

WYSG (river-name), WYSG, HWYSGYNT, RHWYSG<sup>1</sup>

**I**N Old Welsh, *Wysg* as a river-name was written *Uisc* or *Uuisc* and was applied not only to the river on which Caerleon(-upon-Usk) stands but also to the river which has given its name to Exeter, which was known to Asser (c.894) as *Cairuuisc* and to the Anglo-Saxons as *Escan-castre* (c.750), *Escanceaster* (876).<sup>2</sup> The river-name *Eze* is related to the river-names *Esk* and *Aze*. Ptolemy, c.150, gives the form *Isca* or *Iska Dumnoniorum*. Apparently *Isca* was the name of only one place on his map, although there is evidence that several rivers bore the name.

*Isca* or *Iska* is taken to be a Celtic river-name, represented on the continent in *Isch*, a tributary of the Saar, *Ijsche* (Dijle), *Ische* (beck) (Kreis Schwelm), etc. It is also represented in *Ischer* (Iscara) (Elsaß). The root is found with *-r*-suffix in the river-names *Isar*, *Iser*, *Isère*, *Yser*. It has been related by German scholars (H. Krahe, A. Bach) to Old Norse *eisa*- 'hurry', although H. Bahlow rejects the connection on the grounds that the *Isère* and *Yser* are not swift-flowing rivers.<sup>3</sup> The root of *Isca* and *Isara* appears to be *\*isa* (> *Isia* > *Oise*, called in Roman Gaul *Is-ara*), and *\*isa*- 'turbulent water' has been connected with IE *\*eis-*, *\*ois-* 'to be agitated, energetic, passionate'.<sup>4</sup>

Ekwall identified *Isca* with OIr. *esc*, Ir. *easca* 'water' and derived both from *\*pid-ska* or *\*pit-ska*, the root *\*pi-* as in Gk *pidúō* 'to gush forth', *pidax* 'spring' etc. Ekwall apparently was following the lead given by Stokes in Bezzenger's *Beiträge*.<sup>5</sup> Pokorny, under root *\*př-tu*, 'Trank, Speise', 'Erweiterung *\*poi-d-*, *\*pi-d-*', explains MIr. *esc* 'Wasser', Mod. Ir. *esca* 'Sumpf' as < ? *\*pid-ska* or < ? *\*peisk-* 'Fisch', and under *\*peisk-*, *\*pisk-*, asks whether the correspondence between OIr.

<sup>1</sup> ABBREVIATIONS: *BA*, J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The Book of Aneirin* (Pwllheli 1908); *BBCS*, J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *Black Book of Carmarthen* (Pwllheli 1906); *BBCS*, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*; *BT*, J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The Book of Taliesin* (Llanbedrog 1910); *CCG*, H. Lewis and H. Pedersen, *A concise comparative Celtic grammar* (Göttingen 1937); *DIL*, (*Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials*) (Dublin 1913-76); *FT*, M. Förster, *Der Flußname Themse und seine Sippe* (München 1941); *IEW*, J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern 1949-59); *LHEB*, K. H. Jackson, *Language and history in early Britain* (Edinburgh 1953); *MA*<sup>2</sup>, *The Myvyrian archaiology of Wales* 2nd ed. (Denbigh 1870); *PNRB*, A. L. F. Rivet and C. Smith, *The place names of Roman Britain* (London 1979); *RP*, J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The poetry in the Red Book of Hergest* (Llanbedrog 1911); *WM*, J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The White Book Mabinogion* (Pwllheli 1907).

<sup>2</sup> See E. Ekwall, *The concise Oxford dictionary of English place-names* 3rd ed. (Oxford 1947) s.n. *Exeter*.

<sup>3</sup> *Deutschlands geographische Namenwelt* (Suhrkamp 1985) 239.

<sup>4</sup> A. Carnoy, *Dict. étym. du Proto-Indo-Européen* (Louvain 1955). Cf. Pokorny, *IEW*, 299: '*\*eis-* . . . Fl.N. (*eisā*, *oisā*, usw., *ois-mo* "Ansturm, Zorn", *ois-tro* "Wut"').

<sup>5</sup> *Bezzenger's Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanische Sprache* 19 (1893) 1-120, p. 73. See É. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étym. de la langue grecque* 4th ed. (Heidelberg 1950) s.v. *pidúō* (*esc* < *\*pid-ska*; *uisc* < *\*peid-ska*).

