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Tyther- as a place-name element

Richard Coates (pp. 35–42)

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ABBREVIATIONS OF COUNTIES AND EPNS COUNTY SURVEYS

Co	Cornwall
Ha	Hampshire
He	Herefordshire
K	Kent
La	Lancashire
Nb	Northumberland
Sf	Suffolk
So	Somerset
Wt	Isle of Wight
CPNE	<i>Cornish Place-Name Elements.</i>
EPNE	<i>English Place-Name Elements, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN BdHu	<i>The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire.</i>
PN Brk	<i>The Place-Names of Berkshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Bu	<i>The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire.</i>
PN Ca	<i>The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.</i>
PN Ch	<i>The Place-Names of Cheshire, Parts 1–5.</i>
PN Cu	<i>The Place-Names of Cumberland, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN D	<i>The Place-Names of Devon, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Db	<i>The Place-Names of Derbyshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Do	<i>The Place-Names of Dorset, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Du	<i>The Place-Names of County Durham, Part 1.</i>
PN Ess	<i>The Place-Names of Essex.</i>
PN ERY	<i>The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York.</i>
PN Gl	<i>The Place-Names of Gloucestershire, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Hrt	<i>The Place-Names of Hertfordshire.</i>
PN Le	<i>The Place-Names of Leicestershire, Parts 1–6.</i>
PN Li	<i>The Place-Names of Lincolnshire, Parts 1–7.</i>
PN Mx	<i>The Place-Names of Middlesex (apart from the City of London).</i>
PN Nf	<i>The Place-Names of Norfolk, Parts 1–3.</i>
PN Nt	<i>The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire.</i>
PN NRY	<i>The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire.</i>
PN Nth	<i>The Place-Names of Northamptonshire.</i>
PN O	<i>The Place-Names of Oxfordshire, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN R	<i>The Place-Names of Rutland.</i>
PN Sa	<i>The Place-Names of Shropshire, Parts 1–6.</i>
PN Sr	<i>The Place-Names of Surrey.</i>
PN St	<i>The Place-Names of Staffordshire, Part 1.</i>
PN Sx	<i>The Place-Names of Sussex, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN W	<i>The Place-Names of Wiltshire.</i>
PN Wa	<i>The Place-Names of Warwickshire.</i>
PN We	<i>The Place-Names of Westmorland, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Wo	<i>The Place-Names of Worcestershire.</i>
PN WRY	<i>The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Parts 1–8.</i>

***Tyther-* as an English place-name element**

Richard Coates

This paper is an analysis of the remarkable small group of place-names with *Tyther-*, in the modern spelling, as the first element. These names are remarkable in two ways, one of which can probably be addressed successfully and one not. Orthographically, they are notable for the near-universal modern spelling in <y>, representing the short vowel /i/, and after studying the dataset for some time I remain puzzled by the fact. Perhaps this modern spelling consistency was hardened up by the analogy of the word *tythe*, representing a major nineteenth-century social and economic issue, but this was by no means the main contemporary spelling of the word also appearing as *tithe*, and it is the latter form that now predominates in historical works. Structurally, the group stands out because it consists of compounds of *Tyther-* only with *lēah* (× 4, or more probably × 3) and *-ing-tūn* (× 5), two of the most prolific farm- and village-name forming elements or structures in English, and something significant may well be inferrable from this.

The names in question, with a selection of their medieval spellings, are as follows:

1. With *lēah*:

West and East Tytherley, Hampshire (PN D 654; Gover 1961: 191; Coates 1989: 165)

Tiderlei, Tederleg’ 1086, *Tuderle(g)* 1218, *Tidderleg*h 1252, *Tuderley* alias *Est Tyderley* 1414, *Est/West Tetherley* 1579, *West Tutherley* al. *West Tedderley* 1597

Tytherleigh in Chardstock, Devon (PN D 654; formerly in Dorset, PN Do 4 275–6)

Tiderlege t. Hy 2, *Tuderlege* 1201, *Tidderleg(a)* c.1226–8, 1251, *Tydderleye* 1288, *Tytherleigh* 1597

Tytherley Farm in Hinton Charterhouse, Somerset

No early spellings are known. I have found no form definitely earlier than those recorded in 1799 (*Titherley*), 1802 and 1807 (*Tytherly*), in the Somerset Heritage Centre online catalogue (see documents DD\BR\wt/12, DD\RG/1 and DD\RG/35 respectively). The name

may either be copied from Hampshire or Devon/Dorset or more probably be from the surname now generally spelt *Tytherleigh*, which has its focus in Somerset (see footnote 1).

