



XORIJY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI

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LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH RIVER-NAMES OF TWO COUNTIES

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15179409>

Annotation. *The importance of hydronyms place names derived from water features in comprehending the historical, cultural, and geographical landscape of England is examined in this introduction. It draws attention to the ways in which these names serve as language archives that maintain the connection between environmental preservation and human activity. With a focus on their function in forming historical geography and cultural identity, the study investigates how these names provide insights into the geographical relevance and cultural connotations of English hydronyms. It also emphasizes the importance of hydronyms, both well-known and obscure, in comprehending English intricate relationship with land and water.*

Key words: *Place Names, Cultural Identity, Historical Geography, Etymology, Old English, Celtic Influences.*

Introduction. Place names preserve a region's cultural, historical, and geographical tales by acting as linguistic archives. In England, where rivers, fords, and estuaries were crucial in forming settlement patterns, trade, and transportation networks, hydronyms—place names associated with water—are particularly instructive. These names, which still retain their original meanings and purposes, are profoundly rooted in the relationship between human activity and the natural environment. With roots in Old English and earlier linguistic layers, such as Celtic and pre-Celtic influences, the suffixes -ford (meaning "river crossing") and -mouth (signifying "river mouth") are representative of England's hydronyms. Names like Oxford, which means "the ford of oxen," and Dartmouth, which means "the mouth of the River Dart," for instance, not only characterize physical attributes but also offer In addition to describing physical characteristics, names like Oxford ("the ford of oxen") and Dartmouth ("the mouth of the River Dart") reveal information about the social and economic objectives of early settlements. These names show how human habitation and language expression were influenced by opportunities and limitations imposed by geography. This study explores the various meanings of hydronyms in English toponymy, emphasizing their geographical significance, cultural connotations, and etymological origins. The study looks at both well-known and lesser-known instances to show how hydronyms serve as indicators of historical geography and cultural identity, providing a prism through which to perceive England's complex hydronyms.



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The word "-ford" comes from the Old English ford, which denotes a shallow area where people and cars might cross a river or stream. Because they offered access across bodies of water, these locations were important in terms of settlement trends. It's likely that Ashford means "the ford near the ash trees," often located close to rivers or places where people can cross shallowly. Bedford: From "Beda's ford," which denotes a crossing that belonged to or was utilized by a person with the name Beda. Oxford is an acronym for "ford of the oxen." is used to describe a place where oxen can cross the Thames River. Guildford: Probably translates to "ford associated with a guild"—a customary association of merchants or artisans. situated next to the Wey River. Probably meaning "landing ford" or "staithe ford," Stafford alludes to a crossing close to a landing spot. Hereford: "ford suitable for an army" (with an army in mind).By the Wye River.Combining "hart" (stag) with "ford," the term "Hertford" probably alludes to a deer-frequented crossing. situated alongside the River Lea. Seaford: Denotes a ford or community close to the ocean.has to do with tidal crossings, probably. Blandford: Could mean "white ford" or "blazing ford," possibly alluding to the hue of the surrounding area or the water. Meaning "stony ford," Stamford denotes a rocky crossing site. Adjacent to the Welland River The term Watford can mean either "wet ford" or "ford by the water."Hydronyms, or place names associated with water, have been important in creating cultural identities, influencing trade routes, and forming towns close to the Colne River. Here's a detailed look at how historical development and human settlement patterns were influenced by these "-ford" names and water-related terrain. Natural intersections and ease of access: Fords were ideal places for settlements since they served as important shallow crossing spots for rivers and streams. They promoted trade and communication by making it easier for people, animals, and things to move between areas. Defensive and Strategic Significance: A large number of "ford" towns were built close to important water crossings, which frequently functioned as points of strategic defense. For instance, Stafford was a hub in medieval England because of its location on the River Sow, which offered both access and security. Economic Activity: By linking marketplaces and agricultural areas, rivers and fords promoted trade. Due to their river access and close proximity to merchant fords, settlements like Bedford and Hereford became affluent. An ancient language (or languages) spoken prior to the Celts' arrival in Britain in the first millennium BC is the earliest linguistic stratum visible in the river names of this corpus. These are five old names: Three from the North Riding of Yorkshire (NRY), and two from Cumberland. Both countries possess the river Esk. In each instance, the name was created by adding a



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k-suffix to an IndoEuropean (IE) root **is-/*eis-*, resulting in **eis-kā*, which means "moving swiftly, strongly" and is shortened to *Iscā* in British (CDEPN: 218). The same root, without an extension, was used to create the name *Ure*.

The two counties are perfect for comparison because of their different topographies and divergent settlement histories. Both counties were home to British-speaking people when Germanic populations first settled there in the fifth century. There is 'limited indication' that this culture persisted in the North Riding past this date (PNNRY: XV). Nonetheless, it has been maintained that Cumberland once again became "British territory" following the fall of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria (SCNW: 2). Thus, Cumberland's British population not only arrived later than other regions of the nation, but it also remained there longer, which may indicate that the Brittonic languages had a greater influence on the toponomasticon of the county. A corpus of 105 river names was created by updating the entries in the Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names (CDEPN) from 2004 using the names gathered from Eilert Ekwall's 1928 English River-Names (ERN), which is the primary source of the names that make up the corpus under analysis (see appendix). It is important to note that this procedure has certain limits. First of all, it is not all-inclusive. Cumberland has 66 names in Ekwall's book, compared to over 250 (279 to be exact) in the county's English Place-Name Society (EPNS) volumes. There are 39 names as well. In ERN from the North Riding, even though Cumberland is geographically a smaller county. Furthermore, in several places, names are conspicuously missing. The southernmost portion of the Allerdale above Derwent ward in Cumberland is noticeably empty, and the wapentakes of Pickering, Bulmer, and Langbargh East and West are scarce in NRY. Ekwall acknowledges that the emphasis is on "names of more general interest, importance" (ERN: XXXV) and that "considerations of space forbid the inclusion of all the names." In addition, his study is almost 100 years old at the time of writing, and place-name studies have advanced significantly since then. It is nonetheless regarded as "one of the classics of English place-name scholarship" in spite of these drawbacks (Kitson 1996: 3) and is still regarded as the "standard authority on the subject" in most cases (Padel 2013: 2). Prior to delving into these names' investigation, a few explanations of Terminology is required. Across the reference works studied for this volume, there is much variation in the vocabulary employed when addressing specific languages, notably the Celtic languages. For instance, CDEPN uses the term "Old Brittonic," which hasn't been used anywhere else (2004: XXI). Ekwall uses both "British" and "Old British," but doesn't explain why (ERN: XXXI).



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Conclusion. Hydronyms in English toponymy serve as vital markers of linguistic heritage and cultural identity. These names not only preserve elements of ancient languages but also reflect the historical and geographical dynamics of human settlement. From their roots in Celtic, Old English, and Norse, to their connections with mythology, folklore, and practical utility, hydronyms reveal how closely intertwined human cultures have been with the natural environment, particularly water. Studying these names offers insights into the evolution of language, cultural traditions, and the socio-environmental landscape of England. Moreover, hydronyms reveal the practical and ecological significance of water in shaping human settlements, as towns and cities often grew around rivers, springs, and fords, which provided sustenance, transportation, and strategic advantages. Many hydronyms also describe the physical characteristics of water bodies, such as their flow, color, or location, offering a glimpse into how early inhabitants perceived and interacted with their environment. They are not only markers of physical geography but also symbols of the historical, linguistic, and cultural currents that have shaped English identity over centuries.

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