*iasc* (\**peiskos*), and MIr. *esc*, Scottish river-name *Esk* (Celt. *īska*), OW *uisc*, NW *Wysg* (Celt. *ēskā* < \**eiskā* or \**eidskā*) is accidental.<sup>6</sup>

The connection between OIr. *esc*, W. *Wysg*, British *Iskā*, has exercised the minds of several scholars. Max Förster's discussion in *FT*, 822–41. is characteristically long and careful. Unlike Ekwall and other scholars, he refuses to believe that the *Iska/Isca* given by Ptolemy, the Antoine Itinerary and the Ravenna Cosmography, must be taken as a correct phonetic representation of the British pronunciation of the river-name, and for him, since Welsh *Wysg* requires \**Ēscā*, *Iskā/Iscā* must have represented a British \**Ēskā* derived from \**Eiscā*. As for the English river names, (1) *Eze* in southern England and *Esk* in northern England can be derived equally well from *Ēskā* as from *Iskā*, and there is no compelling reason for assuming a British *Iska*; (2) *Az*, *Aze*, cannot be derived either from *Iskā* or *Ēskā* and must go back to a British \**ěska* from IE \**aiskā*. Finally, the river name *Esk* in Forfar and Kinkardine (Scotland), representing modern Gaelic *Easg*, just as Irish (*Lough*) *Easg* in Donegal and the place name *Esk* in Kerry, represent OIr. *esc*, 'das ein schwundstufiges urkelt. *iskā* repräsentiert'.<sup>7</sup>

The late Sir Ifor Williams, in his notes to I. A. Richmond,<sup>8</sup> said that the Irish and Gaelic forms *easc* 'water', *easg* 'fen', imply *Īskā*, with *ī* affected by the following *ā*, whereas W. *Wysg* (= Engl. *Usk*) implies *-ei-* or *-ī-*, either of which would explain W. *-wy-*, although neither would explain OIr. *esc*. He concluded that the two *Isca* forms (i.e. *Isca Dumnoniorum* 'Exeter', *Isca Augusta* 'Caerleon-upon-Usk') may therefore contain a different form from the Irish, and for the *-ei-* or *-ī-* (\**eiska*, \**īska*) he referred the reader to Walde-Pokorny,<sup>9</sup> \**eis*, \**is*, meaning rapid motion, in this case of water, and seen in the river-name *Isara*.

In *LHEB*, 259, 330–33, Professor Kenneth Jackson explained the development of British *ē* > W. *ui*, e.g. *Ēscā* > *Uisc*, and on the relation between *Isca* and the corresponding English river-names he was content to say that short *ī* became short *e* in Late British if the following syllable was final and contained *ā*, and that this explains the *e-* and the *a-* in *Eze*, *Aze*, *Esk*, if they 'are from *Isca* (which is uncertain, see *FT* pp. 832ff.)'.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Pokorny, *IEW*, 793. See also Walde-Hofmann, *Lateinisches etym. Wörterbuch* 4th ed. (Heidelberg 1965); and Ernout-Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine* (Paris 1932) under *piscis*.

<sup>7</sup>Förster discusses Lhuyd's statement that in Cornish *Ēxeter* was called *Karēsk* and dismisses *Karēsk* as 'eine gelehrte Erfindung oder wenigstens gelehrt beeinflusste Form'. He refers also to the *Esk* in Dumfries and the *Esk* near Edinburgh: according to him, if they are really old, they must be derived in the last resort from the British \**ēskā* but they may have been 'gaelicised' at an early date. *FT* was published in 1941 during the Second World War and did not become accessible to British scholars until the war had ended.

<sup>8</sup>O. G. S. Crawford, *The British section of the Ravenna Cosmography* (Oxford 1949) 35.

<sup>9</sup>Vergl. *Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen* I (Berlin and Leipzig 1930–32) 106.7.

<sup>10</sup>*ibid.*, 259.