There was formerly a place named **Titherley** in Whitbourne, Herefordshire, for information about which I am indebted to John Freeman. This is the only name for which a general modern form, before its disappearance from maps around 1900, had <i> rather than <y>.¹

Olde tuderley 15th cent. (Charles and Emanuel 1955: 83), *Tudderley*, *Nether Tudderley*, *ouertudderley*, (grove called) *ouer Tudderley*, *Tudderley broke*, *the Topp of Tudderley hill*, and *Tudderley way/vey* (all in Butterfield's Survey of the estates of the bishopric of Hereford, c.1578), *Tetherley* 1838 TA (map) and 1891 (OS 6"), *Titherley* 1840 (TA (apportionment), Whitbourne) and 1841 (TA (apportionment), Tedstone Delamere)

2. With *-ingtūn*:

East Tytherton and the manor of **Tytherton Kelways** (later simply **Kellaways** and variants); and **West Tytherton/Tytherington Lucas**, both in Chippenham, Wiltshire (PN W 91–2, 99); originally an *-ingtūn* name from which the connective element *-ing* disappeared around 1600. Kellaways was a hamlet west of, and in the parish of, East Tytherton, which could itself be known as *Tyther(ing)ton Kellaways* and variants (CDEPN 338b, 634b).

Tedrintone 1086, *Tiderinton* c.1155, *Tuderington* 1202, *Tudrintone* 1211, *Tiderington* 1227, *Tidderinton* 1248, *Tutheryngton* 1453, *Tethryngton* 1513, *Titherton* 1603

Tytherington, parish in Gloucestershire (PN G1 3 19–20 and xi)²

Tidrentvne 1086, *Tuderinton'* 1272–8, *Tyddrington'* 1287, *Tedryngton* 1503, *Titherington* 1592

Tytherington in Heytesbury, Wiltshire (PN W 168)

Tuderinton 1242, *Toderington* 1279, *Ted(e)ryngton*, *Tydryngton* both 1459 and 1489

Tytherington in Marston Bigot, Somerset (PN W 92, the two medieval spellings apparently being unknown to Watts, CDEPN 634a)

Tyderington 1242, *Tudryngton* 1425, *Tytherington* 1817

Tytherington, a township in Prestbury parish, Macclesfield hundred, Cheshire (PN Ch 1 214); there is a rare administrative sub-tradition in which the *-ing* is lost, as with Tytherton in Chippenham, above.

Tidderington c.1245, *Tiderinton* 1249, *Tuderinton* 13th, *Tederington* 1328, *Tythrenton* 1480; *Tiderton*, *Tudirton* c.1250–88

If it were not for the Cheshire name, we would be able to assert confidently that we were dealing with an element belonging to the south-western counties, or more narrowly still to Greater Wessex; in fact all the Tyther(ing)tons except the Cheshire one are within 18 miles of Bath.³ The Cheshire place is on record since about 1240, and for about half of its recorded history, allegedly from the beginning of the fourteenth century, though I do not know on what authority,⁴ it was in the hands of the Worth family who evidently took their name from a nearby hamlet (which is discussed at PN Ch 1 207). That greatly reduces the probability that the place-name was copied from one of the more southerly instances. It is striking that most of the nine (eight) places were mere farms or hamlets, and that only two have achieved parish status. The Hampshire Tytherley, presumably once a single estate, now consists of the manors of East and West Tytherley, which are also in separate ancient parishes sharing these names (VCH 4: 515–24). Tytherington in Gloucestershire is also an ancient parish. Kellaways became a separate civil parish as late as 1895, at first under the name *Tytherington Kellaways* (Youngs 1979: 551), which was abolished in 1934.⁵

