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## ***Settlement names referring to the natural environment\****

1. The systemic study of Hungarian toponyms started in the 1930s and 1940s with the description of settlement names with a historical-typological purpose. This typology-based traditional toponym chronology (for its bases, see: KNEZSA 1938, 1943–1944 and BÁRCZI 1958), which has long been the basis for the perception of the change of the Hungarian toponymic system, primarily as regards its rigidity in terms of chronology, is hardly tenable today (KRISTÓ 2000, HOFFMANN–TÓTH 2015, 2016). Together with this realization, the development of a relative chronology based on the real occurrence and data extraction of toponyms has come to the fore (for that, see: RÁCZ 2015).

The typological descriptions distinguish primarily linguistic-structural types. The three main types comprise 1. one-constituent names, 2. names formed with topoformants and 3. two-constituent toponyms formed by word compound. These types can be associated with functions denoting characteristic features, functions denoting types and functions having a denominative role (cf. HOFFMANN 1993: 55). It is always an existing toponym that has the denominative function, and for the denomination of the type of the place we can use a geographical common noun. The functions of the name constituents expressing the characteristic features of the place may be very diverse semantically (cf. HOFFMANN 1993: 58–61).

In the case of settlement names the names expressing the characteristic features can be divided into three groups: 1. settlement names referring to the human environment (cf. names created out of personal names, tribe's names, ethnonyms, names of professions and words denoting status), 2. settlement names referring to the built environment, to a human activity (in that case name-giving has been motivated by a building, e.g. a church, a fortress, a bridge, etc.; by an activity, e.g. keeping of fairs, customs law, etc.; or by an inherent characteristic feature of the settlement, e.g. its size, form, etc.), 3. settlement names referring to the natural environment (names referring to a local relationship or a general geographical relationship, e.g. flora, fauna, geological nature). The genesis of names belonging to the first two large groups was influenced to a great extent by the shaping hand of individuals, and accordingly, such names can be categorized under the traditionally distinguished name type, civilizational

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names (see LÖRINCZE 1947: 5). The names belonging to the third group received their denomination from places existing even without human activity, and on that basis, they show a relationship with the other traditionally distinguished name type, the category of natural names.

2. The distinction among settlement names referring to the natural environment and the assessment of their internal differentiatedness has not been determined exactly in the specialized literature because of the similar semantic content of the names belonging to this group. This category of settlement names studied here appeared already in the early typological works, from the 1940s onwards (KNIEZSA 1943–1944, BÁRCZI 1958, KISS 1988, HOFFMANN 1993), emphasising that distinguishing of the different types from each other is a very difficult task because of the similar semantic content. For instance, in the case of settlement names originating from hydronyms (e.g. *Almás* alma ‘apple’ + formant *-s*), where the separation of the categories of the plant name and of the hydronym is not always clear. Most of the researchers believed that the majority of settlement names formed out of plant names (e.g. *Nádas* nád ‘reed’ + *-s*, *Füzes* füz ‘willow’ + *-s*, etc.) had originally been hydronyms, so they expected the following change pattern: plant name > hydronym > settlement name (KNIEZSA 1943–1944/2001: 15). It is important to note, however, that the justification for this assumption would require data extraction related to the hydronym that has the same form, but such comparisons are often impossible since hardly any toponymic parallelisms have subsisted from the early period.

2.1. Two semantic features present in the case of settlement names refer to the natural environment. They can express a local relationship or a general geographical relationship (e.g. flora, fauna, geological nature). In terms of their lexical structure they can include both common noun and proper name (here toponym) lexemes. A common noun without any formant was used, for example, in the one-constituent settlement names referring to a local relationship of *Ér* (< *ér* ‘brook’, 1219/1550: *Er*, Gy. 1: 615) and *Patak* (< *patak* ‘brook’, 1255: *potok*, FNESz. *Patak*). A common noun with a topoformant was used, for example, in the settlement names of *Erdőd* (< *erdő* ‘forest’ + *-d*, 1215/1550: *Herdeud*, FNESz. *Erdőd*) and *Halmaj* (< *halom* ‘hillock’ + *-j*, 1234/1243: *Holmoy*, Gy. 1: 91). Toponym appears in the name of *Tapolca* (1182–84/1418: *Topulza*, vö. FNESz. *Tapolca*) which comes from a hydronym without the addition of a name formant, metonymically.

