PLACE- NAMES OF THE EBRO VALLEY: 
THEIR LINGUISTIC ORIGINS

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The upper and middle reaches of the Ebro river, approximately coterminous with the conventus Caesar Augustan us of the Roman period, are well known in earlier times as a sort of frontier for Celtic-speaking peoples, a zone in which the Celtiberians interacted with speakers of non-Celtic languages such as Basque and Iberian, and one or more unidentified Indo-European (hereafter IE) tongues. Place-names constitute an important set of data for studying the linguistic origins of this region. However, the degree to which these toponyms are Celtic or non-Celtic has long been a subject of scholarly disagreement. Thus W. von Humboldt thought that Alavona, Balsione, Bortinae, Caravis, Curnonium, Leonica, Salduie and the mountains Edulium and Idubeda were Basque (Humboldt 1879: 50-65). To this list of supposed Basque names, Aracelium, Bituris, Iturissa, Muscaria and Tarraga were added by A. Campión (1907: 296; 1908: 271-272, 750-753). A. Schulten (1930: 374) considered that Cortonum was Etruscan; J. Pokorny (1938: 151) believed that the lake Perusiae and the river Salo were Illyrian; while A. Dauzat (1926-27: 221) opined that Calagurris was very probably Ligurian.

More recently, García Alonso (1994) has concluded that many of the toponyms of the Autrigones were Celtic, though a few were pre-Celtic IE. On the other hand, in a study of 29 pre-Roman toponyms of Navarra and northern Aragón, Villar determined that 25 were IE and only two Celtic (Villar and Prósper 2005: 504). The confusion generated by such conflicting results calls for a new, global examination of the place-names of the upper and middle Ebro valley.

1 Funding for this project was generously provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I wish to thank the anonymous referees of this journal for helpful suggestions, as well as Thomas Edward Butcher and Margaret McCarthy for their help in tracking down linguistic roots and ancient references. Abbreviations: AcS = Holder 1896-1907; AE = L’Année Epigraphique; CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum; DIL = Dictionary of the Irish Language (Dublin, 1913-76); HEp. = Hispania Epigraphica; IEW = Pokorny 1959; LEIA = Vendryes, Bachellery and Lambert 1959-.

2 “Perusia” was Schulten’s improbable emendation of Turasia, no doubt inspired by Perusia in Etruria.

3 I exclude the lower reaches of the Ebro, which lie in Cataluña and comprise chiefly Iberian toponyms, which are not germane to the Celtic versus IE debate.
cities. Ancient sources for most of these names can be found listed in Schulten (1955) for mountains and rivers, or Tovar (1989) for cities. Conclusions will be offered as to the proportion of Celtic, IE and other names in the area.

**CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION**

To establish with reasonable certainty that a toponym belongs to a particular language, it is necessary to show that: (a) there are grounds to believe the language was spoken in the district in question, (b) the component elements of the toponym are represented in that language, (c) they are not represented in other languages. Where such certainty is not attainable, we must rely on the balance of probability.

Thanks to the research of F. Villar (especially Villar 2000), we now know that IE toponyms are found throughout the Peninsula, even in areas previously considered Iberian. Thus, IE toponyms could occur anywhere in our region. Both Iberian and Celtic (“Celtiberian”) toponyms are found in the middle Ebro, as shown by the unequivocal examples of Bilbilis (Iberian) and Contrebia (Celtic). Iberian toponyms are less likely in the upper Ebro, distant from the language’s coastal homeland. If a name has analogues in IE but not in Iberian, it is presumably IE. If it is paralleled in Iberian inscriptions but not in IE, it is probably Iberian (though personal names in Iberian inscriptions are not always Iberian).

As for Basque, the “Vasco-Iberian” thesis of the nineteenth century, which claimed to find Basque toponyms throughout the Peninsula, is no longer credible. The Basque language was essentially confined to the territory of the Vascones (province of Navarra and adjacent parts of Huesca, Zaragoza and La Rioja). Yet it was not the only language spoken here, as demonstrated by the Celtiberian inscriptions from Viana, Navarra (Untermann 1997: pp. 696-701) and by the apparently Celtic toponyms Iacca and Segia. In fact, very few of the toponyms of the Vascones are clearly Basque. Even the name of the Vascones (baskunez or barskunez on coins) is possibly non-Basque, from IE *bhask- “network, bond” (Mann 1984-87: 67).

More difficult is the distinction between Celtic and non-Celtic IE names. Many IE roots have derivatives in Celtic (and in Latin, though our knowledge of Latin is so complete that the Latin toponyms are usually obvious), but this does not prove that a toponym from such a root belongs to Celtic rather than a cognate language. Thus it is not always possible to prove whether a given name is Celtic or non-Celtic IE. My criterion has been to judge whether the toponym is sufficiently close to known Celtic parallels to warrant classifying it as Celtic rather than generic IE. In case of doubt, I have left it as IE.

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4 Even in the zone north of the Ebro between Osca and Ilerda, traditionally regarded as a non-Celtic area, we find apparently Celtic names such as Caum and Boletum.
Mountains

Caius. This name can hardly come from the Latin praenomen Gaius. A likelier etymology is Celtic *cagio- “enclosure, fortification” (Old Breton caiot, Welsh cae “enclosure”, Gaulish caio- in toponyms Caioecum, Mattucaium and Vercaius) from IE *kagh- “to enclose” (Delamarre 2003: 97). Caius should thus mean “stronghold”.


Idubeda. The initial element Idu- has never been satisfactorily explained. It is possible that -ub- represents an Indo-European hydronym (Villar and Prósper 2005: 34). The supposed parallel of a mountain-name Orospeda suggested to Schulten (1955: 164) that -beda might be an Iberian word for “mountain range”. However, Celtic personal names such as Bedarus, Bedasius and Ricagambeda (AcS I, col. 364-366; AcS III, col. 135-137; Collingwood and Wright 1965: n°. 2107) suggest the existence of a Celtic onomastic element beda, of unknown meaning.

Rivers and water features

Chalybs. Though Schulten (1955: 315) compared toponyms in Calu- it is difficult to avoid attributing the river-name Chalybs to Greek chalyps “hardened iron, steel”, in view of the importance of the cold waters of this river in the steel-hardening process. Therefore, “steel river”. Compare the Chalybes, a Pontic tribe famous for their steel.