In the meantime Ifor Williams, in his *Enwau lleoedd*,<sup>11</sup> had returned to the problem presented by OIr. *esc*, W. *wysg*, British *Īska*. I summarize this argument as follows: *Īskā* with short *ĭ* should give W. *esg*, Ir. *esc*. *Īskā* with long *ī* should give W. *isg* and could by no means give Ir. *esc*.<sup>12</sup> Sir Ifor does not mention here the fact that Lat. long *ī* sometimes gave *ūy* in Welsh (*synnwyr* < Lat. *sentīre*: cf. *pabwyr* < Lat. *papīrus*, and possibly *paradwys* < Lat. *paradīsus*).<sup>13</sup> Professor Jackson explains *sentīre* > *synnwyr*, *papīrus* > *pabwyr* as 'presumably cases where V[ulgar] L[atin], at least in Brittonic, had *ē*'.<sup>14</sup> This leaves us with the possibility that Latin writers in Britain could sometimes take a long *ī*, as in *sentīre* to represent a long *ē* (Jackson's *ē*), and the possibility that they could write *Isca* with a long *ī* to represent a long *ē* (*Isca* = *Ēscā*). This seems to confirm Förster's suggestion that *Isca* in Ptolemy represented *Ēskā*.<sup>15</sup>

It should be noted, however, that *Easg* in Lough Easg, Donegal, and in the river-name Esk (= Gaelic *Easg*), Forfar, Scotland,<sup>16</sup> if it represents Ir. *esc* (*eisc*) gives no support to the view that the *e* in *esc* (*eisc*) was long, nor does *esca* 'a bog, quagmire; a depression, puddle', if, as the *DIL* suggests, *esca* is a by-form of *esc* (*eisc*). According to P. W. Joyce,<sup>17</sup> '*Eisk* [*esk*], is in some parts of Ireland, especially in the south, applied to the track of a stream, or a channel cut by water; and it is evidently connected with *uisce*. It has given name to some townlands called Esk, in Kerry; and to Eskenacartan, in Cork, 'the stream-track of the forge'. Joyce does not refer to Lough Easg (Donegal). Dinneen gives: *esc*, g. *eisce*, f. 'a marsh or quagmire, a marshy place in solid land, a sag in the road, *gnly* wet; . . . a soft vein; a defect; a narrow deep glen between rocks; a channel cut in the land by a stream of freshwater; a stream; *al. eisc, asc*' . . . *éasc*, m. 'a flaw in rock texture, timber, etc., a soft vein'; as well as *easca*, g. id. f. 'a sedgy bog (*Con., Om.*); a slough, a quagmire (*Sup.*); water (*Wind.*), *al. eascaidh*. See *esc*'. N. Ó Dónaill, gives *éasc* m., 'Flaw . . . Flaw in timber' . . . *easca* f. gsg. *idem*. '1. wet, sedgy, bog. 2. Depression, hollow (Var: *esc* f.)'.<sup>18</sup>

Ifor Williams's objection to *Wysg* from *Isca* 'water' meant that he had to find an alternative derivation. He first considered connecting W. *Wysg* with the noun *wysg* 'track, path', but abandoned this attempt as fruitless.

Personally, I wonder whether he would have abandoned it so quickly had he known that, according to some authorities, the name *casán* has

<sup>11</sup>(Cyfres Pobun 5, Lerpwl 1945) 38-39.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. *CCG*, §§ 6(1), 11, 77(5), 78(5).

<sup>13</sup>See J. Morris-Jones, *A Welsh grammar* (Oxford 1913) 96.

<sup>14</sup>*LHEB*, 304.

<sup>15</sup>See *CCG*, §§ 11, 78(4); and note Ir. *céir*, W. *cŵyr*: Latin *cera* 'wax'; Ir. *dísert* 'hermitage', W. *diserth*: Lat. *desertum*.

<sup>16</sup>See *FT*; and W. J. Watson, *History of the place-names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, London 1926) 470.

<sup>17</sup>*The origin and history of Irish names of places* (Dublin 1869) 405.

