Up to the first century CE it would have been a long *ē*, the change being due to stress on the penult [Jackson, 1954, 82]. His reference to Old Breton *Treanton* deserves notice as regards meaning. While ‘trespasser, flooder’ might denote a stream that broke its banks, it would be an odd name for a man. Another sense is more likely.

Meanwhile, Ekwall’s ‘trespasser’ went its way, reappearing in the last edition of his dictionary, together with reference to the Tarrant of Dorset [Ekwall, 1960, 460–461, 480]. It is echoed elsewhere [Reaney, 1960, 72]. Margaret Gelling thereafter gave ‘trespasser’ as the meaning of *Trent* [Gelling, 1970]. Then came an important account of *Trisantona*, with a map of rivers called *Trent* or *Tarrant* or *Tarannon* or the like (including the brook near Evesham). Its authors took the first element as an intensive, meaning ‘most, very’ (differing from Ekwall’s ‘through, across’). Noting ‘trespasser’ for the second element, they yet cited Ifor Williams’s objection on how that requires a form in *e*, not *a*, and his preference for the hypothetical root *sem-* ‘to draw water’ of Latin *sentina* ‘bilge water; cesspool; dregs, refuse’ (a term which Roman orators applied to the mob). Williams extracted from that a sense ‘great pourer-out, strong

flooder, thorough drainer.’ It still does not explain the vowel of *-sant-*, and the entry ends on how “there must remain a considerable doubt about meaning and etymology” (scepticism which is to the authors’ credit). For the Arun of Sussex they recorded not only Latin *Trisantonis* after Ptolemy, but the readings *Mutuantonis* (variant *Mantuantonis*) from the 8th-century *Ravenna Cosmography*. They took its first syllable as a “garbled abbreviation” of “Fl” for *Flumen* ‘river’ [Rivet & Smith, 1979, 476–478]. Despite corruption, the *Cosmography* here preserves vital evidence. We shall return to it.

Doubts of Rivet and Smith notwithstanding, ‘trespasser’ and notions of flooding continued [Field, 1980, 178]. Old Welsh *Trahannon* for the Trent figures amongst “Wonders of Britain” listed in the 9th-century *Historia Brittonum*, with mention of the bore or “single wave, like a hill” in its estuary [Morris, 1980, 40]. The derivation ‘trespasser’ recurs in a popular dictionary [Room, 1988, 364–365]. So again (with the caveat “possibly”) in an Oxford book [Mills, 1991, 321, 334]. Coates acutely saw the Trent, like the Severn of Gloucester or Wear of Durham, as having a Brittonic name-form and not a pre-Celtic one [Coates & Breeze, 2000, 267]. David Parsons nevertheless calls *Trisantonis* (the Sussex Arun, formerly the Tarrant) the reverse of “straightforward” and perhaps not British at all [Parsons, 2000, 175]. The English Place-Name Society’s dictionary has translations (after O’Rahilly) ‘great wanderer’ or (after Ifor Williams) as ‘(one) flooding strongly, draining thoroughly’. Problems of the *a* in *-sant-* are yet admitted. There is mention too of the Dorset Tarrant, now curiously transported to Devon [Watts, 2004, 627]. The Tarannon or Trannon of mid-Wales then gained its own entry, with hesitant interpretations ‘great wanderer’ or ‘river likely to flood’ or ‘river of the goddess of the way’; misled by the Cambridge dictionary, its authors refer to a non-existent River Tarrant in Devon [Owen & Morgan, 2007, 462].