Cinga. Like the Gaulish personal names Cingetis, Cingetorix etc., this river-name probably represents Celtic *cing- from IE *kenk- “to bind, gird” (IEW 565; LEIA C-102). See below on the town Cinca.

Dercenna. The root is Celtic *derk- “to see” (Gaulish derco- “eye”, Irish dercaid “look at”). Parallels include the toponym Dercinaosedenses near Clunia (AE 1953, 267), the onronym Dercetius in south-east Burgos (CIL II 5809), the river-name Derceia near Marseille, and the personal names Dercinus (AcS I, col. 1267), Dercinio (CIL II 6338ee).

(H)iberus. The spelling with H- appears to be latinized. There is a homonymous river in Andalusia, modern Río Tinto (Avienus Ora mar. 248). The name is Iberian, of uncertain meaning but clearly related to that of the Iberians.

Salo. The root is the IE hydronym *sal- found in numerous European river-names such as Salia (Asturias), Salo (Dalmatia) and Sala (Germany) (González 1963: 284).

Sicoris. This river-name comes from the the IE hydronymic root *seik- “to flow”, as does the river Sicanus, which Schulten (1955: 318) identifies with the Júcar.

Turasia. A lake near Bilbilis (Martial IV, 55, 21). The name appears related to other IE hydronyms such as Turia. The suffix *usyo- occurs also in the personal names makasia (on Botorrita Bronze I) and kamasio (Villar and Prósper 2005: 340).
CITIES AND TOWNS

Ad Novas. A road station with a Latin name.

Agiria. This name appears to derive from the IE hydronym *agher- (Mann 1984-87: col. 5). Cognates include the Greek river Acheron, the French rivers Ager, Eger, Aire (*Agira) and Girac (*Agiracus: AcS III, col. 522), and the Achaean town Agira.

Alanto. Probably derived from the IE hydronym *alant- from *al- “to flow” (Villar and Prósper 2005: 433). Parallels include the toponym Alantune in south-west Spain (Rav. 318, 4) and the goddess Alantedoba (Villar and Prósper 2005: 134).

Alavona/alau. The likeliest etymology seems to be IE *al- “beyond” plus *abo- “river”. It is unclear whether there is a relation with the Gaulish and British place-names Alaunos/Alauna, which some explain as “white, shining” (Guyonvarc’h 1960) and others as “nourisher” (Lambert 1995: 37). There is a river Alabon or Alabos in Sicily, and a mansion Alabonte in southern Gaul.

Albonica. The name of this mansion appears to derive from Celtic *albo- “white” with the Celtic adjectival suffix -ico-. The personal name Albonius occurs frequently in Lusitania (Grupo Mérida 2003: 79).

Anabis. The root could be Celtic *(p)ana- “marsh” (Gaulish accusative anam, glossed paludem) from IE *pen- “mud, marsh”. This has produced the names of such French rivers as Anais and Annet (Nègre 1990: 103), and possibly the ancient Hispanic river Anas. There is, however, another Celtic root *anau- “rich” (Welsh anaw “wealth”) which underlies the British river-name Ana and the toponym Anauon in Germania Magna.

Andelos. So spelled by Ptolemy; but cf. Pomp(a)elo. Villar and Prósper (2005: 437) wonder if this could mean “the city of Andos”, a personal name attested on a Celtiberian inscription from Uxama (Untermann 1997: K.23.2). However, a more likely root is IE *andho- “dark” or IE *andh- “to flourish”, with IE suffix -lo-.


Articabe. Although there is a pre-Celtic word *art “stone” (LEIA A-91) and a Celtic word *arto- “bear” (Old Irish art, Welsh arth, cf. Artobriga and Artona in Gaul), the key to this toponym is the element cabe. There is no

5 Alantia, attested as a medieval village and sometimes evoked as the original name of the river Elz, is not a parallel, as the ancient name (confirmed by CIL XIII, 6490 and AE 1986, 523) is Elantia, probably cognate with Irish elit “doe” (Sims-Williams 2006: 184).

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such element in Celtic, but in IE we have *kap- “to hold, catch” (Mann 1984-87: col. 456). This suggests that *arti- should also be IE, from *er- “ground”, extended form *ert-. Therefore perhaps a place “holding (occupying?) ground” or a “catching (hunting?) ground”.

**arzakoz.** Villar (Villar and Prósper 2005: 440) assumes the adjectival form of a toponym Arsa from IE *ars- “to flow”; cf. Arse (Saguntum) and Arsa in Baetica. However, the first “z” could equally represent Celtiberian “d(h)”. It might then be cognate with Old Irish *ard “high”, Old Cornish ard “a height” and the Gaulish forest Arduenna (Ardenness). A potter Ardacus is attested at Tarraco (CIL II, 4970, 43a-b).

**Atanaugrum.** I would suggest a Celtic derivation from IE *petano- “thing spread out” (Early Irish atánach, glossed capuciatus “hooded”: DIL A-442) plus *agro- “field”, therefore “extensive field”.

**Atiliana.** This clearly comes from the Latin personal name Atilius (well attested in Spain) and should refer to a property owned or founded by an Atilius.

**Auci.** The name may come from IE *aug-/auk- “to increase, grow” (cf. the personal name Aucius, whence toponyms Aucia in Germany and Aucia in Gaul). A medieval bishopric Auca gave its name to the Montes de Oca.

**Barbariana.** This road station has a homonym in Baetica (IA 406, 2; Rav. 344, 4). The name appears to be Latin. Structurally, it should denote the estate of a Barbarius, but this nomen is not attested in Spain. More likely it means the property of Barbarus, a much commoner name (Alarcos Llorach 1950: 475; Abascal Palazón 1994: 298).

**Beldalin.** Tovar (1989: 382) considers it a corruption of “Belsio”. However, it appears to represent IE *bh(e)ld- “mass” from *bhel- “to swell” (Mann 1984-87: col. 87), perhaps with meaning “agglomeration”. Cf. Old Irish baile “place, village”.

