The Roman Period Name for Adel

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ABSTRACT

Antiquarian and more recent discussions of Roman period place-names in western West Yorkshire are considered, along with possible locations for Cambodunum*, with the Roman period site at Adel identified as the latter.*

Keywords: Adel; *Cambodunum*; *Antonine Itinerary*; Roman Road Margary 712; Roman fort; Ralph Thoresby

The existence of a significant Roman period site at Adel, to the north of Leeds (FIG. 18), has been known for some considerable time having entered the archaeological literature through the work of the Leeds antiquary Ralph Thoresby. Recent work has shown the site to incorporate a fort, centred on SE 277 411,[129] and a substantial civil settlement.[130]

Thoresby was a great collector and acquired much material from Adel for his private collection.[131] In his diary entry for 14 August 1702 Thoresby discusses possible Roman period names for Adel:

> Consulting Burton's[132] Comment upon Antoninius's Itinerary, where if Selegocim, or Agelocim, as it is elsewhere writ, had been the station on this side [of] Danum, I should have concluded this had been the place [i.e. the Roman name of Adel], and should have read it as Camden himself once did, (when he made that station at Idleton,) Adellocum ... much of which old name is yet retained in the present name of Adle, or Adel; and this very author refers, p. 247, to a transposition of two stations, Nidum before Bomium; and why may Danum be misplaced before Adelocum? or why might there not be two several Adelocums, as our late learned Dean of York, Dr. Gale, (whose assistance I greatly want in this matter,) apprehended from the Roman altar in my possession, that there were two Condates; ...[133]

Danum, or *Dano* (Doncaster) appears in *Iter V* of the *Antonine Itinerary* and Rivet and Smith[134] associate the preceding name *Segeloci* with Littleborough located between Doncaster and Lincoln; thus Thoresby was in line with modern scholarship in rejecting it as a possible name for Adel. His speculation regarding possible transposition and/or the possibility of there being more than one 'Adelocums', appears to be exactly that — speculation. Some seven years later, in a letter to Dr Hans Sloane, the Secretary of the Royal Society, Thoresby concluded, having had 'an opportunity of perusing that Venerable Record *Domesday* Book in the Exchequer, I found besides *Adel and Echope* ...', that '... *Burghedurum* or *Burgedunum*, was the Ancient *Roman* Name of this Station: ... within a Mile of it there two scattering[s of] House, that do

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[129] Burnham 2007, 269.
[130] See Wilson (forthcoming) for a fuller discussion.
[131] The collection is now dispersed, although Leeds City Museum holds elements of it.
[132] Burton 1658.
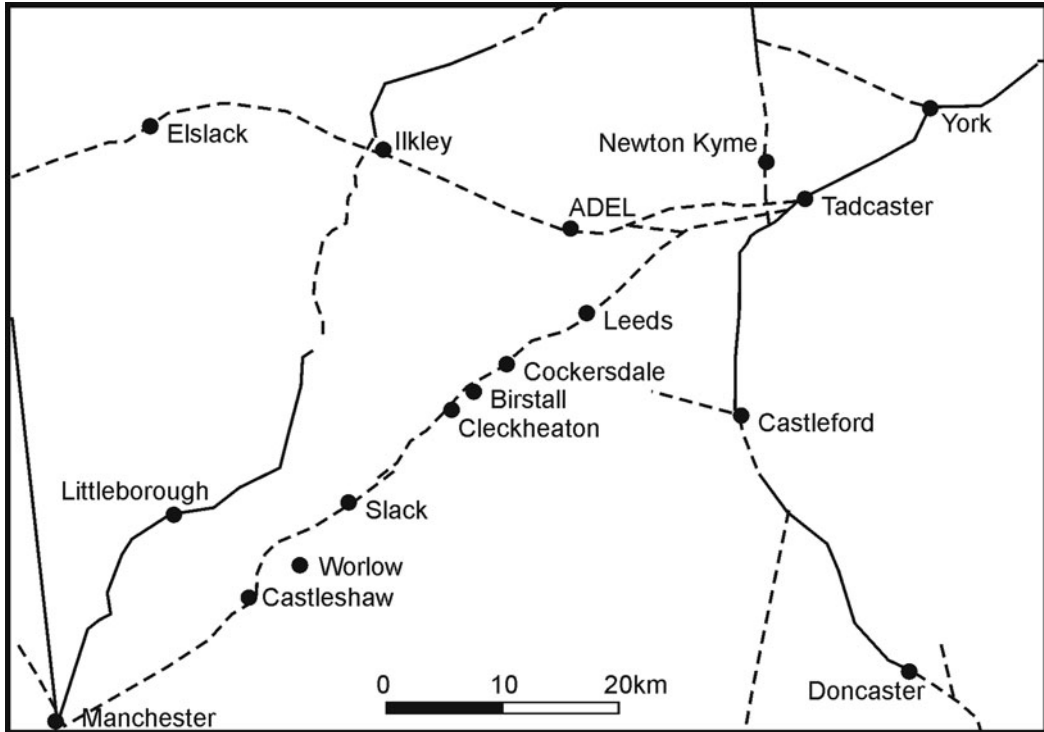[133] Hunter 1830, 377.
[134] Rivet and Smith 1979, 162, fig. 14.