In the case of settlement names referring to general geographical features a common noun lexeme (without any formant or a topoformant) always serves as the base word. The *Kő* (< *kő* ‘stone’, 1289/1291: *Keu*, Gy. 1: 330), *Füzes* and *Füzegy* (füz ‘willow’ + *-s*, *-gy* topoformants, 1315: *Fyzess*, Gy. 1: 304; 1192/1374/1425: *Fizeg*, Gy. 1: 220) settlement names belong to this category.

We also need to emphasize, however, that these two types of settlement names (referring to a local relationship or a general geographical relationship) are often hard to distinguish and in the case of some names we cannot decide on their precise categorization due to the lack of relevant information. In the case of *Füzes*, *Füze*gy settlement names we rarely have enough information to decide whether a settlement got its name from a watercourse named *Füzes* (referring to a local relationship) or the settlement name was simply motivated by an environment rich in willow trees (referring to the general geographical feature). In the case of *Füze*gy village (1211: villa *Fuzegy*) in Somogy County, for example, with records in the 1211 Land Survey of Tihany Abbey, it is the founding charter of the Abbey dated 1055 that may provide clues for a better understanding of the name-giving process itself. This charter confirms that the *Füze*gy hydronym is primary because the name is recorded three times as a hydronym in this, our oldest authentic charter that has survived in its original form (1055: *iuxta fizeg, ultra fizeg, ad fizeg azaa*, cf. KOVÁCS É. 2015: 169–170).

Settlement names may also be created out of two-constituent toponyms denoting the natural environment (e.g. *Hegyeshalom* from the constituents *hegyes* ‘sharp’ + *halom* ‘hillock; mound’, *Körös*fő from the hydronym *Körös* + *fő* ‘its source’, etc.). However, in these settlement names comprising two constituents from a lexical perspective, one single semantic feature is expressed, i.e. the fact that the settlement ‘lies beside a certain watercourse, relief, etc.’, therefore, these settlement names may be considered as having one constituent. In contrast, among the two-constituent settlement names we can find names with the structure’s first constituent referring to a characteristic feature, and a second constituent which is a geographical common noun (e.g. *Dombegyház*: *domb* ‘hill’ + *egyház* ‘church’, *Erdőfalva*: *erdő* ‘forest’ + *falva* ‘village’, etc.), in which the first constituent expresses a natural characteristic feature of the settlement. Among the settlement names there are names, which are formed with a first constituent expressing a characteristic feature, having a differentiating role in general, there are settlement names whose main constituent had initially been a one-constituent toponym belonging to the toponym type presented above (e.g. *Felsőegres*: *felső* ‘upper’ + toponym *Egres*, *Kisfüzes*: *kis* ‘small’ + *Füzes*, etc.).

This ancient mode of name-giving is specific to each language, when nature, the rich flora and fauna, the topographic, the hydrographic configurations, etc. offer multiple opportunities for name-giving. In the case of settlement names of foreign origin it is also possible to expect names referring to a local relationship or a general geographical relationship in each structural type. For instance, the Lithuanian city name *Vilna*, *Vilnius* (from a hydronym with the meaning ‘curly’) or the Russian city name *Voronezh* (from a hydronym with the meaning ‘black’) originate from primary hydronyms (cf. KÁLMÁN 1969: 160, FNEsz.