**Belsio/Belsinum.** The name should derive from IE *bhel- “resplendent, white” or *bel- “strong, great”. In Gaul we find another Belsinum (IA 463, 1) as well as late toponyms Belsinnacum and Belsonancum (AcS I, col. 396). A “Belsinonensis pagus” is attested on the bronze from Agón, Zaragoza (F. Beltrán Lloris 2006b).

**Bergidum.** Closely paralleled by Bergidum Flavium in Asturias, Bergida in Cantabria and Bergium in Cataluña. The root is IE *bhergh- “high” (cf. Celtic *brig-).

**Bergisia.** On the root *bhergh- “high”, see Bergidum. In Gaul we find a town of the Allobroges named Bergusia (IA 346, 8; Rav. 239, 7) or Bergusium (Tabula Peutingeriana), as well as a deity Bergusia (CIL XIII, 11247).

**Bibilis/bibiliz.** This town appears to have a reduplicated Iberian stem bil(i)- (Curchin 1997: 262; Gorrochategui 2000: 146). A dissimilated form “Birbili” appears in some sources (Justin XLIV, 3, 8; CIL VI, 2728; CIL XII, 735).

**Bituris.** This toponym resembles that of the river Biturgia (for Celtic *Biturgia: Sims-Williams 2006: 246) in Etruria and the tribe Bituriges in Gaul. However, while the latter name may connote “kings of the world”, such a meaning is inappropriate for a town. Jullian (1908: 789) ineptly suggests bi-turis “two towers”, while others point to Basque bide “road” and
aurre- “rear part” (Jordán Cólera 1999: 474). The ending -uris is reminiscent of Calagurris and Gracchuris (both below), Laccuris (Oretania) and Illacuris (Carpetania), but these are probably not all from the same root. I would suggest IE *bheid- “to split” (Latin findo, fidi; Germanic bitan “to bite, cut”: IEW 116) plus *uro- “river,” perhaps indicating a town at a river-fork.

Boletum. This name is reconstructed from the adjectival form Boletanus in inscriptions (CIL II, 5845 and 5843=5846, on which see F. Beltrán Lloris 2004: 38-39), whence the town’s medieval name, Boletania (Caro Baroja 1981: 7; spelled “Volotania” on Visigothic coins). It appears to represent Celtic *bol- “swelling, hill” from IE *bhel- “to swell” (cf. above, Beldalin), attested in the toponyms Bolvellaunium (Britain), Bolentum (Pannonia) and the Gaulish divine surname Bolvinnus (Rivet and Smith 1979: 271). The IE suffix -et- broadens the theme (Meillet 1964: 268), cf. Toletum, Lobetum, Oretum.

bolšken. The name is probably Iberian (Villar and Prósper 2005: 468-469), paralleled by bolskokate on an Iberian inscription (Velaza 1991: 63), despite the suggestion of García Alonso (2005: 247) to derive it from IE *bel- or *bhel-.

Bortina/Burtina. Analogy with Burum (Galicia) and Burdua (Lusitania) suggests IE *bheu-/bhou- “to grow” (IEW 146), probable root of Welsh bwr “big, strong”, of the Celtic personal name Burros, and possibly of some Gaulish names in Bor-. It is unclear whether such toponyms as Burdoga (Baetica), Burdigala (Aquitania) and Burticum (Dacia and Thrace) also come from this root. If the correct form is “Bortina”, the stem could be IE *bhar-/bhor- “projection, point” (IEW 108) with the IE adjectival suffix -to. Cf. the Celtic personal name Burdo on a medical plaque in the Museo de Zaragoza, with parallels in Gaul, Britain and Italy (HEp. 12, 2202, 552)


Caesaraugusta. The Roman name of the former Salduie (q.v.) is purely Latin, from the imperial name Caesar Augustus with a feminine ending to agree with its title colonia.

Calagurris Fibularia. On Calagurris, see next entry. Fibularia clearly comes from Latin fibula. Hübner (1897) suggests that fibulae may have been made here.

Calagurris Iulia Nasica. Spelled kalakorikos on pre-Latin coinage. Much ink has been spilled over the etymology of Calagurris. The element cala- (which may also occur in the Galician toponym Caladunum, and in such Gaulish ones as Calabrica and Calodurum) could come from IE *kal- “hard” or *kal- “beautiful” (IEW 523-524) though some have suggested that cala is pre-Celtic, meaning “village” or “shelter” (Dauzat 1926-27: 221; Whatmough 1970: 447), or pre-IE, meaning “stone” or “fortress” (Fouché 1939; Buesa Oliver 1958: 141). The second element of the name has been

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Evans 1967: 154. Pokorny (IEW 109) invoked a root *bhors- which is rejected by Sims-Williams (2000: 10) as the source of bwr and Burros.
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related to Basque gorri “red”, though Menéndez Pidal (1920: 44; 1968: 17), arguing that the “u” in Calagurris could not come from gorri, preferred Basque uri “city”. But Villar (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 450) argues that this is impossible, since the Paleobasque word for city was il and did not suffer rhotacism until the Middle Ages. I would instead propose IE *gher- “to enclose”, therefore “beautiful (or hard) enclosure”. The surnames Iulia and Nasica are Latin, Nasica being the name of several members of the Cornelius Scipio family. Gabba (1976: 197) suggests that Sciipio Nasica, praetor 194 B.C., was the town’s eponymous patron.

Car(a(e). The root *kar(r)- “stone”, found frequently in the toponymy of western Europe, is generally considered pre-IE (LEIA C-42; Rivet and Smith 1979: 288; Villar and Prósper 2005: 450-452); but the ultimate root could be IE *kar- “hard” (Falileyev 2000: 22). Possible parallels include the tribal names Caristi or Carietek (neighbours of the Varduli and Autrigones) and Careni (in Caledonia: Ptol. II, 3, 8), and the towns Caraca (Carpetani), Corontium (Galicia) and Carasa (Gaul: IA 455, 9).

Caravis/karauex. This name should come from the same root as Car(a(e). It is paralleled by the Illyrian city Caravantis (Livy XLIV, 30, 9) and by the Carvanca mountains between Noricum and Pannonia, all from *kar-w- “stone” (Anreiter 2001: 50).