FIG. 18. Map showing places mentioned in the text. (*Prepared by Kelly Hunter and Sophie Coy of MAP Archaeological Practice*)

to this day retain the Name of *Burden-* (for *Burgdun-*) Head'.[135] Rivet and Smith, in an Appendix to their *Place-Names of Roman Britain* entitled 'Doubtful names, ghost-names and inventions', reject *Burgodunum*:

> . . . a name one finds occasionally applied to the Roman settlement at Adel near Leeds (Yorkshire), e.g. in local publications of quite recent date. It has no ancient warrant and seems to have arisen among antiquarians of the early nineteenth century, being based on nothing more solid than the name *Burhedurum* by which Adel is designated in the Domesday Book.[136]

Faull states that the Domesday name '*Burgedunum*' related to a vill 'the name only surviving today in that of Burden Head in Weardley township, 2.4 km to the north-east of Adel Roman site'.[137] *Adelocum* or *Adellocum* does not even get considered by Rivet and Smith as a *falsa*. The modern name Adel derives from the Old English *adela* meaning 'filth' or 'filthy place'.[138]

Thoresby returned to the subject of the Roman period name for Adel in *Ducatus Leodiensis*:

> But what the Name of this Station was, I cannot divine. The very learned Dr. Gale, late Dean of York, some years ago gave me Notice from an anonymous Geographer [in *The Ravenna Cosmography*] of a Station in these Parts called *Pampocalia*, which he thought should be read *Campocalia*, . . . Now

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[135] Thoresby 1709, 315.
[136] Rivet and Smith 1979, 513.
[137] Faull 1981, 144.
[138] Ekwall 1960, 3.

considering that the said *Ravennate* Geographer . . . places this *Pampo*, or *Campocalia*, the very next Station to *Lagentium*, or *Lageolium*, it seems not improbable that this Camp and Station [i.e. Adel] was the very Place; but because Things so many Ages past admit of various conjectures I will offer another ,...[139]

He then goes on to discuss *Adelocum*/*Segelocim* (see above).

Richmond and Crawford interpret *Pampocalia* as a conflation and distortion of *Cambodunum* and *Calcaria*,[140] a view endorsed by Rivet.[141] Rivet and Smith seek to explain it as the conflation of 'adjacent names presumably misread from a map'.[142] *Iter II* of the *Antonine Itinerary* must pass close to Adel, but has serious problems with regard to the mileages given in the section between *Calcaria* (Tadcaster) and Manchester — a distance of 55 Roman miles as the crow flies with only 38 miles being recorded in the *Iter*. Following Richmond and Crawford,[143] Rivet and Smith propose that a complete stage has been lost and suggest, that 'the missing station must be *Camulodunum*, which is placed in these parts by Ptolemy and whose name could easily be taken by a scribe as a duplication of *Cambodunum* . . .', concluding, after some adjustments to the mileages to account for possible scribal error, that *Camulodunum* equals the known Roman fort at Slack. Following further discussion of the mileage they conclude that '*Cambodunum* could, then be found in the Leeds area' and that its etymology, which they suggest as 'fort at the bend' suits a location on a notable bend on the river Aire,[144] and propose an unlocated fort at Leeds, at the confluence of the Sheepscar Beck with the river Aire.[145] The name *Cambodunum* is known at various sites in continental Europe,[146] including Kempten in Germany where it has been translated as 'crooked fortress' i.e. 'fortress on the bend of the river'.[147] *Camboduno*, the form attested in the *Antonine Itinerary*, also appears as the variant *Campoduno* which suggests assimilation of the first element of the name from the British by Latin speakers as *campus* 'field'.[148] The etymology is interesting, with the second element apparently having a Celtic origin; as a (reconstructed) neuter *dounon* it was regularly represented in Latin as *dūnum*. In sense it seems to have developed from 'hill' to 'fort', as at *Branodunum* (Brancaster, Norfolk) where there is no hill.[149] While the first element '*Cambo-*' is basically 'curved, crooked' in Celtic as indicated above; however forms with –*mp*- may indicate an assimilation of the first element with the Latin *campus* 'field'.[150] Such possible assimilations are known elsewhere, including at Catterick (*Cataractonium*), where the British '*catu-*' meaning 'battle' may have been assimilated with the Latin '*cataracta*' meaning 'waterfall' or 'rapids'.[151]

