Australian capital cities: names' lingua-cultural roots and semantic meanings

Liliia Bilas
Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology of
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5514-9799
Larysa Pavlichenko
Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3801-2587

Abstract. *This study puts focus on how historical and linqua-cultural links with Britain are reflected in the names of the Australian capital cities. The names' etymology, semantic meanings, and forms of spelling are traced. The authors reveal the roots of the Australian capital cities names and their parallelism with original English primary source.*
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Rapid globalization is enhancing intercultural links between nations, mutual exchange of their beliefs, views, values, attitudes and ideologies, which helps to raise person's awareness of various cultural, ethnic, and religious identities. At the same time much remains different even within the cultures of the "same" language, as each provide their people with peculiar way of thinking and shaping world view. The countries of English-speaking world could be a vivid example of differences both in language and extra-linguistic collective experiences.

Scholars and researchers in different fields of Lingua-Cultural Studies and Intercultural Communication on both domestic (V. Andrushchenko, F. Batsevych, M. Kocherhan, V. Lykhvar, V. Manakin, V. Parashchuk, H. Pocheptsov, O. Yashenkova and others) and international level (V. Anderson, E. Gellner, E. Hall, A. Holliday, A. Room, O. Taylor, G. Tomakhin and others) lay emphasis on the importance of extra-linguistic knowledge which most vividly reflect the national peculiarities of a certain culture. Obtaining such background knowledge is necessary for successful communication between nations, mutual understanding and respect.

Apart from other English-speaking countries, the roots of Australian cultural heritage are less known for the majority of university students, educators, and secondary school teachers. Hence *the aim* of the article is to reveal the origin of the names of Australian states' capitals, their historical and cultural links with the British culture, as well as to trace the words' etymology, semantic meanings, and forms of spelling.

British influence in Australia is vividly seen in many toponyms, hydronyms and anthroponyms, architecture and design, painting and music, cinematography and literature. British people also brought with them skills, habits, family traditions,

education, their own beliefs and values. In the course of history their experiences in Australia created a new peculiar culture and Australia's identity [1; 3].

The country comprises six states and two territories. Except Canberra (Australian Capital Territory) which name comes from one of the indigenous languages, the names of other states' capital cities are deeply rooted into the British culture and history:

Sydney (/ˈsɪdni/) is the state capital of New South Wales stablished in 1788. Demonym – *Sydneysiders*. The word *Sidney* or *Sydney* is an English surname and is both a masculine and feminine name, with varied meanings. It is of French and Old English origin. The first is *Sid + Eg* meaning *"of the wide island / well-watered land"*. The second is *Sid + Hala* which means *"broad or wide nook"* and finally *"south of the water"*, a reference to Sussex [5].

As to its history, the name was first recorded in 1188 as a French surname. This family settled in Lewes Priory (East Sussex in the United Kingdom) after moving from Normandy. During this time many French families were migrating to Britain after the Norman invasion. The surname Sydney can also be found in various parts of North American immigration records. The Roman Empire's early Christians introduced the name *Sidonius* (*"coming from Sidon"*). It is possible that the name made its way into Britain during the Roman occupation. The word has such variant forms: *Cidney, Sydne, Sydnie* [5].

The city was named after the British Home Secretary, Thomas Townshend, Lord Sydney, in recognition of Sydney's role in issuing the charter authorizing Admiral Arthur Phillip to establish the colony [9].

Melbourne (/ˈmɛlbərn/) – the capital of the state of Victoria and the second most populous city in Australia. Demonym – *Melburnians* or *Melbournians*. The word *Melbourne* is of Old English origin and means *"mill stream"*. It is a popular English surname which has eight variant forms: *Mel, Melborn, Melburn, Milbourn, Milbourne, Milburn, Millburn* and *Millburn*.

Melbourne was named by Governor Sir Richard Bourke in 1837, in honor of the British Prime Minister of the day, William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne (15.03.1779 – 24.11.1848). William Lamb was a British Whig statesman who served as Home Secretary (1830–1834) and Prime Minister (1834 & 1835–1841). He is best known for his intense and successful mentoring of Queen Victoria, at ages 18–21, in the ways of politics [2]. Melbourne was officially declared a city by Queen Victoria in 1847 and in 1851 it became the capital city of the newly created colony of Victoria During the Victorian gold rush of the 1850s, it was transformed into one of the world's largest and wealthiest cities. After the federation of Australia in 1901, it served as the interim seat of government of the newly created nation of Australia until 1927 [5].