Carduae. A place named by Martial (IV, 55, 17) in the vicinity of Bilbilis. While Tovar (1989: 394) posits a Latin etymology from cardus “wild thistle, artichoke”, I would prefer IE *kar- “hard” with suffix -to/-do- (Epic Greek kartos “strength”, Gothic hardus “hard, strong”: IEW 531-32). The same theme is found in Cardia in Thrace (Pliny IV, 48) and Cardena in Belgica (Rav. 234,7). The ending -ua occurs in many toponyms in Hispania and elsewhere (Villar and Prósper 2005: 75).

Cascantum/kaiskata. This may come from either IE *kas- “elevated” or *kas- “grey”, with suffix -ko- (Villar 2000: 312; Villar and Prósper 2005: 453). There are Gaulish names Cascus and Cascellus (Whatmough 1970: 689; Weisgerber 1969: 255 note 54) that might refer to “grey”. An island Cascandrus was located in the Persian Gulf (Pliny VI, 110), which if Persian could be an IE name.

Caum. The IE root *keu(e)/kau(e)- “vault, hole” can indicate something enclosed (Welsh cau am “to enclose”, Old Breton cau “closed”, cf. Latin cavea “cage”) or hollow (Welsh cau “hollow”, Latin cavus). Caum may therefore denote either an enclosed site, or one in a depression. The cited parallels suggest a Celtic name.

Celsa/kelse. Tovar (1989: 395) makes the name Iberian. A derivation from IE *kel- “to tower, lofty” seems excluded by the low topography of the site (Hübner 1899: 1881), unless it was “high” in terms of importance (cf. Latin excelsus “distinguished, excellent”).

Cemelon. The name is reconstructed from the mention in Diodorus Siculus (XXIX, 28) of a city of the “Kemeletes”. A possible parallel is afforded by the Ligurian toponym Cemenelon (modern Cimiez). Dottin
(1920: 244) evokes an oronymic root *kem- (Old Welsh cemn “back, ridge”, Gaulish Cebenna “Cévennes”), not inIEW.\(^7\)

**Cinca.** The name’s similarity to the river Cinga (above) suggests that it too comes from IE *kenk- “to gird”, implying an enclosed site, though not necessarily from Celtic *cing-. Cf. the Celtiberian suprafamilial name kinkiskum (Villar 1995: 141).

**Contrebia Belaisca/kontebakom.** The name is paralleled by Contrebia Carbica among the Carpetani, and Contrebia Leucada among the Pelendones. Contrebia is purely Celtic, from *con- “together” plus *treb- “dwelling”, cf. Old Irish contreba “he dwells” (LEIA C-202). On names in Bel- see above on Belisio. The closest analogy is a suprafamilial name Belaisocum in Portugal (González Rodríguez 1986: 124). The suffix -sca, traditionally branded “Ligurian”, may well be IE, as it is often attached to an IE stem (e.g. Vipasca in Lusitania, from IE *wepe- “water”; Virosvesca, discussed below; and cf. familial names such as uriascum in Botorría Bronze III).

**Cortonum/kortono.** Such parallels as the toponyms Cortona (Etruria), Cortoriacum (Belgica), Corticata (an island off Galicia) and the Celtiberian adjective kortikos suggest a Celtic root *corto- derived either from IE *kert- “to wind” (Isaac 2004) or, more likely, from IE *gher-to- “enclosure” (Beltrán, Hoz and Untermann 1996: 120).\(^8\)

**Curnonium.** The obvious root is Celtic *cern- “upper part, tip, horn” (Old Irish cern “angle, corner”, Middle Breton quern “top of head”, Welsh curn “heap, mound, cone”, Gaulish theonym Curnunos “the antlered one”), cognate with Latin cornu “horn”. The meaning for our toponym appears to be a site with a pointed summit. The ending -onium is paralleled in Istonium (Celtiberia) and Tullonium (Varduli).

**Damania/tamaniu.** Prósper (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 336) suggests an IE etymology *dom-an-yo- from *dem-/dom- “household” (IEW 198). Old Irish dám “band, company” may come from the same root (so LEIA D-20), though Lewis and Pedersen (1974: 6) prefer, perhaps rightly, a derivation from IE *da-mo- “people” (IEW 175). But another option is Celtic *damo- “tamed animal”, whence Gaulish damos “ox, deer”, Old Irish dám “ox”, Middle Irish damán “calf or fawn”, also an Irish man’s name Damán (DIL D/1, 62).

**Deobriga.** This town of the Autrigones has a homonym among the Vettones (Ptol. II, 5, 7); cf. the diminutive Deobrigula among the Turmogi (Ptol. II, 6, 51). The derivation is Celtic, *dewo- “god” plus -briga “hillfort”.

**Ebelinum.** If Eblana in Ireland truly represents a Celtic *(p)ipeleena “crowded place” from IE *pele(e)- “to approach”, cognate with Latin populus

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\(^7\) A British root *comel- appears to be the etymon of Old Breton cemel, Welsh cyfyl “edge, vicinity” (Jackson 1953: 487; Fleuriot 1964: 100) but cannot easily be linked to our toponym.

\(^8\) A divine name Cordomus, attested on two panels of the large Celtiberian inscription from Peñalba de Villastar, is possibly related (Beltrán Lloris, Jordán Cólera and Marco Simón 2005: 936-941, who suggest, p. 939, that Cortonum might therefore be a theophoric name), though in view of the spelling it might better be derived from IE *kerd- “craft” (Old Irish cerd “art, artist”: IEW 579), referring to a god of craftsmen.
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A personal name Ebelinus occurs in northern Italy (CIL V, 7850).

Ebera. A toponym with homonyms in Lusitania and Galicia. Its etymology is Celtic *ebru- “yew tree”, from IE *ereb(h)- “dark red or brown”. There is an Eborodunum in Italy, and various Eburo- toponyms in Gaul, Germany and Britain.

Eraga. The root could be IE *er- “earth” (Old Cornish and Welsh erw “field”: Padel 1985: 95) with suffix -aga as in Tarraga (below). However, A. Falileyev (oral communication, 2007) suggests that the Dacian toponym Eractum could be Celtic, from *(p)eri- “around” and *ag- “to go”. If so, Eraga might mean a place that a river or road goes around.