*Vilnius, Voronyezs*). At the beginning, toponyms of British Celtic origin also typically denoted natural features (rivers, mountains, forests, larger areas) and several such names later came to signify nearby settlements also: for example, the settlement names with the base components of *Deverill* ('fertile highland area by the river' or 'river of a fertile highland area') and *Avon* ('river') were also formed from names of rivers (BÖLCSKEI 2012: 156, 163). The German city name *Nürnberg* (from the oronym with the meaning 'rocky mountain') might have been baptised following relief form names (cf. KÁLMÁN 1969: 158, FNESz. *Nürnberg*) and in the settlement names of the Spanish *Toledo* ('mountain, hill') or the French *Pointe-Noire* ('black promontory') we can find an orographic common noun (FNESz. *Pointe-Noire, Toledo*). The basis of name-giving has been inspired by fauna for instance in the case of the following names: the German *Stuttgart* ('stallion ranch'), the English *Oxford* ('ford for oxen', cf. KÁLMÁN 1969: 163, FNESz. *Stuttgart, Oxford*), the Mordvinian *Čipizlāj* ('peewit', cf. MATICSÁK 1995: 47) and the Turkish *Karuna* ('goose', JARRING 1997: 357). For example, the Mordvinian settlement names *Leplej* ('alder'), *Tumola* ('oak', cf. MATICSÁK 1995: 47), the Estonian *Kaasiku* ('birch tree forest', KALLASMAA 2005: 20) or the Slovak settlement name *Trstená* ('reed', FNESz. *Trsztena*) all refer to the flora.

**2.2.** Thus, we can distinguish several semantic and lexical-morphological groups of settlement names referring to a local relationship or a general geographical relationship; that being said, we can distinguish, for example, settlement names with hydronyms, oronyms, forest names; or plant names and animal names. These groups have been addressed by Hungarian toponomastics in a quite disproportionate way.

The relationship between hydronyms and settlement names has received the most attention in Hungarian specialized literature with the most in-depth study having been carried out by LORÁND BENKŐ who discussing the genesis of settlement names considered the larger aquatic features the primary eponyms (2003: 136). He also considered it very probable that even those settlement names were original hydronyms, that had been formed out of the names of aquatic animals and the names of characteristic features related to water. He considered as original hydronyms even those settlement names in which the name form of the settlement and of the watercourse alongside were perfectly similar (e.g. the hydronym *Gagy* ~ the toponym *Gagy*). However, this finding (water > settlement) should be treated very carefully, since it might also occur that certain settlement names have become hydronyms metonymically without the addition of a name formant. During the study of the hydronyms of the Bihar County in the Old Hungarian period I have found (2007) such data: 1332–37/Pp. Reg, 1333: *Barakun*, villa > 1344: *Barakun*, alveus, 1344: *Barrakun*, palus; 1281: *Chaslo*, terra > 1416: *Chazlo*, palus, 1526: *Chazlo*, fluvius (cf.

JAKÓ 1940: 222, 337). Thus, while in the case of the larger bodies of water the change pattern hydronym > settlement name is dominant, in the case of the denomination of medium-sized and smaller bodies of water the reverse transformation may also be expected: settlement name > hydronym (see also: GYÖRFFY E. 2011: 158–159), therefore each case must be assessed individually. Besides BENKŐ's investigations, the issue of settlement names originating from hydronyms has been addressed in a multitude of works. For instance, in the study of metonymic settlement names originating from hydronyms (7,55% of the names), taken from the database related to the ambitious work of LAJOS KISS, the *Etymological Dictionary of Geographical Names* (FNESz., 1988) that explores the settlement names from their earliest data up until the 20th century, FERENC BÍRÓ (2005) concluded that in the Eastern regions of historical Hungary these settlement names seemed to be more frequent, and that more than half (55,62%) of the analysed names had emerged in the early Old Hungarian period (896–1350). Most recently, ERZSÉBET GYÖRFFY has summarised the settlement name types originating from watercourse names (2011: 153–164).