<sup>18</sup>*Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Baile Átha Cliath 1977).

been applied to a few rivers in Ireland. According to the *DIL*, *casán*, also *cosán* (cf. *cos*), means a path or footpath.<sup>19</sup> According to Edmund Hogan,<sup>20</sup> *casán* is found as a river-name, and according to P. W. Joyce,<sup>21</sup> *Cashen*, an English form of *casán* signifying a path, is found both as a place- and as a river-name. Anyone using the river *Wysg* or *Usk* in olden times would have found it an excellent 'highway', not to mention 'a path', into Wales, but as I have said, Sir Ifor referred to the idea that the river-name *Wysg* and the noun *wysg* 'path' are identical, only to reject it. He then suggested that in the river-name, the Welsh word *wysg* corresponds to the OIr. *íasc* (gen. sg., nom. pl. *éisc*) 'fish' and that the river *Wysg* meant originally 'Fish River'. He backed the suggestion with references to the Welsh *Llyn Eigiau* 'The Lake of shoals (of fish)' in Snowdonia, and *Piscotuc* (= Pysgotwg, today called *Pysgotwr*, 'Fisherman') in the *Book of Llandâv* and to the English *Fishbourne*, *Fishburn*.<sup>22</sup> He then suggested that the river-name which the Romans heard on the lips of the Britons was not *Isca* but *Eisca* and that, as *-ei-* presented difficulties to Latin speakers – they changed the Gk *parádeisos* to *parádisus* – they reproduced \**Eisca* as *Isca*. I may be wrong, but I know that Sir Ifor used to send books and offprints to Pokorny and as *Enwau lleoedd* was published before the latter's *Idg. etym. Wörterbuch*, I think that I am justified in believing that the credit for suggesting that the river-name *Wysg* may come from the same root as OIr. *íasc* belongs to Sir Ifor. However, although we may feel certain that there was in W. at one time a *wysg*, cognate to OIr. *íasc*, it is by no means certain that the river-name *Wysg* is identical with that lost cognate. It is interesting to note that the *DIL* lists *esc* (? *eisc*) 'water', and its examples seem to be glosses or found in glossaries, with the result that one cannot be absolutely certain of the length of the initial *e*. But if Ir. *Easc*, Gaelic *Easg*, in river-names represent it, the *e* cannot have been long.

Sir Ifor Williams objected to the semantics involved in the derivation of W. *Wysg* from *Isca*, assuming that *Isca* meant 'water'. Why call the river *Wysg*, a 'water'-river? Is there any other kind of river possible except a 'water'-river? Here Sir Ifor seems to forget that in his notes to the *British section of the Ravenna Cosmography* he had given his blessing to the derivation of *Dover* or *Dubris* from a Celtic word for 'water'.<sup>23</sup> He could have asked with equal justification why should anyone call the Continental rivers *Isch*, *Ijsche*, etc., or for that matter why call a river *Avon*, when *Avon* (W. *afon*) means 'river'. It may well be, of course, as Rivet and Smith point out, that river-names such as *Isca* may originally have had qualifying names which have been dropped.<sup>24</sup> If, in the case of

<sup>19</sup>It is also the name of an ornament or a fastening of a cloak.

<sup>20</sup>*Onomasticon goedelicum* (Dublin 1910) 167.

<sup>21</sup>*Irish names of places*, 341.

<sup>22</sup>See Ekwall, *Dictionary of English placenames*, 172.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. W. *dwfr* and Jackson, *LHEB*, 259; A.-S. *Dofras* (Dover) from \**Dubrās* or *Dubrā*. See Förster, *FT*, 409 n. 2; and *PNRB* s.n.

<sup>24</sup>*PNRB*, 376. Cf. Ptolemy's *Isca Dumnoniorum*.

river-name *Avon*, a descriptive epithet or a noun in the (defining) genitive has been lost, then in the case of the river-name *Wysg* – if *wysg* originally meant ‘fish’ – some word meaning ‘river’ or the like has been lost.