Ergavica. The similarity of this toponym to the Ercavica in Celtiberia (Pliny III, 24; Ptol. II, 6, 57) suggests a Celtic origin. Carnoy (1907: 11) proposed IE *(p)erkwo- “oak” plus *weik- “to fight”; Sims-Williams (2006: 122) considers a derivation from *weik- “formally admissible”. Meanwhile, Villar (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 458-459) thinks Erca and -av- are hydronyms. I have suggested elsewhere (Curchin 1997: 267) that we have a divine name Erga (also attested in Gaul: Whatmough 1970: 254), possibly from IE *erku- “to shine”, plus a cognate of Latin vicus “village” from IE *weik- “to dwell”.

Forum Gallorum. The name is Latin, implying a market for Gaulish traders from the north. On Gauls in this region, see F. Beltrán Lloris (2006a, especially 196-197). There is another Forum Gallorum in northern Italy.

Gallica Flavia. A Latin name, implying a Gallic settlement that was granted an imperial surname by the Flavians.

Gallicum. This is the neuter form (perhaps agreeing with an understood “oppidum”) of the Latin adjective Gallicus. Like Forum Gallorum, Gallica Flavia, and the Pagus Gallorum on the bronzes of Gallur and Agón (M. Beltrán Lloris 1977; F. Beltrán Lloris 2006b), it reflects the presence of Gauls in the Subpyrenaic zone.

Gergium. If this is not an error for Bergidum, it may be related to Gergovia in Gaul, presumably from IE *gher- “to enclose”.

Graccuris. Festus (86, 5) informs us that this town was named after Sempronius Gracchus (governor of Citerior in 179 B.C.) and was previously called Ilurci. It combines his Latin name with an indigenous ending. On the problem of whether uri can mean “city”, see above on Calagurris.

Grall(ium). Known from the inscription of a Gralliensis (CIL II, 4244). Villar (1995: 27) identifies it with the pre-Roman mint karaluz, whose nominative form could be *Grallom. On Botorrta Bronze IV (Villar et al. 2001: 112) we seem to have the same toponym in the accusative form karalom. A possible etymology is IE *gher-/ghre- “to project, stand out” with extension -et/-ed- and diminutive suffix -lo-; thus *gratlom “small projection, knoll”.

Iacca/iaka. The root is Celtic *iecco- “healthy”, from IE *iek- “to heal” (Welsh and Cornish iach, Old Breton iac “healthy”), found also in the

9 However, as Lewis and Pedersen (1974: 26) point out, IE “p” between vowels disappears in Irish (after initially becoming “f”); it should not become “b”.

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Celtic personal name Iaccus (Delamarre 2003: 185). Vitruvius (De archit. 1, 4, 1) tells us that a healthy location was an important factor in siting a town.

Ilerda/Iltirta. The name may be related to that of the Ilergetes, which on coins appears to be Iltirkesken (Tovar 1989: 46). We also have Iberian personal names in ilir- or ildir- (Albertos Firmat 1966: 123). There was another Ilerda on the Iberian coast, according to Avienus (Ora mar. 475), and Vibius Sequester (Flumina 91) mentions a river Ilerda. It- seems to be an Iberian term for “city” (see Iluberis), though personal, ethnic and river names containing this element may come from a different root (Hoz 2005: 76).

Iluberis. The name is Iberian, paralleled by Iliberris (Baetica), Ilubaria (Bastetania) and Eliberry (Aquitania). Ili/ilu appears, from its frequent occurrence in coastal town-names, to be Iberian for “city”. Berri means “new” in Basque; if this is a loan-word from Iberian, we would have the meaning “new city” (Menéndez Pidal 1968: 246). Alternatively, Villar (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 461) derives -uberis from IE *uba “water, river”, comparing the ethnonyms Uberi (Alps), Uberae (India).

Ilurcis. The name combines Iberian il(u) “city” with an element urc-/urg- found in many Hispanic toponyms (Ilurco, Isturgi, Lucurgentum, Urci, etc.). Villar (2000: 211-221) derives -urberis from IE *ur- “water”, yet none of his Hispanic examples is a hydronym. It is therefore quite possible that the urc-names in Hispania are Iberian.

Ilurs(a). The name appears Iberian, cf. Ilurcis (above), Ilurci/Ilurco (Lorca) and Urso (Baetica).

Iologum. If the name is correctly transmitted, there is no clear etymology. The only parallel is a mount Iolon in Perrhaebia, Thessaly.

Iturissa. As a city of the Vascones, it appears to be connected with Basque itur, iturri “spring” (Bertoldi 1953: 412; Tovar 1989: 391), which is also seen as the root of the French river Dorres (Nègre 1990: 39). The name should therefore mean “place beside the spring” (Hubschmid 1960: 461). Although the suffix -issa occurs in Celtic toponyms (Vindonissa, Abissum, Laurissa) and personal names, it can also be “Mediterranean” pre-IE, e.g. Cissa and Mentissa in Cataluña, Larissa in Thessaly.

Labitologa/Tolous. The spellings “Labit[o][o]sa” and “Labitulosa” appear on two inscriptions of M. Clodius Flaccus (CIL II, 5837; HEp. 6, 1996, 600); “Tolous” in the Antonine Itinerary, and “TOLO(---)” on local tiles (Navarro Caballero et al. 2004). The element lab- occurs in the Celtic (?) personal name Labio (AcS III, col. 114) and in the toponyms Labisco (Narbonensis) and Laberus (Ireland), though the last of these is probably related to the river-name Labrona, from Celtic *(p)labro- “to babble” (De Bernardo Stempel 2000: 104). Neither IE *lab- “to lick, smack”, *leb- “to hang loosely; lip”, nor *plab- “to flap” seems appropriate to a town-name. The second element recalls Tolosa in Narbonensis and Toletum in Carpetania (both of questionable Celtlicity), another Toletum in Galicia (AE 1961, 96) and the Galatian tribe Tolistobogii (which contains the Celtic element *bogio-). However, the correct root might be IE *twel- “lump, mass” (see below on Tullica).
Leonica. Theoretically this could refer to a place founded by a Leonicus, a Latin cognomen from leo “lion” (Kajanto 1965: 327); but the name is not attested in Spain.