The relationship between oronyms and settlement names has also received considerable scholarly attention. Research by KATALIN RESZEGI has confirmed that the oronym > settlement name (e.g. *Hegy* 'mountain', *Farkashalom*: *farkas* 'wolf' + *halom* 'hillock', etc.) and the reverse settlement name > oronym patterns (e.g. the Slavic *Bucsony*, etc.) seem to be especially typical in the Old Hungarian period although RESZEGI also emphasizes that in the great majority of the cases the settlement names became oronyms when attached to orographic common nouns (e.g. *Báré* > *Báré-bérc*: toponym *Báré* + *bérc* 'crag', *Bátor* > *Bátor-hegy*: toponym *Bátor* + *hegy* 'mountain', etc.). At the same time, in these two change patterns of name-formation processes we can also identify a specific feature showing that while only those one-constituent settlement names were incorporated into oronyms that were semantically non-transparent, in settlement names generally semantically-transparent two-constituent oronyms also often appear (2011: 65).

The other large category of settlement names denoting the natural environment (names reflecting general geographical features) and its various types have also received some attention by scholars. ZSUZSANNA J. PAPP (1969, 1982) studied the presence of animal names in medieval geographical names (e.g. *Solymos* 'falcon' + -s, *Ölyves* 'buzzard' + -s, *Baromlak*: *barom* 'cattle' + *lak* 'barn', etc.), while MAGDOLNA I. GALLASY (1989) did research on old settlement names formed from names of vegetation (e.g. *Füzegy* 'willow' + -s, *Meggyes* 'sour cherry' + -s, etc.). They both emphasized that settlement names could not only derive directly from the flora and fauna characteristic of an area, but could also be formed indirectly, from personal names or microtoponyms. It was PÉTER PÜSPÖKI NAGY (1975) who studied settlement names formed from



animal names, focusing especially on their morphological categories. At the same time, JÁNOS PÉNTEK (1997) and EDINA ZÁNTHÓ (1998) examined the relationship between names of vegetation and geographical names, as well as the regional features of particular plant species.

Most recently, ISTVÁN HOFFMANN, ANITA RÁCZ, and VALÉRIA TÓTH (2017) investigated the toponymic corpus of fifteen historic Hungarian counties from the early Old Hungarian period using the database of Vol. 1 of *Korai magyar helynévszótár* (KMHsz.) focusing especially on the name-structural types of the settlement names referring to the natural environment and their chronological features. Among the close to 3,400 settlement names studied, they identified 550 names (16%) which refer to the natural environment (HOFFMANN–RÁCZ–TÓTH 2017: 226, 233). On the one hand, their analysis confirmed the findings of traditional toponym-typology which claims that metonymic (without any formants) and morphemic (with toponymic formants) name-formation represent an earlier process than name-formation by compounding. On the other hand, their study has also revealed that the different types of one-constituent settlement names (both with and without formants) multiplied almost entirely simultaneously (HOFFMANN–RÁCZ–TÓTH 2017: 233–234). At the same time, they have also emphasized that the in-depth analysis of the underlying reasons and the better understanding of the internal system of settlement name categories in general requires further research.

As it is obvious from the above, settlement names referring to the natural environment show the closest relationship with the other name types, thus their study might provide additional information about microtoponyms as well. During the study of these settlement names we must seek to answer the very difficult closed question as to whether we might expect to find as antecedent a primary land part name (e.g. hydronym, ridge name, oronym, etc.) referring to the natural environment, or a personal name; or the basis of the settlement name-giving might have been constituted directly by natural conditions. Of course, this is also related to the development of the documentation of names, i.e. to the fact that quite a long time might have passed between the genesis of the names and their notation.