It was the assimilated version that was conflated with *Calcaria* to eventually appear in the Ravenna Cosmography as the *falsa* '*Pampocalia*' around A.D. 700. The assimilated version survived to be used by Bede as '*in Campoduno*' in his description of the events in A.D. 627–33 following the conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria and prior to his defeat and death at the hands of Penda of Mercia:

A basilica was built at the royal residence of Campodonum; but this, together with all the buildings of the residence, was burned by the pagans who killed King Edwin, and later kings replaced this seat by another in the vicinity of Loidis. The stone altar of this church survived the fire . . .[152]

Faull discusses the location of *Cambodunum* at length and with great care, starting with the statement that it is 'the most difficult problem of Roman West Yorkshire'.[153] She goes on to state:

[139]   Thoresby 1715, 161.
[140]   Richmond and Crawford 1949, 43.
[141]   Rivet 1970, 43–4.
[142]   Rivet and Smith 1979, 288.
[143]   Richmond and Crawford 1949, 43.
[144]   Rivet and Smith 1979, 158–9.
[145]   ibid., 292.
[146]   ibid.
[147]   Falileyev 2010, 88.
[148]   Rivet and Smith 1979, 292.
[149]   ibid., 274–5.
[150]   ibid., 292.
[151]   ibid., 303.
[152]   Bede 2.14.
[153]   Faull 1981, 157–63.

> According to the *Antonine Itinerary, Cambodunum* lay 20 Roman miles from *Calcaria* (Tadcaster) on *Iter II* between *Calcaria* and *Mamucio* (Manchester), i.e. probably on road 712.

She accepts both *Camulodunum* as Slack and the conflation of *Calcaria* and *Campodunum* and by implication the conflation as the explanation for the loss of a stage from *Iter II*. In a thorough discussion of the linguistic evidence and what little archaeological material is known from Leeds in the Roman and post-Roman periods in general, Faull concludes that 'Leeds [is] the best candidate for Edwin's *villa regia* of *Campodunum*'[154] and that the new palace that replaced the destroyed *villa regia* was elsewhere. Two possible sites for Roman forts have been proposed in Leeds — Walflat/Wall Flat (Quarry Hill)[155] and Woodhouse Moor.[156] Faull favours an Iron Age date for the latter, but regards a Roman fort on Quarry Hill as 'a distinct possibility' — which lying only 400 m north-east of the confluence of the Sheepscar Beck and the river Aire, could certainly justify the name *Cambodunum*, 'fort in the bend of a river'.