Agreeing an etymology for the element rendered *Tyther-* has proved difficult, though as we shall see Arngart (1972) offered a good pointer in the direction we explore below. A. H. Smith (PN Gl 3 19–20) argued against possible derivation from the known Anglo-Saxon male personal name *Tidhere*, and showed that the run of spellings for the Gloucestershire name did not strongly support an origin in West Saxon *tīedre* ‘weak, fragile, tender’ or a personal name derived from this, partly since the West Saxon dialect feature of diphthongal <īe> is encountered in only one name-element in this county, namely *hlīep-* (PN Gl 4 67). This second possibility is entirely ruled out in Anglian Cheshire, of course. Watts (CDEPN 634a) adopts the ‘tender’ or ‘thin’ solution suggested in PN D for the Devon Tytherleigh, but for none of the others, and it clearly will not pass muster with *-ing-tūn*. Practically all the names show medieval orthographic variation between <i~y>, <e> and <u>, and all of them show <u> plus one other vowel, indicating that the Old English (OE) source vowel was /y/ in all the names, whether short or long,⁶ and that we are almost certainly dealing with the same element in each instance. But if *tīedre* is not involved, the only plausible OE candidate to explain this element is an *i*-mutated variant of the well-attested neuter noun *tūdor*, *tuddor*⁷ ‘offspring, progeny, product, fruit’, used of animals or plants (ASD 1018a–b, ASD Supp. 725b). In PN Gl (3 19–20), supported in PN Ch (1 214), it is suggested that the element is a personal name *Tȳdre* derived from this word.⁸ The base-word is variable in form as shown, and since it is of unknown origin and appears

to have no lexical cognates in other Germanic languages, it is hard to form a view of what its original form and its inflectional and derivational properties might have been.⁹

Given the original consonantal frame /t...d...r/, one might legitimately compare the variable regional German word *Zieter/Zitter* ‘shaft, thill’ (Kluge-Mitzka 1963: 889), but as will be seen by adducing the accepted cognate of this word, Old Norse *tjóðr* (Cleasby-Vigfusson 1874: 635), which is from Proto-Scandinavian **tēuðr*, the source of English *tether*), this has Germanic **/ēu/*, which in English should have given rise to a form **tēodor*. If such a word had existed in Old English, and there is no evidence for it, this **/ēu/* would have shortened in the first syllable of polysyllabic words such as the names under investigation, but under no circumstances to [y].

All the names show spellings in modern medial <th>, but medieval <d>, <dd>, in a pattern which is completely consistent with the general change in English dialects of the plosive [d] to the fricative [ð] before an immediately following [r] in the fifteenth and especially sixteenth centuries (EDG 231; Luick 1940: 1010–2).

All that seems to leave *tūdor*, *tuddor* as the only viable starting-point for our efforts to explain this group of names, but there seems to be a semantically more plausible avenue to explore than the one involving a personal name, especially seeing that the recorded compounds suggest we are dealing with a lexical word, rather than a personal name for which there is no hard evidence whatever.

We know that *tūdor*, *tuddor* was capable of forming derivatives with an *i*-mutated vowel in OE, because we find the verb *tydrian* ‘to propagate’ and the abstract noun regularly derived from it *tydrung* ‘propagation’.¹⁰ Helpfully, *tuddor* itself appears in the variant reading *tydder* as a gloss on *pignus*, *pignoris*, presumably in the late sense ‘graft, scion’, in the early MS R of Ælfric’s grammar (Zupitza 1880: 59, line 9; ASD Supp. 725b). This variant, if genuine, may be what we find in the relevant names. It suggests that a form of the base-word *tūdor*, *tuddor* with a front rounded vowel existed, which might have been generalized from a dative-locative form with the suffix **-i* causing *i*-mutation in the stem, though that idea is far from compelling and a better one will be presented below. There is an adjective *tyddorfull* recorded in *tydderfullum* ‘fetosis, .i. fecundis’ (‘pregnant’, ‘fertile’; Napier glosses 3135; ASD Supp. 725b; ASD Add. 60b), which also testifies to the existence of the innovative front-vowelled form as an independent base. The existence of the compound adjectives *on-tydre* ‘weakened, debilitated, effete; “sine foetu”, etc.’ (ASD 760a; cf. *on-tydran* ‘to nourish’) and *or-tydre* ‘without offspring, barren’ (ASD 767b), as well