Professor Eric Hamp wrote an interesting article on ‘Fish’<sup>25</sup> to supplement an article by Otto J. Sadovszky.<sup>26</sup> Hamp refers to a previous article of his own where he states that the apparent medial reflexes which produces *sk* in Celtic must be regarded as some prior consonant cluster with *sk*,<sup>27</sup> a point which reminds us that Jackson states, ‘It seems fairly clear . . . that *sk*, *sq* gave British *sc* initially and  $-\chi s-$  (by metathesis) internally; that it ever became *-sc-* medially seems to be unproven except when another consonant preceded it’.<sup>28</sup> Thus for W. *mysgu* we have to assume a derivation from *\*mik-sk*, for W. *llogsi* a derivation from *\*luq-sk*. However, as Jackson points out, since Latin *sc*, *sq*, gave British (Brittonic) *sc* (e.g. *disco* > W. *dysgu*, Cornish *deska*, Middle Bret. *disquff*), the metathesis (*sk* > *ks* >  $\chi s$ ) was probably older than the Roman period.<sup>29</sup> If *Isca* is to be derived from *\*eis-ka*, it was so derived during the Roman period. If W. *Wysg* is derived from an IE root meaning ‘fish’, it goes back, as Hamp demonstrates, not to *\*(p)(e)isko-*, but to *\*(p)(e)ikskó*, and this he equates with the Slavic etymon *\*pik-ro-* ‘trout’. On the basis of morphology, dialect distribution and the apparent IE base involved, he further suggests that this was an IE lexeme not for the generic ‘fish’ but specifically for ‘trout’. Hamp accepted that the W. *Wysg* goes back to *\*(p)(e)ikskó*. Perhaps a river *Wysg* so called because it was a ‘trout river’ would suit Ifor Williams’s thesis better than if it were so called because it was a ‘fish river’, but it would be difficult to argue that the W. *\*wysg*, Ir. *íasc*, retained the species meaning while Latin or Italic had developed the generic meaning, especially as OIr. *íasc* has only the generic meaning.

Nicolaisen<sup>30</sup> reviewed the research work done on the problem presented by the relationship between Ptolemy’s *Isca*, Welsh *Wysg*, etc., and rejected the derivation *\*peiskā* ‘fishy water’, and *\*peid-skā* (cf. Gk *pídax* ‘spring’) to find himself faced with the choice of finding the root in Celtic *\*eiskā* < IE *\*ei-* ‘go’ or Celtic *eiskā* from IE *\*eis-* ‘to move swiftly, turbulently, vigorously’, both with the *-k*-suffix often found in

<sup>25</sup> *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 1 (1973) 507–511.

<sup>26</sup> ‘The reconstruction of IE *\*pisko* and the extension of its semantic sphere’, *ibid.*, 81–100.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Notes linguistiques bretonnes’, *Annales de Bretagne* 79 (1972) 939–49, esp. 940; and he refers to another article in an Italian journal which I have not been able to trace.

<sup>28</sup> *LHEB*, 534; he refers to Loth (*Revue Celtique* 15 (1894) 221), Foy (*Indogermanische Forschungen* 6 (1896) 323), Baudiš (*Grammar of early Welsh*, 113–14), and Morris-Jones (*A Welsh grammar*, 138, 140).

<sup>29</sup> *LHEB*, 534.

<sup>30</sup> W. Nicolaisen, ‘Die alturopäischen Gewässernamen der britischen Hauptinsel’, *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 8 (1957) 209–268, esp. 241–2.

Celtic names. He finally decided in favour of the latter, as it seemed to fit better with other river-names, including the type \*Is- mentioned above.

Professor Kenneth Jackson returned to the problem in a discussion of the Romano-British names in the Antonine Itinerary.<sup>31</sup> He does not repeat the explanations which he offered in *LHEB* but refers to the seventeenth-century Cornish *Karêsk*, i.e. *Kar Êsk*, the name given by Lhuyd for Exeter, where *Eska* must be, according to him, from \**Iskā*, not *Eska*, in spite of appearances to the contrary, adding that if the British form was \**Eiskā*, as suggested by Sir Ifor Williams (\**Eiska* from \**peisko* 'fish'), we should have expected Exeter (and presumably Caerleon as well) to be called *Eska* (i.e. *Ēskā*), not *Iska*, *Dumnoniorum*

A. L. F. Rivet and Colin Smith mention the tenuous possibility which Jackson dismissed in *LHEB*, that *Isca* became *Esca* in the spoken Latin of Britain, 'just as stressed *ĭ* regularly became close *ē* in the speech of most parts of the Empire by the third century'.<sup>32</sup> Rivet and Smith argue that whereas most (not all) words having stressed *ĭ* that were borrowed from Latin retain this *i* (in the form *y*) in Welsh, this stressed *i* became *e* in spoken Latin, as shown in some inscriptions (*ella* for *illa*, *stepibus* for *stīpibus*), and that in those districts in Britain where spoken Latin remained long enough for this change to occur, the Latin \**Esca* influenced the British pronunciation of *Isca*, especially in the cases of *Isca Dumnoniorum* (Exeter) and *Isca Augusta* (Caerleon-upon-Usk), both places where Latin, we can believe, was the spoken language of the inhabitants. As we have seen, the W. *Wysg* implies a British pronunciation *Ēsca*, and Rivet and Smith suggest that stressed *i* in British *Iska* became *Esca* in the spoken Latin of Britain, including that of the borderland between the Lowland and the Highland Zones where Exeter and Caerleon were, just as stressed *i* 'regularly became close *e* in the speech of most parts of the Empire by the third century', *pace* Jackson, who states that 'the change (of *ĭ*) to *e* . . . emphatically did not occur in British Latin as we know it, though it could presumably have done so in the low-class VL, which may have been current in the cities'.<sup>33</sup>