4. Clues from Irish *Seoid* ‘Jewel’ and Welsh *Chwant* ‘Desire’

Now for a fresh start. The vowel-history of Old Irish *sét* ‘course, path’ and Welsh *hynt* ‘course’ does not accord with the *a* of *Trisantonā*. Its second element may thus instead correspond to Old Irish *sét* ‘jewel, treasure’ and Welsh *chwant* ‘desire, lust, greed.’ These two are exact cognates, original *a* surviving in the latter. The initial would have been Indo-European and Common Celtic *su-*, as in Welsh *chwaer* ‘sister’ or *chwegr* ‘mother-in-law’ against Latin *soror* ‘sister’ or *socrus* ‘spouse’s mother’ [Morris-Jones, 1913, 135]. Old Irish *sét* gives Scottish Gaelic *seud* ‘hero; jewel’ [Calder, 1923, 41, 84]. The Modern Irish equivalent is *seo(i)d* ‘jewel, gem; pretty girl, pet’ [Dinneen, 1927, 1021]. Their British cognate (from reconstructed **suant-*) must have been a common word, because it was borrowed by Irish, occurring as *sant* (together with the native form *sét*) in early texts [Thurneysen, 1946, 572]. It gives Modern Irish *santach* ‘greedy; covetous, avaricious; intensely eager’ and Scottish Gaelic *sannt* ‘greed; covetousness; lust.’

Encouraged by this, we offer a new derivation for *Trisantonā* by reference to standard works. Welsh *chwant* ‘desire; lust, cupidity’ is from hypothetical Common Celtic

**suant-*, with *u* as a semi-vowel; *-on-* will be an adjectival suffix (not an augmentative, as in Welsh *gwron* ‘hero’ or *Rhiannon* ‘great queen’); and *tri-* is an intensive prefix related to Old Irish *tre-* and Welsh *trwy* or *try-* ‘through,’ all three from reconstructed Common Celtic **trē-* with long closed vowel [GPC, 841, 2647, 3634]. Relevant too is an observation on the meaning of *chwant*. It can be ‘what a man desires or hankers after’; or ‘the desire which is in the heart of the donor’ [Williams, 1968, 53]. Old Irish *sét* ‘trésor, fortune, richesse’ and Welsh *chwant* ‘désir’ are elsewhere derived from prehistoric Celtic **suanto-* [Vendryes, 1974, S-99].

How do these Insular forms relate to Continental ones? Nothing can be proved. *Santicum* (now Villach in south Austria) was a settlement in the Alps, but the meaning here is “uncertain” [Sims-Williams, 2006, 204]. Dr Isaac is quoted for a link with Old Irish *sain* ‘different, special.’ The Santones of the Saintonge region (between Bordeaux and La Rochelle, France) were on this reckoning the ‘separate’ or ‘special’ people; the British *Trisantonā* was a river which ‘separates’ by flowing ‘through’ [Falileyev, 2010, 30, 195]. Dr Isaac cites no parallel from hydronyms for the latter sense and the force of his analysis is hard to see. All streams in channels separate by moving through. His proposal is a bad guess.

5. Celtic Stream-Names of Love or Affection

In contrast is comparison of *Trisantonā* with Old Irish *sét* ‘jewel’ and Welsh *chwant*, each deriving from reconstructed Common Celtic **suanto-*. That permits (as noted) the meaning ‘she of great desire, she who is much loved or desired.’ It has many equivalents.

The British polemicist Gildas, writing in 536 CE, recalled how the Celts once “heaped divine honour” on wells and rivers. Quoting him, Watson listed Celtic goddess-rivers such as the Boyne of Ireland or the Don and Dee of Aberdeen, as also the burn at Arbuthnot (south of Aberdeen) called *Buadhnat* ‘little triumph’; it was “a holy stream possessed of healing power” [Watson, 1926, 211–212, 425, 446]. In a classic study, Thomas listed Welsh brooks known as *Câr*, *Ceiriog*, *Ceiro*, or *Ceri* (‘friend; beloved one, darling’) or *Serchan* (‘lover’); there is also *Sylltyn* ‘little treasure’ (cf. Welsh *swllt* ‘shilling’ from Latin *solidus* ‘gold coin worth 24 denarii’) east of Cardigan. They will enlighten us on *Trisantonā* and the Tarannon or Trannon (a tributary of the Severn upstream from Newtown, Powys), the latter figuring in a verse prophecy from the 14th-century *Book of Taliesin* [Thomas, 1938, 86, 125–126, 132–133, 197]. In Gaulish, the element *Caro-* ‘love’ lies behind the names of the Charente and Cher [Evans, 1967, 165]. Both are major rivers, the former entering the sea south of La Rochelle, the latter meeting the Loire at Tours.