In a careful discussion of the evidence of the *Antonine Itinerary* for the location of *Cambodunum*, Faull notes that the distance of 20 Roman miles (30.3 km) from Tadcaster would give a location 'in the vicinity of Cockersdale about 1.6 km east of the intersection of road 721 with 712 — an area that has produced virtually no Roman material at all' which she rejects. She also dismisses Villy's suggestion of Cleckheaton[157] (34.8 km from Tadcaster) as being too far.[158] Accepting that Leeds at 21.2 km is too close to Tadcaster, Faull agrees with the suggestion made by Rivet and Smith that Slack should be inserted as *Camulodunum* and the missing mileage is that from *Cambodunum* to Tadcaster.[159] She goes on to suggest that the 28 km from Slack to Wall Flat/Quarry Hill is not too far removed from the required 30.3 km to equate Leeds with *Cambodunum*. She supports the suggestion with a discussion of Roman finds from the Leeds area and the possible nature of a settlement at the Aire crossing.[160] While accepting that such an identification is possible, it is appropriate to observe that despite the *possibility* of a Roman fort at Wall Flat/Quarry Hill and the certainty of Roman period occupation in the Leeds *area*, there is another possible location for *Cambodunum* — Adel. Adel lies approximately 30.3 km from Slack and is the location of a substantial Roman period settlement and fort. The location of a significant settlement at the junction of roads M712 and M72b seems entirely reasonable, as does the strategic imperative for the establishment of a fort controlling the road junction. Margary speculates on the line of M712 to the north-east of Raistrick, suggesting a route through Brighouse and Cleckheaton and suggests that 'the present road to Leeds [the A58] … almost certainly represents it … It must have continued north-east to join near Thorner roads 72 or 729 leading to Tadcaster, *but its course has not yet been traced*' (my emphasis).[161] Faull and Moorhouse[162] do not trace M712 with any certainty north-east of Grimescar and with decreasing certainty from Cleckheaton and abandon any attempt to suggest a course north-east of Cockersdale, although they do add a number of possible east–west routes to those suggested by Margary, including the suggestion of two short lengths of road at Wellington Hill (*c.* SE 353 384) and to the north of Roundhay Golf Course (*c.* SE 332 389) that might represent extensions of 'road E' as proposed by Ramm around Tadcaster[163] and suggest the existence of a road roughly paralleling M712/M729 some 2 km to the south. Antiquarian sources repeatedly refer to a road '… of which the remains leading to Adel are sufficiently conspicuous on the moor near Whitkirk [Temple Newsam], and on Hawscaster Rigg [Chapel Allerton]',[164] which could have crossed the river Aire at Sheepscar; however neither Margary nor Faull and Moorhouse[165] mark the road and it must be regarded as 'unproven'. Such a road, or any of the other putative east–west trending roads, if they were to exist, might indicate that M712 did not extend to Adel, but turned east or north-east as Margary suggests, however, again this is unproven.

[154] ibid., 159.
[155] Thoresby 1715, 111; Faull 1981, 161–2.
[156] Wardell 1853, 5; Faull 1981, 161–2.
[157] Villy 1940.
[158] Faull 1981, 162.
[159] Rivet and Smith 1979, 158–9.
[160] Faull 1981, 162–3.
[161] Margary 1973, 366–7.
[162] Faull and Moorhouse 1981, map 9.
[163] Ramm 1976, fig. 1.
[164] Whitaker 1816, 175; see also Thoresby 1715, 139.
[165] Margary 1973, 366–7; Faull and Moorhouse 1981, map 9.

In a recent contribution to the topic Mike Haken[166] offers a series of suggestions with respect to possible routes for Roman roads and the location of Roman period place-names in West Yorkshire. His discussion derives from a scepticism of the view that *Camulodunum* can be equated with Slack[167] with any certainty. He suggests that:

> There is, however, a major problem with this interpretation. The locating of *Camulodunum* at Slack depends crucially on the locating of *Cambodunum* at Leeds, as Margaret Faull suggested.[168]

He then clearly articulates the limited physical evidence for the road and outlines a number of potential alternative routes for *Iter II* in the area, with suggestions that sites at Birstall might represent *Cambodunum* and either Cloise Farm, Littleborough or Worlow *Camulodunum*. Evidence of Roman period occupation exists or is claimed at all these locations: there are antiquarian references to a tessellated pavement at Birstall,[169] Cloise Farm has been proposed as a fortlet[170] and Worlow as 'a small Roman station'.[171] None of them is, on the evidence currently available, of a comparable size and importance to Slack and this suggests that Richmond and Crawford and Rivet and Smith are correct in claiming that a stage must be missing from *Iter II*.[172] Therefore, given the correlation in terms of distance from Slack, it would seem reasonable to conclude that *Iter II*, in the form of road M712, ran via Adel which can therefore reasonably be identified with *Cambodunum*.

That having been said the identification of *Cambodunum* with Adel leaves one outstanding question — how does the toponym '*Cambodunum*' relate to the site at Adel, which cannot be described as a 'fort in the bend of a river'? Looking to Rivet and Smith's suggestion of 'fort at the bend' we are forced to examine the topography, and while accepting that a bend in the river Aire would be a more obvious landscape feature, it is noticeable that the area south-west of Adel fort is in fact a low promontory defined by Adel Beck and a stream running south-west. It is possible that it is that promontory, or rather the streams that surround it on three sides, to which the toponym refers. Alternatively if the name reflects the variant *Campoduno*, and the assimilation of the first element to Latin *campus* 'field',[173] the difficulties of the name disappear — it may simply mean the 'fort in the field'.

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[166] Haken 2012.
[167] Rivet and Smith 1979, 158.
[168] Haken 2012, 10.
[169] Cradock 1933, 3.
[170] Haken 2012, 12.
[171] Crosland 1986–7.
[172] Richmond and Crawford 1949, 43; Rivet and Smith 1979, 158.
[173] Falileyev 2010, 88.

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