Before we leave the Welsh river-name *Wysg* and the OIr. *esc*, perhaps we should look briefly at two Irish nouns, namely *usce*, *uisce* 'water' and *ess*, *eas* 'a cataract, rapid', etc. There seems to be general agreement that *u(i)sce* 'water' is from the \**ūd-* form in the series \**aȳed-*, *aȳd-*, *ūd-* of the root *aȳ(e)-*, *aȳed-* *aȳer-*. Pedersen derived *uisce* from \**-ud-skijō*.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> 'Romano-British names in the Antonine Itinerary', appendix II, pp. 68–82, to A. L. Rivet's 'The British section of the Antonine Itinerary', *Britannia* 1 (1970) 34–82.

<sup>32</sup> *PNRB*, 377.

<sup>33</sup> *LHEB*, 259.

<sup>34</sup> *Vergl. Gramm. der keltischen Sprachen*, II, 19; cf. Skt *ud*, instrumental *ud-ā*. Cf. Pedersen, 'Die gutturale im Albanesischen', *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 36 (1898) 277–340, p. 339; cf. Pokorny, *IEW*, *uisce* < \**udiskjō*; Boisacq, *Dictionnaire s.v. údōr*, gen. *údatos*; Ernout-Meillet, *Dictionnaire étym. de la langue latine* (Paris 1939) s.n. *unda*.

OIr. *ess* 'waterfall, cataract' is derived by Pokorny in *IEW* from the root \**ies-*, from \**iestu* 'to foam, froth, boil',<sup>35</sup> and is thereby related to W. *ias*, f., (pl. *iasau*) 'boiling, seething', etc.<sup>36</sup>

J. Morris-Jones derives W. *wysg* 'a path, track' tentatively from \**ped-sk̅io-*; Gk *pedá* 'meta', Latin *pēs* 'foot', etc., ? with metathesized *̅i*, i.e. from Celtic \**eisko*.<sup>37</sup> This seems to be justified semantically. Ernout-Meillet s.v. *pēs*, *pēdis*, quotes Fest. 230, 9: 'pedam, vestigium humani praecipue pedis appellesse antiquos in commentariis quibusdam inueniri solet'. J. Lloyd-Jones was content to derive W. *wysg* '? *hynt*' from (? Celtic) \**eisk*.<sup>38</sup>

It may be significant that Sir Ifor Williams in dealing with *llwrrw* (cognate with Ir. *lorg*, 'a path') and *wysg* refers to OIr. *éis* 'a trace, track', in pl. 'reins'.<sup>39</sup>

Stokes derived OIr. *éis* from \*(*p*)*end-ti*, from the root \*(*p*)*endō* 'I go'.<sup>40</sup> Walde-Pokorny rejected Stokes's derivation on the grounds that other derivatives of the root \**pend-* were not attested in Celtic.<sup>41</sup> Walde-Pokorny suggested instead that *éis* or *és* was derived from \**pent-tā* or \**pnt-tā*, from the root \**pent-* 'Pfad, Weg, mehrfach über nasses Gelände oder Wasser führenden Pfaden', 'Prügelweg durch Sumpfe, Furt, Steg, Brücke'. Pokorny in *IEW*, however, omits the suggestion that OIr. *éis* is from \**pent-tā* or \**pnt-tā*.<sup>42</sup>

Stuart E. Mann is on much firmer ground in deriving OIr. *éis* from \**pēd-si* from the root \**ped-*, *pēd-* 'foot',<sup>43</sup> especially as Celtic has other derivatives from that root, in particular from the extended form \**pēds*, such as OIr. *is* 'under' (loc. pl. *pēd-su*); cf. W. *is*, also from \**pēd-su*.