There are other instances. The Marne, east of Paris, was known to the Gauls as *Matrona* (with the suffix *-on-*, here an augmentative, and the first vowel long) or ‘great mother’ [Mac Cana, 1970, 33]. She was the tutelary goddess within its waters

[Bromwich, 1978, 433]. Portchester, near the British naval base of Portsmouth, is recorded as British-Latin *Portus Adurni* [Gelling, 1978, 78]. The second word, obscure as it stands, can be emended after Welsh *eiddun* ‘desirable’ to *Adiuni* ‘of the much loved one’; it will have denoted a brook called *Adiunus*, entering Portsmouth Harbour immediately by the Roman fort [Breeze, 2004]. On the border of Cumbria and south-west Scotland is the River Sark, its name explicable from the Welsh hydronym *Serchan* ‘lover.’ It indicates a Cumbric form meaning ‘loved one’ in a good or bad sense; for Breton dialectal *serc’h* means ‘concubine’ [Breeze, 2008].

Rivers called *Ceri* or *Serchan* or (in France) *Charente* or *Marne* indicate a Celtic liking for hydronyms denoting female passion or affection. That fondness allows a rendering of *Trisantonā* as ‘she of great desire, she who is much loved or desired’ (like a Frenchwoman called *Désirée*). The first element will, as proposed by Rivet and Smith, be an intensive prefix ‘very’; the second is apparently a Latin version of reconstructed British **suanto-* ‘passion, love’; the third is best taken as a simple adjectival suffix (not an augmentative). If so, notions of ‘flooder’ for the Trent can be rejected. Like the *Matrona* or *Marne*, the Trent was thought of as feminine; like the *Ceri* or *Serchan* or *Sylltyn* of Wales, it was associated with love or desire. That also makes comprehensible the name of Treanton the Breton. He had nothing to do with floods. He was a man ‘much desired.’ Compare Latin *Desiderius* ‘desired one’ (as with the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus), or Slavic *Ludmila* / *Lyudmila* ‘beloved of the people’ (as with the heroine of *Ruslan and Ludmila* by A. S. Pushkin). The Trent, with its intimidating bore or tidal wave, might well be considered a passionate goddess. But the Tarrant of Dorset or the brook near Evesham were mild streams, and their names will denote mere affection, as with the *Ceri* or *Sylltyn* of Wales.

Three final points. As mentioned above, the Tarannon or Trannon of Wales figures in a 10th-century political prophecy, now examined anew [Haycock, 2013, 156, 167]. Despite editorial claims, however, this tributary of the Severn is not the *Trahannon* of *Historia Brittonum*. That will be the Trent, with its eagle or tidal wave. The poem is now translated by two bards (one a former Archbishop of Canterbury), who include a note on the Tarannon of Wales [Lewis & Williams, 2019, 149]. Like the Tiber “foaming with much blood” (*multo spumantem sanguine*) in book six of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, Welsh rivers might figure in verse to dramatic effect.

Second, an objection. Latin *Trisantonā* is derived from reconstructed British **Trisuantona*, earlier **Tresuantona* ‘she of great passion, she who is much loving, she who is much desired.’ Why, then, no trace of British *-su-*? Is it not essential for a link with *chwant* ‘desire’ from Common Celtic **suanto-*? We reply that it is there, but has passed unnoticed. We return to *Trisantonis* or the Sussex Arun, listed as *Mutuantonis* (variant *Mantuanonis*) in the *Ravenna Cosmography*. Rivet and Smith derived the readings from “Fl[umen] Trisantonis.” But this is hard to accept. *Mutuantonis* is surely from *Trisuantonis*. It is easier to derive “Mutua-” from “Trisua-” than from “Fl. Trisa-” (where two or three letters would have to be lost). The present etymology

