

*Observations on the Origin of the Duni Pacis.*

COLINTON.

Boys no sooner arrive at the use of reason, than they begin to be instructed in the language of ancient Rome: And the actions of the Romans is the first history they are taught. From thence it comes, that every monument of antiquity is almost always believed to have been made by these conquerors; especially if the name of the monument, or of any place in its neighbourhood, can be wrested to a

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Latin word, or even to a Latin termination. Such must have been the case with regard to the two great *tumuli* near the river Carron, in the shire of Stirling, from which the place is called Dunipace; which is supposed to signify the Hills of Peace; and it is commonly thought that the true name is *Duni Pacis*\*. Hence it is concluded, that these *tumuli* were raised by the two nations, on occasion of a peace, agreed on betwixt the Romans and Caledonians, and had their name from the Latin.—But *Duni* is not a Latin word; and if it is to be found in any Latin writer, it is only in giving a Latin termination to the Gaelic word *Dun*; which name the place had before ever the Romans came there. The other part of the name of *Dunipace*, *Pacis* or *Peace*, is a word that we have no authority to believe was ever used in this country to signify *Peace*, at the time these *tumuli* were raised. Shall we then suppose that the two nations clubbed for the name, that each should contribute one half towards it, but that the Romans, being the strongest, should have the honourable distinction of giving the terminations of both words? I must acknowledge that such a thing is possible, but it is extremely improbable; especially, as I cannot find any instance in the Latin historians, of the Romans having raised such *tumuli* on the spots where they had concluded a peace with any nation. But both history and poetry are full of accounts of heaps being raised for funeral monuments, by every nation, of which we have any ancient accounts. There are several in this country, and many in Ireland, in which the Romans never were. I therefore conceive, that the *tumuli* of Dunipace were raised over the people that had fallen in battle, each army raising one for its own men; and therefore gave them the name of *Dun-abas*, i. e. *Hills of Death*. Observe here, that B, in the Gaelic, is pronounced so like P, that there is little if any difference in the sound. In short, I find that the raising such

*tumuli*

\* See Buchanan, B. 1. and B. 4. in Donald I. Blaeu's Scotland in Stirlingshire, Cambden, &c. J. G. C.

*tumuli* over the dead, was the custom of the country in which they stand; and they must of course have a name from the language of that same country. Where the ground was stony, the heaps were raised of stones, and were called *Cairns*: Where stones were not at hand, the heaps were made of earth. The battle, in memory of which the heaps in question were raised, was probably a very bloody one, and in which many people had fallen on both sides. This inclined the parties concerned, to raise monuments every way larger than usual, so that they appeared as hills, or, in their language, *Duna*.

Another proof that these monuments were not the work of Romans, is, that it was the custom of that people always to set up wrought stones, with inscriptions, marking the names of the people concerned, and the business on which they were employed; and they could not have failed to have done it in a remarkable way, on an occasion when they had thought proper to raise such remarkable monuments. But none such having ever yet appeared in that place, makes it probable, that none such ever were. On the contrary, my opinion, which I had conceived for the several reasons above deduced, seems supported and confirmed, by finding several similar *tumuli* in Britain, that were raised as sepulchral monuments, as is known for certain, by the human bones yet unconsumed, that are found in such places; and I doubt not, if one was to dig a little into the two at Dunipace, he would soon find the same undoubted proofs of the purposes for which they were erected\*.

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\* Near to Inverury, in Aberdeenshire, there is a *tumulus*, like to those of Dunipace; and it is remarkable, that it has the name of the *Bass*. May we not conjecture, that this one likewise, has been a monument over dead bodies, and has likewise got its name from *Bas*, that in Gaelic signifies *Death*? J. G. C.

These *tumuli* of Dunipace lie on the river Carron, on the right hand of the road from Falkirk to Glasgow, about three miles from Falkirk, and about half a mile from the road. The one that is on the east, and is most entire, appears to be above 600 feet in circumference at the bottom, of more than 100 feet round the top, and 80 or 90 feet from top to bottom; being a truncated cone. J. G. C.

To sum up the whole in a few words, the etymology I have given, *Dunabas*, is agreeable to the custom of the country, and the language of the country; whereas the other, *Dunipacis*, has no other prop to support it, but what is taken from the unnatural conjunction of two words, belonging to two different languages, and as improperly coupled together as a figure would be, that had a human head joined to a fish's tail.

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