**3.** During the study of settlement names referring to the natural environment, I have investigated those settlement names that have been created out of two-constituent topographical names having the geographical common noun *halom* as their second constituent, as well as the settlement names whose creation has followed that pattern. In the genesis of these settlement names, we might expect a certain kind of duality. The first *halom*-type settlement names must have been created metonymically out of a microtoponym having the same structure. However, the microtoponym as presumed antecedent cannot be

evidenced in each case with data. The antecedent of the Romanian settlement name *Feketehalom* (1267: *Feketeholm*, Gy. 1: 828) is the topographical name *Fekete-halom* (*fekete* ‘black’ + *halom* ‘hillock; mound’) that lies nearby, and the name might have referred to the colour of the relief. The Western Hungarian settlement name *Hegyeshalom* (1197/1337: *Hegesholm*, FNESz. *Hegyeshalom*) may also be classified here; it has been created out of the microtoponym denoting the shape of the relief (*Hegyes-halom*: *hegyes* ‘sharp’ + *halom* ‘hillock; mound’). Data about *Hegyes-halom*-type microtoponym may already be extracted from the Árpád age, mainly from the territory of Transylvania: 1. 1177/202–3/337: *Hegesholmir* [ɔ: -*holmu*], Erdélyi Fehér County (Gy. 2: 131); 2. 1313: *Hygysholm*, mo., Erdélyi Fehér County (Gy. 2: 102, 191); 3. 1324/407: *Hegysolm*, montic., Erdélyi Fehér County (Gy. 2: 167); 4. 1326: *Hegesholm*, mo., Kolozs County (Gy. 3: 380); 5. 1329: *Hegesholm*, coll., loc., Kolozs County (Gy. 3: 345); 6. 1348: magnus mons *Hegesholm* alias Babaholm, Küküllő County (Cs. 5: 867), but in the 19th and 20th centuries their occurrence may also be observed in land part names at multiple places in the territory of Hungary.

The functional content of the first constituents of topographical names constituting the basis of settlement names may refer to the specific shape of the hill (e.g. *Hegyeshalom* ‘sharp + hillock’, *Félhalom* ‘half + hillock’), the substance of the hill (e.g. *Kőhalom* ‘stone + hillock’, *Szihalom*: *szén* ‘coal + hillock’), the colour of the hill (e.g. *Feketehalom* ‘black + hillock’), its temperature conditions (e.g. *Héhalom*: *hév*, *hő* ‘heat + hillock’), its position or location (e.g. *Szeghalom*: *kiszögellés*, *szeglet* ‘salient, corner + hillock’), and may express the relationship of several hills to each other (e.g. *Hathalom* ‘numeral six + hillock’, *Százhalom* ‘numeral hundred + hillock’), or the relationship of the hill with a particular person (e.g. *Bábahalom* ‘midwife + hillock’) as well.

After the genesis of the first metonymic names having such a structure, the subsequent name formations might have been created according to the model of the existing ones: this means that the settlements lying beside a small hill have received a name with the structure’s first constituent denoting a characteristic feature + the geographical common noun *halom* as second constituent. Among these names there is a very significant proportion of newer settlement names whose genesis dates back to the period of official settlement name-giving,<sup>1</sup> such as the settlement formerly known as *Luka* in the Bodroghköz region was named *Bodroghalom* (toponym *Bodrog* + ‘hillock’) referring to the hilly

<sup>1</sup> The period of regular settlement name-giving can be counted from the end of the 19th century, from 1898, when the Act on the Registration of Settlements was adopted, and the National Communal Register Committee was established. The development of the official Hungarian settlement name system is posterior to that; it realised the principle of „one locality, one name” in the entire territory of the country (cf. MEZŐ 1982: 47).