Lib(i)a. Like the Libici of Italy, the name may be Celtic, from *lob- “amiable” (De Bernardo Stempel 2000: 90); therefore “friendly place”? Other comparanda include Libana (Celtiberia), Libora (Carpetania), Libisosa (Oretania), Libunca (Galicia).

Mendiculeia. A homonym in Lusitania (Ptol. II, 5, 6) excludes the possibility of an etymology from Basque mendi “mountain” (Garvens 1964: 16). Very similar is the village-name Mendicoleiu in Lucania. The likeliest root is IE *mento- “projection”, cf. Welsh mynyd, Cornish menedh “hill, mountain” (from Brittonic *monid: Schrijver 1995: 34). However, the vocalization of Mendiculeia seems to reflect the zero grade of the IE root, rather than the result of -o- > -i- as in the Insular Celtic examples.

Muscaria. The Latin adjective muscarius refers to flies (muscae), therefore “fly-town”. Canto (1999: 350) suggests that the name comes not from musca, but from muscus “moss”. However, muscarius is not attested in that sense.

Nemanturista. This name has been compared with the Alpine tribe Nematuri or Nemeturi. The root might be Celtic *nemeto- “sanctuary” (Tovar 1989: 409) or *namanto- “enemy” (Gorrochategui 2005: 161). The second element has sometimes been seen as incorporating the hydronym Tur- which has traditionally been regarded as Iberian but could be IE, either from *ter- “to rub” (Villar 1993: 329-330) or from *tur- “to swell” (IEW 1083). However, I would propose a totally IE solution: nemant- as a present participle from IE *nem- “to turn, bend” (IEW 764) plus IE *ura “river” and the IE superlative ending -isto- (cf. Greek -istos).

Nertobriga/nertobis. There is a homonym in Baetica (Ptol. II, 4, 10). The name means “strong fortress” in Celtic, from *nerto- “strength”.

Oiarso. The name seems clearly related to Basque oi(h)ar “woods” (Ramírez Sádaba 2002: 110; Villar and Prósper 2005: 466).

oilaunu. This appears to derive from Celtic *ouyi-lo- “sheep” (Isaac 2002). There is a toponym Oelunum in Baetica (CIL II 5467, cf. 1646) which might be related.

okelakom. A coin legend, traditionally read okalakom, but the relevant sign (also found in bolsken and sekeiza) now appears to be ke rather than ka (Rodríguez Ramos 2001-02). The name is therefore Celtic, from *ocele- “promontory” with suffix -aco-.

olkairun. The initial element of this mint-name is Celtic *(p)olca “field”, also found in the tribal name Olcades and the Galician toponym Olca. Tovar (1979: 473) derives the second part from Basque ir “city”, but this form does not appear until the Middle Ages (Villar and Prósper 2005: 467). However, we could have *ole(a)-air(e)n, perhaps comparable with Old Irish airm “place” (LEIA A-47).

Orcia. Its etymology has been variously regarded as Celtic *(p)orc- “salmon” (Gorrochategui 2005: 163) or the IE hydronym *ur- from *(a)ur- “water” (Villar 2000: 212). Also possible is Celtic *(p)orc- “pig” (Old Irish orc), cf. Succosa, below. There are homonymous toponyms Orcia in Asia, Greece and Dacia (Villar 2000: 218) as well as Orcelis in Bastetania; also a
personal name *Orcius* (*CIL* XIII, 1452) and divine name *Orcia* (*CIL* III, 8151).

**orosiz.** A word or “edge, boundary” is preserved in Old Irish and Old Welsh, but could be a borrowing from Latin *ora* (*LEIA* O-26). The name is more likely Iberian, cf. the *Orospeda* mountains (from Iberian -bed-/ped- according to Hoz 1993: 658 note 64). The resemblance to Greek *oros* “mountain”, from IE *or-* “to raise”, is probably coincidental.

**Osca.** The linguistic transition from *bolšken* to Osca is not easy, despite the attempts of Faria (2005: 276) to conjecture a transitional form *olšken*, and of Luján (2005: 487) to invoke an Iberian prefix “b”. It remains unclear whether there is a philological link between the two names. *Osca* appears to come from an IE root *osc-* seen in numerous toponyms such as *Osca* and *Osqua* (Baetican towns), *Osci* (a Campanian tribe) and *Osca* (a river in Umbria) (Villar and Prósper 2005: 113).\(^{10}\)

**Osicerda/usekerte.** IE *osti-* “ash tree” (*IEW* 782) may explain the first part of the name. For -cerda we have a choice between Celtic *cerdh-* “mountain ash” (Cornish *cerden*, Welsh *cerdhin*, Irish *caorthain*), in which case *Osicerda* is a bilingual pleonasm “ash-ash (place)”, like “river Avon” or “puente de Alcántara”, and Celtic *cerd-* “market” (Old Breton *cerd*, Welsh *cerdd*). Fleuriot 1964: 103).

**Otogesa.** Celtic *gaes-* “spear” does not seem suitable for a town. The toponym *Otohesa* from *Edetania* (Ptol.’s Etobesa, but coins read *otobesken* and *CIL* II, 3794 has *Otobesanu* and mention of *oto-iltiŕ* in an Iberian inscription (Velaza 1991: 201), suggest that we have an Iberian name. *Pertusa*. Though sometimes taken as an error for *Bergusia*, the name is preserved in the modern toponym Pertusa, at the exact location indicated in the Itinerary (Roldán Hervás 1975: 257-258). Latin *pertusus* “perforated” does not befit a place-name. The etymology could be P-Celtic *pert-* “wood” (Welsh *perth* “bush”, Gaulish toponym *Perta*, cognate with Old Irish *ceirt* “apple tree”) from IE *perkwo-* “oak” (*IEW* 822). In this case we would have Gaulish influence (cf. above on *Gallicum*), since Celtiberian is Q-Celtic. But the name may simply represent IE *pertus* “crossing place, ford” (*IEW* 817), cf. a road station Pertusa in Africa (*IA* 45, 6).