as the noun *un-tȳdre* ‘evil growth, evil progeny, monstrous birth’ (ASD 1135a (cf. *un-tīdre* on 1133a)), are also suggestive, and the latter is further hard evidence for the existence of the noun base with a mutated vowel.

Lēah ‘clearing, wood’ and *-ing-tūn* ‘farm, village, with particular associations (with a person, place, thing or notion)’ are involved in two of the most productive structural types used in English farm and farming village names. Clearly the notions ‘propagation clearing’ and ‘propagation farm’ can be entertained, because we have a well-understood partial parallel in **imp-haga* ‘sapling enclosure’, interpreted by Smith (EPNE 1 280–1) as ‘nursery’, confidently postulated for Limbo Farm (PN Sx 117), and paralleled by several recorded Middle English compounds of *impa~impe* ‘shoot, sapling’ with other ‘enclosure’-words such as the descendants of *croft*, *geard*, *garðr*, and *gehæg* (EPNE 1 281). The geographical distribution of names in *impa~impe* complements that of the *Tyther*- names; they are found in Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Cumberland, with an outlier in Cornwall. This mutual exclusion may be significant, and it certainly does not damage the suggestion made here that the *Tyther*- names have to do with propagation. However, generally speaking, the *impa* names attach only to places of lesser importance such as enclosures.

The recorded existence of *tydrung* ‘propagation’ allows us to ponder whether this word itself is what appears in the *Tytherington* names, as Watts suggests for those in Wiltshire and Cheshire (CDEPN 633b, 634a) and Arngart (1972: 270) for all the five names in question. If we pursue the unified solution that seems desirable, such a suggestion would require us to believe that all instances of **Tydrung-tūn* had undergone assimilation to the overwhelmingly dominant *-ing-tūn* type, unless a form **tyd(d)ring* had also existed, as Arngart (1972) and Watts (CDEPN 633b) appear to assert. Such a suffix-replacement is not impossible, but there is no hard evidence in support of the suggestion. It may be safer to run with the idea that we have the stem of the verb *tydrian* backformed into an independent name-element,¹¹ in a straightforward construction with *-ing-tūn*. This allows us the linguistically parsimonious solution that the types in *lēah* and *-ing-tūn* are structurally parallel, rather than having *tyd(d)or* with *lēah* but *tydrung* with *tūn*. On the other hand, there is good evidence for the existence of compounds with a first element in *-ing* derived from a noun, plus *tūn*, such as Fordington (PN Do 1 348), mentioned in § (c) of *-ing*⁴ in EPNE (1 296) and interpreted there as old place-names in *-ing*, to be taken along with others interpreted as containing singular common nouns by Arngart. These names do not show *i*-mutation of the vowel of the first element by the [i] in *-ing* (witness Fordington itself), and so the necessity to postulate a base-

form with completed *i*-mutation in *Tytherington* still remains. Whatever its precise origin, therefore, we can postulate *tyd(d)or*, in construction with *lēah* and *-ing-tūn* or *-ing + tūn*.

Watts claims that *tyd(d)rung* or his *tyd(d)ring* can be interpreted as ‘stock-breeding’, probably via a reference in PN Ch (5.1.i xx) to the view previously taken by Arngart. This seems to be too narrow an interpretation, especially in view of the existence of the OE word *tȳd(d)erness* ‘branch’ (in *tyddernessa*, a gloss on *propagines*, .i. *soboles*, Napier glosses 3849 (and see Napier’s note); ASD Supp. 726b). This, and the possible analogy of *imp-haga*, suggest that the propagation involved might be vegetable rather than, or at least as well as, animal. I submit that we have enough support for the idea that our two name-types have the general meanings ‘propagation clearing’ (naming a location serving for a farm, and therefore the farm by metonymy) and ‘propagation farm’.