region of the Bodrogeköz without such protrusions being present around the settlement itself. Also the name *Herceghalom* ('duke + hillock') created in 1880, the former name of the village being *Csonkatebe*; but the actual settlement name *Szigethalom* (created out of the former name *Szilágyitelep*) has also been created as a result of an official name-giving (for further examples see FNESz.). During the conscious name-Hungarianisation procedures, name structures with the geographical common noun *halom* as second constituent were also frequently used: for instance, the settlement *Órhalom* in Nógrád County received its name in 1898 in such a way. In the case of these settlement names microtoponym antecedents may hardly be presumed, we might rather presume that the name *halom* meaning a 'settlement lying in the neighbourhood of a smaller hill' has become a kind of settlement name formant. In VALÉRIA TÓTH's interpretation, a similar phenomenon can be observed in the case of a certain part of the settlement names with *fő* 'source' as second constituent, in which the constituent *fő*, as a secondary settlement name formant, takes the meaning 'a settlement lying at the source of a particular watercourse' (e.g. the toponyms *Szuha-fő*, *Pinkafő*, where the first constituent being a hydronym + the second constituent being a geographical common noun *fő* have been joined, cf. TÓTH 2008: 182–187). Although it is not typical of settlement names, it is also possible to mention those tree names which also mean 'forest', which can also have the function of a topoformant, diverging from their primary semantic content: for instance, in the forest name *Szurkos-cser* (so in a microtoponym, and not in a settlement name) *cser* does not mean 'Turkey oak tree', but has the meaning content of 'Turkey oak forest' (cf. BÁBA 2016: 40–41).

An excellent piece of evidence for the settlement name formant *halom* is the name of a settlement in Eastern Hungary, *Szántóhalomtanya*, created in 1913: this name was created out of the original *Szántótelek* ('arable land/plowman + land, property') by exchanging the second constituent (*Szántótelek* > *Szántóhalom*), then by the addition of the geographical common noun *tanya* 'farm' (*Szántóhalom* > *Szántóhalomtanya*). The exchange of the second constituent of the settlement name formant *-telek* 'land, property' > *-halom* can reinforce the role of *halom* as a name formant, since among the settlement name formants the exchange of name constituents is very frequent (see for instance, *Herbártföldsé* 'personal name *Herbárt* + land' > *Herbártfalva* 'personal name *Herbárt* + village' and changes like *Szentmihálytelke* > *Szentmihályfalva*, etc., TÓTH 2008: 191–192).

4. Therefore, the study of this restricted onomastic corpus reveals that in certain cases the geographical common noun *halom* has diverged from its primary meaning as 'a small relief from the land surface', and through a certain change in meaning it has become a secondary settlement name formant in its meaning



as ‘a settlement with a specific characteristic feature’, more precisely as ‘a settlement lying in the neighbourhood of a smaller hill’.

It would also be important to conduct such kind of studies for other similar names (e.g. names with *-hegy* ‘mountain’, *-patak* ‘brook’, etc. as second constituent) so as to have a more obvious overview of the issue. Moreover, it would be useful to conduct empiric studies not only in Hungarian, but also in very diverse languages, based on specific name data, since this would contribute to the gradual exploration of the similarities and the differences between the toponymic systems of these languages (for that, see JAROSLAV 2008).

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### Abstract

The systemic study of Hungarian toponyms began in the 1930s and 1940s with the description of settlement names with a historical-typological purpose. The typological descriptions distinguish primarily linguistic-structural types. The three main types comprise 1. one-constituent names, 2. names formed with topoformants and 3. two-constituent toponyms formed by composition. These types can be associated with functions denoting characteristic features, functions denoting types and functions having a denominative role. The functions of the name constituents expressing the characteristic features of the place may be very diverse semantically: 1. settlement names referring to the human environment, 2. settlement names referring to the built environment, to a human activity, 3. settlement names referring to the natural environment. This essay investigates more thoroughly that latter group, that is, settlement names referring to the natural environment. This ancient mode of name-giving is specific of each language, when the natural, the rich flora and fauna, the topographic, the hydrographic configurations, etc. offer multiple opportunities for name-giving. After determining the position of that group of settlement names within the system, the essay discusses settlement names which contain the geographical common noun *halom* ‘hillock’, as well as their possible antecedents in microtoponyms.

**Keywords:** settlement names, natural environment, old name-giving, settlement name formants