**Pom(a)elo.** Ancient sources tell us the name means “city of Pompey” (Strabo III, 4, 10; Athenaeus XIV, 657), implying that -elo may be a variant spelling of Iberian *ilu* “city” (cf. above, Andelos). The spelling “-aelo” is probably a Latin hypercorrection.

**Sala.** The root of this toponym is probably IE *sal-* (literally “salt”) which is frequently an element in river names: cf. above on river *Salo*.

**Salduvia/saltuie.** Apparently Iberian, since several Iberian words in inscriptions begin *saldu*- (Siles 1985: 290).

**Salionca.** Despite its resemblance to Greek and Latin *saliunca* “Celtic nard”, it is likelier to come from IE *sal-* “salt” (García Alonso 1994: 509; Gorrochategui 2005: 159), denoting a place where salt is gathered. There are numerous parallels, such as *Saliobriga* (Germany), *Saliocanus* (a seaport in Brittany) and *Saliacus* (the presumed etymon of 25 places in France and

\(^{10}\) But *Oscela* (Graian Alps), cited by Villar and Prósper loc. cit., surely derives from Celtic *oscel-* “ash tree”, cf. Old Breton *oscaill*, Gaulish *oskela*, Irish *escal-* (Fleuriot 1964: 279).
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Belgium, from a personal name Salius: AcS II, col. 1306-1307). The ending -onca is also IE (ibid., col. 855).

Segeda/sekeiza. Documented in literary sources (Strabo III, 4, 13; Appian, Iber. 44; Florus I, 34) and by coins of sekeiza. The root is Celtic *sego- “powerful, strong” from IE *segh- “to hold”. Cf. the Segardinensis pagus, mentioned in an inscription from Gallur (HEp. 9, 1999, 612).

Segia. Although located among the Vascones, this name is formally compatible with Celtic (Sims-Williams 2006: 108), from the same root as Segeda.

Segisamunculum. Clearly a diminutive of the toponym Segisamon, a town of the Turmogi. Segismamon is itself a Celtic superlative, from *sego- (see Segeda) plus -samo- (Curchin 1997: 273). There was also a Segisama Iulia among the Vaccarri.

Segontia. This road station has homonyms in Segontia of the Arevaci, and Segontia Paramica of the Vaccarri or Varduli (Ptol. II, 6, 49 and II, 6, 65). The name is formed from Celtic *sego- (see Segisamunculum) with ending -ntia (cf. Numantia, Palantia). The name appears with different vocalization as Seguntium in Britain, and is arguably cognate with Saguntum (Villar and Prósper 2005: 472).

Sermonae. This name comes from the IE noun *sermo- “flow” (IEW 909), the base of numerous place-names such as Sermio near Brescia and Sirmium in Pannonia.

Stissum. The root is perhaps IE *stei- “stone” (IEW 1010). However, the -sso- ending may be pre-IE, cf. Iturissa.

Succosa. Although numerous Gaulish personal names begin with Suc- (Sucarius, Sucinius, Sucomus etc.) from *su- “good, well” (Evans 1966: 257-258), the double “c” in Succosa suggests we are dealing with Celtic *suc- “pig” (Old Irish socc, Old Welsh huch, glossed sus); therefore, “Pig-town”. The ending -osa is paralleled by Tolosa (Narbonensis), Metercosa (Carpetania), Dertosa and Egosia (Cataluña).11

Suestatium. The name appears related to that of the Sussetani (a people of Cataluña or the Ebro valley: see discussion in Tovar 1989: 41-42) and Suessiones (Belgica), possibly from IE *swedh- “one’s own” (Sanskrit svadhá “custom”, Gothic swe:s “property”, Latin suescere “become accustomed”: Isaac 2002), rather than from Celtic *suecs- “six”. There is a personal name Suissetarten on the Ascoli bronze (CIL I2, 709) which Caro Baroja (1981: 4) thinks is related to Suissetani.

Tarraca/Tarragona. Villar (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 472-473) would derive the name from IE *ter(e)- “to rub” with suffix -ko. An alternative possibility is suggested by Old Icelandic tarra “to spread out”, perhaps from IE *ster- “to spread out” (contrary to IEW 203). Tarraca and Tarraco could of course be Iberian; but the parallel of Tarracina on the Latium-Campania border supports an IE origin.

Telobis/Tolobi. The likeliest root is IE *tel- “even, flat; ground” (whence Latin tellus: IEW 1061). Cf. the Gaulish toponyms Telo Martius

11 Succosa in Etruria is not a parallel, as it represents Sub Cosa (Schulten 1931). However, a place Succossia, attested south of the river Loire in AD 565 (Holder II, 1653), might be related.
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(Narbonensis) and Telonnum (Lugdunensis). Villar (2002: 68) would see -ob- as a hydronym.

**Tirzo**. The signs ti.r. may represent tri, therefore Prósper (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 218) proposes an etymology from IE *trityo- “third”. It may be the same place as Tritium Autrigonum, but this is uncertain. Cf. the personal name Tritius, common in Asturias and neighbouring districts (Abascal Palazón 1994: 532) and cognate with the Gaulish name Tritos (Lambert 1995: 130).


*Tritium Magallum*. On Tritium, see Tritium Autrigonum. Magallum appears to be Celtic, either from *mago- “field, plain” (Gaulish magos, Old Irish mág) or from *magalo- “great” (Gaulish personal name Magalos, Old Irish mál “prince”). Toponymic parallels include Magalonium and Maqlona (Britain) and Magalona (Narbonensis).

**Tullica**. As with Tullonium of the Varduli and Tullium (variant Tullum) in Belgica, the probable root is IE *twel- “lump, mass”, whence Old Irish tul “protuberance, knoll”, Middle Irish and Gaelic tulch “hill”, Welsh twlch “hillock”, and numerous Scottish place-names in Tulli- or Tully- (Johnston 1934: 316).

**Turiaso/turiazu**. This is one of numerous Hispanic names in Tur- which may derive from an IE hydronymic root *ter- or *tur- (see above on Nemanturista).