Whichever formal solution we adopt for the first element — backformed *tyd(d)or* or the OE root-variant seen in the Ælfric manuscript, which may ultimately be the same thing, or the (?hypothetical) alternative suffixed form in *-ing* which will help only in the case of *Tytherington* but not *Tytherley* — the pair of name-types we are investigating is one more set to be considered in the debate initiated by Margaret Gelling (see e.g. PN Sa 1 2–4) about whether some classes of *tūn*-names are evidence of the specialized role for some farms in the arrangements of large and complex estates, holdings or networks. This issue has been reviewed most recently in Coates (2012, forthcoming), where the possible significance of the alternation of *lēah* and *tūn* with a particular set of “agricultural” first elements, for instance *wyr̥t* ‘herb’, *brōm* ‘broom’, and *plūme* ‘plum’, is discussed (although names in *-ing-tūn* are not covered there), and where the tentative suggestion is made that the use of these terms represents different degrees of evolution in Anglo-Saxon farming organization and practice.

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Notes

1. John Freeman informs me that there is a single apparently relevant surname record in Herefordshire: John *Tetirley* who held land at Houghton (Bodenham) in 1428 (Feudal Aids 2: 420); Houghton is about 12 miles south-west of Titherley. He also points out that there are not readily explainable clusters of the surname *Titherley* in the Birkenhead (Cheshire) area and of *Tytherleigh* in the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire boundary area in the 1881 census (maps in Archer 2003). It is not out of the question that these recall lost local place-names. If that were the case for the Birkenhead cluster, some revision of the conclusions presented here would be called for. *Tytherleigh* is otherwise a surname with a focus in the south-west, esp. Somerset (Archer 2003).
2. In PN GI (3 20), it is suggested that the same element may appear in the 1592 field-name *Tutterfyld* in this parish.
3. *Titherington* as a surname is strongly focused on Lancashire, and must normally derive from the Cheshire place-name. The spelling *Tytherington* is not found at all in the 1881 census (Archer 2003).
4. See www.manchester2002-uk.com/history/old-families6a.html, accessed 14 April 2011.
5. It cannot be ascertained whether the late-recorded *Ditherington* in Shrewsbury (PN Sa 4 44), a former squatter settlement, is relevant. Perhaps it is most likely to be from *dither* in the sense ‘to tremble with cold’ recorded from Shropshire (EDD: s.v.), as Margaret Gelling surmises.
6. It is true that the proportions of each reflex vary in unexpected ways across the different names, but the point made appears to be valid.
7. Some sources also indicate a long vowel in the form with a geminate consonant; later evidence is inconsistent with that.
8. The possibilities reviewed so far are rehearsed also in DEPN (484b). They also appear piecemeal in the discussion of the individual names in CDEPN (633b–634b), and Watts entertains the solution we suggest below, but only for the Tytheringtons in Cheshire and Wiltshire (633b–634a), and then only as one alternative among other solutions. Arngart (1972: 270) discusses the possibility of a derivative of the “offspring” word in these names, in the context of an argument about *-ing-tūn* names as a type which is not at issue here.
9. Holthausen (1934: 355) suggests that it might be related to the “Germanic” personal names *Tuder*, *Tudru-s* [sic], and the personal name in the Old High German place-name *Zuteres-wīlari*. He identifies no lexical source for these names in Germanic.
10. In the absence of unanimity about the length of the vowel in the root-word, the length of <y> in derivatives remains unspecified below except where a form is quoted from an actual contemporary source (including for these purposes ASD). A short vowel in the modern names is universal because that is a phonological requirement in the first syllable of ancient words, including names, having three syllables or more.
11. The OE independent noun form continues as Middle English (ME) *tuder*, the verb as ME *tüdren*, both becoming obsolete in medieval times, to judge by their entries (*tudder*, *tidder*) in the *Oxford English dictionary*, online, accessed 15 April 2011. No relevant form appears in EDD. The forms in OED also suggest that the long-vowelled forms did not outlast Old English.

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