W. *wysg* and OIr. *éis* can both be derived, then, from the same root. The *-g* in Welsh can be explained as from a *-dsk-* cluster or as an excrescent growth on *wys*. It is known that *-sg* is found side by side with *-s* in some words. Thus in *BBC* 57.15 *na chlat im prisc* (rhyming with *kyfruyys*) = Peniarth 3 (= *BBCS* 4 (1927-9) 127) *prys*. Cf. *bloesg*, derived from Latin *blaesus*, and Lloyd-Jones's remarks<sup>44</sup> hardly justify Jackson's summary rejection of it as a Latin loanword (*LHEB*, 338), though there

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Gallo-Roman. *iestā* 'foam'; cf. Walde-Pokorny, *Vergl. Wörterbuch* I, 208; and T. F. O'Rahilly, 'Notes, mainly etymological', *Ériu* 13 (1942) 144-219, p. 144.

<sup>36</sup>See *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* s.nn.

<sup>37</sup>*A Welsh grammar* (Oxford 1913) 417.

<sup>38</sup>*BBCS* 2 (1923-5) 295.

<sup>39</sup>See *Canu Aneirin* (Caerdydd 1938) 120; *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Caerdydd 1935) 140.

<sup>40</sup>*Urkeltisches Sprachschatz*. . . (Göttingen 1894) (= August Fick, *Vergl. Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen* II 4. Auflage (Göttingen 1894) 28.

<sup>41</sup>*Vergl. Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen* II (Berlin, Leipzig, 1927) 27 nn. 2 and 3, and the reference to Pedersen, *Vergl. Grammatik* II, 526.

<sup>42</sup>*IEW*, 790-91.

<sup>43</sup>*An Indo-European comparative dictionary* (Hamburg 1984-7) 909.

<sup>44</sup>J. Lloyd-Jones, review of H. Lewis, *Yr elfen ladin yn yr iaith Gymraeg* (Caerdydd 1943), in *Honourable Soc. of Cymmrodorion Trans.* 1942 (1944) 194-8, p. 194.

may be other, equally valid, reasons for doing so. However, examples of *-sg* where *-g* is an excrescent growth, are rare, and it seems better to derive *wysg*, as J. Morris-Jones does, from some such form as \**ped-skjo*.

OIr. *éis* and W. *wysg* have one thing in common: they are used mostly in prepositional phrases. *Éis* is found after *ar*: *ar éis* (1) 'after, in succession to', (2) 'for, instead'; after *co*: *co héis*, 'till the end of, till after'; after *di*, *do*: *di/do éis*: (1) 'behind, after', (2) 'after, later in time', (3) '(of remaining) after, left, waiting behind, surviving', (4) 'after the departure of, in the absence of', (5) forming a participial phrase, (occasionally) 'after', in the sense of 'notwithstanding'; after *tar*, (*dar*): *tar/dar eis* (1) 'behind', (2) 'after', (3) 'remaining after', (4) 'after the departure of, in the absence of', (5) 'for, instead'.

There are a few examples of MW *wysc* used as a noun: *RP*, 1314.27 *Brwysc wysc aer uvel* 'mighty path of the war fire'; *ibid.*, 1354.27 *o rat wysc vurnyat* 'by the gift of slayer's path'; *MA*<sup>2</sup> 280 a 27 *Wysg rwysc rawt wawt wiwdec* (= *RP*, 1287.31 *wysc rwysc ryawt wawr widec*) 'One of the path of majesty, of the troop of the splendid fine song'; *MA*<sup>2</sup> 298 b 12 *Cedyrn wysg gyrddfrwysg gwrddfrwydr dachwedd* '? the mighty strong path of the valiant ones of the slaughter of the strong battle'; *ibid.*, 299 b 18 *Ciried oesged wysg torf llorf llifdwysg* 'liberality of a life's giving / of the ever generous / of the path of the host of the defender of the irrupting flow'. In Modern Welsh *wysg* has ceased to be used as a noun and is now used as a preposition or as an element in the compound preposition *yn/i wysg*. *WM*, 43 *Mae yr aniueileit yd aethawch yn eu hwysc heb y math*; *Llyfr Gweddi Gyffredin* (1567) f. 51a *wy aethant yn wysc eu cefn*; *ibid.*, f. 29b *Pop vn aeth yn wysc ei gefn*; *ibid.*, 65a *Iorddanen a droeswyt yn wysc hei chefyn*; W. Salesbury, *Testament Newydd* (1567) 299 *nad ymchwelont yn wysc ei cefn*; William Morgan, *Beibl* (1588) 1 Sam. 4:18 *yntef a syrthiodd oddi ar yr eisteddle yngwysg ei gefn*; *Ezeziel* i.9 *aent bob vn yn wýsc ei wyneb*; R. T. Jenkins, *Bardd. a Beirn. Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Dinbych* (1939), 134 *bron na ddywedwn ei fod wedi sefyll mor syth nes gŵygro wysg ei gefn*; Kate Roberts, *Laura Jones* (1930) 74 *Âi Twm i'r Ddarllenfa weithiau yn wysg ei drwyn, am na byddai ganddo unlle arall i fynd. Yn wysg ei drwyn*, literally 'in the track/wake of his nose' seems to have developed a figurative sense – 'without a special purpose, aimlessly'.