**Umanbaate**. Taken as Iberian by Villar (in Villar and Prósper 2005: 504 note 540). However, the presence of an Umana river in northern Italy and a Battiana in Lugdunensis (both in the Tabula Peutingeriana) suggest the possibility of a Celtic etymology. Old Irish umae means “copper, bronze”, from *em- “red” (LEIA U-24). The existence of a Celtic root *bat- “to strike”, cognate with Latin battuere “to strike”, battualia “fighting exercise” (English battle), is suggested by the Latin word andabata “gladiator whose helmet had no eye openings”, obviously from Celtic *ando- “dark, blind”.

There are also Celtic(? personal names Battaces, Battalus and Buttu-batta (AcS I, col. 360). Our toponym may therefore be Celtic for “bronze-strike”, a place where bronze is struck into coinage.

**Uxama Barca.** Uxama is a Celtic superlative *ouks-sama “most elevated” from IE *ups- “high” (Old Irish usal, Welsh uchel, Gaulish uxxello-). Barca was equated by early scholars with the Carthaginian surname Barca (Arbois de Jubainville 1894: 12) or with Basque ibar “valley” (Schuchardt 1907: 557). However, a more attractive etymology is IE *bhar- “projection, point” (Old Irish barr “summit”, Welsh and Cornish bar) with adjectival suffix -ko-.

**Vareia/uarakos.** The name may be descended either from IE *wer- “to enclose, defend” (De Bernardo Stempel 2005: 78) or from the hydronym *uaro- “water”, derived from IE *wer- but variously explained as Celtic (Rivet and Smith 486; Delamarre 2003: 301; Isaac 2002) or pre-Celtic
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(Nègre 1990: 45). Possible parallels include Varada (Celtiberia, Varar (Britain), Argentovaria (Upper Germany) and the rivers Vara, Varia, Varis and Varus (Villar and Prósper 2005: 480).

Veleia. Pre-Latin coins bear the legend κυειοκος, which suggests that Veleia is a Romanized form of an indigenous *Kwelia or *Gwelia, cf. the Quelediani of Asturias (Diego Santos 1986: n. 30). The most plausible root is IE *wel- “to turn, bend”, often used of curved enclosures (Bascuas López 1999: 204-06). There is another Veleia in Cisalpine Gaul.¹²

Vindeleia. The root is Celtic *uindo- “white”. There are many Celtic parallels for this name (see Sims-Williams 2006: 123-124), the closest being Vindelicia in Raetia.

Virovesca/uiriouia. The first part of the name appears Celtic, but as with the various Viro- toponyms in Gaul and Britain it is unclear whether we are dealing with *uīro- “man” or *uīro- “true” (Rivet and Smith 1979: 505; García Alonso 2003: 292). The first seems unlikely for a toponym (but cf. Mannheim “man-home” in Germany), while the second is obvious only in certain contexts, e.g. *Virotiunum “true fortress”. Another possibility is Celtic *uīr- “to bend, twist” from IE *wer- “to turn, bend” (IEW 1152), attested in Celtic viriolae, Celtiberian viriae “bracelets” (Pliny XXXIII, 39) and perhaps capable of describing a river. Much therefore depends on the meaning of the second element. If indeed the name was originally Virovia, -via would be merely a toponymic suffix as in Sego-via or Cano-vium (Britain). Very similar in structure is the divine name Vurovius, which is probably related to *uīro- “man” (Solana Sáinz 1978: 186). A possible Celtic etymology for -vesca is provided by Gaulish vesu- “good, valuable” which may lose its “u” when followed by “c” (as suggested by the personal name Viscarius and adjective viscara, hypothetically from *uesu-caro-: Delamarre 2003: 318); so Viro-ves-ca could mean “good place for men” or “truly precious place”. But as an alternative to a Celtic derivation, the name could be composed of the IE roots *g’er(e)- “mountain” and *wes- “to dwell” with ending -ka, therefore “mountain dwelling-place”.

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of 111 Ebro toponyms reveals the following definite or probable linguistic ascriptions:

Iberian: 11 (10%): (H)iberus; Bilbilis, bolšken, Celsa, Ilerda, Iluberis, Ilurcis, Ilurs(a), orosiz, Otogesa, Saldavia.
Basque: 2 (2%): Iturissa, Oiarso.
Greek: 1 (1%): Chalybs.
Indo-European (not demonstrably Celtic): 41 (37%): Salo, Sicos, Turasia; Agiria, Alanto, Alavona, Andelos, Antequia, aratis, Articabe, Auci, Beldalin, Belsio, Bergidum, Bergusia, Bituris, Bortina, Cara(e), Caravis, Carduae, Cascantum, Cemelon, Cinca, Gergium, Grallium, Mendiculeia,

¹² The Veliocasses of Narbonensis more likely derived their name from a root *velio- “well-bred”, cf. Irish fėle “modesty” (Gorrochategui 2005: 160).
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Nemanturista, Osca, Pertusa, Sala, Salionca, Sermonae, Stissum, Suestatium, Tarraca, Telobis, tirzoz, Tullica, Turiaso, Vareia, Veleia.

Celtic: 37 (33%): Caius, Edulium; Cinga, Dercenna; Albonica, Anabis, Arcobriga, arzkakoz, Atanagrüm, Boletum, Bursao, Caum, Contrebria Belaisca, Cortonum, Curnonium, Damania, Deobriga, Ebelinum, Ebora, Eraga, Ergavica, Iac(ce)ta, Lib(i)tä, Nertobriga, oilaun(om), okelakom, olkairun, Orca, Segeda, Segisamunculum, Segia, Segontia, Succosa, umana, Uxama Barca, Vindeleia, Virovesca.

Indo-European/Celtic hybrid: 3 (3%): Osicerda, Tritium Autrigonum, Tritium Magallum.

Indo-European/Latin hybrid: 2 (2%): Calagurris Fibularia, Calagurris Iulia Nasica.

Latin: 9 (8%): Ad Novas, Atiliana, Barbariana, Caesaraugusta, Forum Gallorum, Gallica Flavia, Gallicum, Leonica, Muscaria.

Latin-Iberian hybrid: 2 (2%): Graccurus, Pomp(a)elo.

uncertain: 3 (3%): Idubeda; Iologum, Labitulosa.

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Fig. 1: Map of Ebro Valley showing toponyms of known location