Brisbane (/ˈbrɪzbən/), the capital of Queensland, was founded in 1825. Demonym – *Brisbanites*. The city is named after the river on which it sits, which, in turn, was named after Scotsman Major-General Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, 1st Baronet (23.07.1773 – 27.01.1860. While Governor (1821–25). He tackled many problems of a rapidly growing and expanding colony. He worked to improve the land grants system

and to reform the currency. Brisbane's keen interest in science led him to accept the invitation to become the first President of the Philosophical Society of Australasia which later became the Royal Society of New South Wales, the oldest learned institution in the Southern Hemisphere. He also set up the first agricultural training college and was the first patron of the New South Wales Agricultural Society. It was he who built Australia's first observatory and conducted experiments in growing tobacco, cotton, coffee and New Zealand flax in the colony. Thomas Brisbane founded a gold medal for the encouragement of scientific research to be awarded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Sir Brisbane died much respected and honored on 27 January 1860 in Largs, Scotland [6].

Perth (/pɜrθ/) is the capital of the state of Western Australia. Demonym – *Perthites.* The word *Perth* comes from a *Pictish* word for *"wood"* or *"copse"* [4]. Perth was originally founded by Admiral Sir James Stirling (28.01.1791 – 22.04.1865) who was a British naval officer and colonial administrator. His enthusiasm and persistence persuaded the British Government to establish the Swan River Colony and he became the first Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Western Australia.

The only contemporary information on the source of the name comes from Fremantle's diary entry for 12 August, which records that they "named the town Perth according to the wishes of Sir George Murray" (a Scottish soldier and politician). G. Murray was born in Perth, Scotland, and was in 1829 Secretary of State for the Colonies and Member for Perthshire in the British House of Commons. The town was named after the Scottish Perth in Murray's honor [8].

Adelaide (/ˈædəleɪd/) – the capital of South Australia. Demonym – *Adelaidean.* Named in honor of Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, queen consort to King William IV, the city was founded in 1836 as the planned capital for a freely settled British province in Australia [7]. The name *Adelaide* comes from the French form of the Germanic name *Adalheidis*, which was composed of the elements *adal* (*"noble"*) and *heid* (*"kind, sort, type"*). It was borne in the 10th century by Saint Adelaide, the wife of the Holy Roman Emperor Otto the Great. The name became common in Britain in the 19th century due to the popularity of the German-born wife of King William IV.

Darwin (/ˈdɑrwɨn/) is the capital of the Northern Territory of Australia. Demonym – *Darwinians.* The word *Darwin* is a surname which was derived from the Old English name *Deorwine*, which meant *"dear friend".* Darwin has four variant forms: *Darwon, Darwyn, Derwin and Derwynn.*

The settlement which first became known as the town of Palmerstone in 1869, was renamed Darwin in 1911 [8]. John Clements Wickham, who was a Scottish explorer, naval officer, magistrate and administrator, named the port after Charles Darwin. The British naturalist had sailed with them both on the earlier second expedition of the *Beagle.* Charles Darwin was a supernumerary on the ship, and his journal was published as *"The Voyage of the Beagle".* He spent most of that time on land investigating geology and making natural history collections. He kept careful

notes of his observations and theoretical speculations, and at intervals during the voyage his specimens were sent to Cambridge together with letters including a copy of his journal for his family.

Hobart (/ˈhoʊbɑrt/) is the capital city of the Australian island state of Tasmania. Demonym – *Hobartian*. The word *Hobart* is variant of *Hubert* (Old German) which means *"bright or shining intellect"*. The name has five variant forms: *Hobard, Hobert, Hobey, Hobie* and *Hoebart.*

The city, initially known as "Hobart Town" or "Hobarton", was named after Lord Robert Hobart, the Colonial Secretary and 4th Earl of Buckinghamshire who was a British Tory politician of the late 18th and early 19th century [8]. Since the Derwent River was one of Australia's finest deepwater ports and was the centre of the Southern Ocean whaling and the sealing trade, it rapidly grew into a major port, with allied industries such as shipbuilding. Hobart Town became a city on 21 August 1842, and was renamed Hobart from the beginning of 1881.

All stated above leads us to conclusion that in spite of being closer geographically to Asia than to other English-speaking countries, Australia is a part of the Anglosphere. An indisputable fact is that it is a Western, liberal nation. Australian culture and identity, being egalitarian and individualistic, remain very different to the collective mentality and group identity of many Asian nations. Peculiar features of its culture, language and history also mean that Australians have much more in common with the UK, the USA, Canada and New Zealand than those countries to the north.

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