The first example from William Morgan's Bible suggests uncertainty in the translator's mind as to the right form of the word: *yngwýsg* implies a form *gwysg*. *Yn nwysg* also occurs. The most frequent combinations are *yn wysg ei ben*, *yn wysg ei drwyn*, *yn wysg ei gefn*. Theoretically, there seems to be no reason why *wysg* on its own could not function as a preposition (cf. *llwrw yn (l)lwrw ei ben*), but in the following examples *yn* has probably been omitted: R. J. Derfel, *Caneuon Min y Ffordd* (1861) 17 *Ac yna edrychai o amgylch y lle, / Gan ddisgwyl i'r cwmni ei ganmol – / Ond rhywun oedd dipyn yn gallach nag e' / A'i troes wysg*

*ei drwyn tua'r heol*; Tegla (Davies), *Tir y Dyneddon* (1921) 18 *Rywsut wrth gilio wysg fy nghefn cyn belled ag y medrwn, llithrais ar y rhew*.

*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* is characteristically cautious in tentatively deriving *hwysgynt* from \**so-eisk* (from the same root as seen in *rhwysg* and perhaps in *wysg*) + *hynt*. The *h*- might be a voiced *h* sometimes found before an initial vowel or diphthong as in *huydvet* (*wythfed*) cited by Morris-Jones (*Welsh grammar* 187), but as *hwysgynt* never occurs without *h*-, it is better to postulate \**so-eisk*. The third element is *hynt* 'way, path, course' etc. The same authority gives to *hwysgynt* the meanings '? pomp, assault' and quotes among other examples Hendregadredd MS, f. 11 b 33 *eu hwysgynt wyr bletynt bleinyad* (Gwalchmai); 20 b 5 *kadyr hwysgynt oruynt oruyrth tewdor*, etc. J. Lloyd-Jones derives \**hwysg*, *hwysgynt* (? *hwysg-hynt*) (? 'rhuthr') from \**s(u)-* or \**s(o)-eisk*.<sup>45</sup>

The University of Wales dictionary is undoubtedly right in deriving as it will surely do, *rhwysg* from \**ro-eisk*.<sup>46</sup> *Rhwysg* according to Dr John Davies, *Dictionarium duplex* (1632), means 'imperium, auctoritas, pompa'; according to Thomas Richards, *Antiquæ linguæ Britannicæ thesaurus* (1753), 'authority, rule, pomp, grandeur'. W. O. Pughe, *A dictionary of the Welsh language* (1832), adds the meanings 'a career, a course, forwardness, sway' and cites *rhwysg malwen* 'a snail's track'. One could add to the meanings cited, 'progress, triumph, might, ostentation', etc. Examples abound in the early poetry: Hendregadredd MS, ff. 7 a 11, 11 a 4, 23 b 12, 26 a 1, 30 b 10, etc.; *RP*, 1149.15, 1171.18-9, 1211.13, 1212.21-2, 1212.37, 1217.13-14, etc.; *BBC*, 79.8; *BA*, 30.7; *BT*, 5.4, 56.17.

J. E. CAERWYN WILLIAMS

*Aberystwyth*

<sup>45</sup>See *BBCS* 2 (1923-5) 295.

<sup>46</sup>*ibid.*, 295, *rhwysc* \**r(o)-eisk*.