also accounts for the *u* before *a*. If it is argued that *Ravenna*'s text is corrupt and that the *u* of *Mutuantonis* is thus no evidence for *Trisuantonis*, we can retort that the text of Tacitus is also corrupt. Hence monstrosities like “Boadicea” for *Boudīca* ‘she who is victorious’ [Jackson, 1971, 118]. The comparison is instructive. Just as Welsh *buddig* ‘victorious, triumphant’ enables restoration of a heroic queen’s name, so also Welsh *chwant* ‘desire, passion’ provides meaning for *Trisuantona* ‘she of great desire’ or the River Trent, England.

Third and finally, a criticism arising from the last sentence. It is the custom to explain British place-names (especially hydronyms) from “Old European” or from Indo-European languages other than Celtic ones. Peter Kitson has developed this model (a favourite of the late Wilhelm Nicolaisen) in a paper of considerable learning [Kitson, 1996]. Yet the present writer thinks the whole approach wrong-headed. He believes that the real way to explain the original names of (for example) *Britain*, *Cirencester*, *Devon*, *Hull*, *Kent*, *Leeds*, *London*, *Manchester*, *Neath*, *Richborough*, *St Albans*, *Salisbury*, *York*, *the Isle of Wight*, *Orkneys*, *Quantocks*, *Axe*, *Derwent*, *Don*, *Esk*, *Exe*, *Nidd*, *Ribble*, *Severn*, *Ure*, *Wear*, or *Wharfe*, as also the *Trent*, is by comparison with medieval Welsh and Irish, and not with Sanskrit or Old Iranian or Greek. Once we do that, he believes that we shall make sense of British toponyms that have for centuries defied rational interpretation; or prove that they are not Celtic at all, as with *Wight* and *Hull* (the former being from the Latin term *vectis* ‘bar’ used by Roman mariners, the latter being from Old English *hula* ‘sheds, hovels’ or fishermen’s huts on the site of modern Hull). Such, he submits, are the results to be expected from the application to British toponyms of consecutive thought combined with knowledge of the medieval Celtic languages.

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**ВАЛЛИЙСКОЕ *CHWANT* ‘ЖЕЛАНИЕ’
И *TRISANTONA* ‘РЕКА ТРЕНТ’ У ТАЦИТА**

Статья посвящена старинному названию самой длинной реки, полностью расположенной на территории Англии, — реки *Трент*, протекающей по городам Сток-он-Трент и Ноттингем и впадающей в Северное море. У Тацита название реки зафиксировано как (испр.) *Trisantonā*. Сам фрагмент, в котором встречается это название, вызвал множество дискуссий и разночтений в интерпретациях, которые подробно обсуждаются в статье. Название *Trisantonā* объяснялось на основе др.-ирл. *set* ‘течение’ и валл. *hynnt* ‘путь’ как ‘Выходящая за границы, из берегов’. *Trisantonā*, как предполагается, также служила названием других рек, в том числе рек *Таррант* в Дорсете и *Тараннон* (или *Траннон*) в Среднем Уэльсе. Данная интерпретация гидронима сталкивается с серьезными фонетическими и семантическими возражениями. Как показывает автор, этих возражений можно избежать, если интерпретировать название через др.-ирл. *set* ‘сокровище’ (совр. ирл. *seoid*) и валл. *chwant* ‘желание’ (от реконструируемого общекельт. **suanto-*). В статье предлагаются текстологические, исторические, лингвистические и типологические аргументы в поддержку этой интерпретации. В этом случае *Trisantonā*, или (предпочтительнее)

**Trisuantona* (< **Tresuantona*), может пониматься как 'Желанная, любимая', при этом предполагается, что название *Трент* (как и английские реки *Dee* 'Богиня' или *Brent* 'Благородная, величественная') должно интерпретироваться как имя кельтского женского божества, существа необузданного и, возможно, опасного.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: латинский язык, валлийский язык, кельтские языки, «*Historia Brittonum*», топонимия, этимология, Тацит, река Трент.

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