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The Changes of the Hungarian Settlement Names

1. The recognition according to which certain toponyms (principally the settlement names) show some similarities concerning, on one hand, their semantic content, on the other hand, their morphological structure, and thirdly, their etymologies, that is, they cluster in name types, made the onomasticians of historical toponyms attempt to classify the settlement names typologically in the middle of the last century. The method developed for the examination of settlement names by ISTVÁN KNIEZSA in the first half of the twentieth century, and which was later called historical toponymic typology by his main critic, GYULA KRISTÓ (1976: 3), has been undermined by time and it has essentially become groundless in today's science, in the first place because of its chronological rigidity. Its renewal and rethinking is an absolutely indispensable task not only for the toponomastics or philological historiography, but also for other related sciences, since they have built significant conclusions upon the findings of name typology: mainly the representatives of historical science, as well, who have relied on onomastics principally in questions of settlement and population history.

The historical toponymic typology must be revised not only with a view of the linguistic and chronological characteristics of the name types, but evidently it must be complemented by a new aspect: the classification of the patterns of change of the toponyms (cf. MEZŐ 1989: 144). The typological system of names also have to take into consideration that the toponyms, similarly to other linguistic signs, very often undergo various changes as a result of external (that is, non-linguistic) and internal (that is, name systemic) reasons, and these changes can involve the form of the names, and their meaning alike (on the topic also cf. HOFFMANN 1999a: 213, 1999b: 70).

ANDRÁS MEZŐ warned about the timeliness of the classification of the changes happening in the life of toponyms, or with a different term: their changes of type, fifteen years ago in the fourth assembly of the Hungarian onomasticians with these words: "After the respectable preliminary studies the time has come to renew the historical-onomastic typology of our settlement names [...] by the exploration of all the possible ways of the changes of type." (1989: 146). In this paper I attempt to formulate a possible theoretical framework of the types of the changes of settlement names, and of



the rules of change, and I also try to describe the most important reasons effecting these changes.¹

The chronological definition of the typology of changes presents itself involuntarily: since the official settlement name giving period, that is from the 18th century till today, when name giving and changing happened under the supervision of different levels of administrative bodies, was thoroughly studied owing to ANDRÁS MEZŐ (1982), quoted above, the natural settlement name changes are worth studying from the earliest documents to the second half of the 18th century.

2. The toponyms, similarly to the common words, can be defined as the relationship between two components, the name form and the meaning. The regularity of the changes of the name form can be grasped mainly in the modifications of the lexical-morphological structure, and that of the meaning, in the changes of the denotative meaning. Figure 1 recapitulates a possible theoretical framework of the rules of change involving the settlement names.

Figure 1. Rules of change of settlement names

1. Changes of the Denotative Meaning

1.1. name disappearance: *Salamon* > \emptyset

1.2. transonymization: *Döbrés* 'settlement' > *Döbrés* 'frontier section'

1.3. name differentiation: *Apáti* > *Kisapáti* 'small Apáti', *Nagyapáti* 'big Apáti'

1.4. name integration: *Szurdok* + *Bénye* > *Szurdokbénye*

¹ The examination of the changes has already appeared in several onomasticians' works, but not with the intention of the description in their entirety, but rather, considering specific types of change relevant to the chosen topic. For example, MIKLÓS KÁZMÉR investigated the possibilities of the changes of a morphological name type: the settlement names containing the *falu* geographical common noun and its alternants, with validity and thoroughness precedential until today (1970). ANDRÁS MEZŐ followed the changes of a semantic type, the patrocynny names, in his studies (e.g. 1989, 1996: 231–249), in the first place focusing his attention to the convergent and divergent developments. And he gave a detailed account of the influence of administrative forums on the changes of settlement names in his monography on official settlement name giving (1982). LAJOS KISS mainly described the changes involving the phonological body of names and their morphological structure in his book on the development of geographical names (1995). ISTVÁN HOFFMANN's settlement name analysing monography was written on a structural basis, and with theoretical character, whose chapter on genetic history involves the domain of the changes of settlement names from a structural approach in accordance with the structural point of view of his work (1993). The rules of structural change appeared in his later works, too, and the author complemented and particularized his earlier writings and he formulated terminological proposals in connection to certain concepts (cf. e.g. 1999a, 1999b).



2. Morphological Changes (the denotative meaning remains unchanged)2.1. entire change: change of name: *Disznó* > *Apáti*

2.2. partial change

A) changes of the syntactic structure (change of one constituent)

a) addition

- of an attributive anterior constituent: *Óvár* > *Nagyóvár* 'large Óvár'
- of a geographical common noun posterior constituent: *Körmöc* > *Körmöcbánya* [*bánya* 'mine']

b) ellipsis

- disappearance of an attribute (anterior constituent): *Péterlaka* [the anthroponym *Péter* + the geographical common word *lak* 'village' with a possessive personal marker] > *Laka*
- disappearance of a geographical common noun (posterior constituent): *Remetefalva* [*remete* 'hermit' + *falva* with a possessive personal marker] > *Remete*

c) name constituent change: *Erzsébetforra* [the anthroponym *Erzsébet* + the geographical common word *forr* 'spring, well' with a possessive personal marker] > *Erzsébetkuta* [the anthroponym *Erzsébet* + *kút* 'spring, well' with a possessive personal marker]d) name element > name constituent substitution: *Kereki* [the adjective *kerek* 'round' + the toponymant *-i*] > *Kerekegyház* [*kerek* + *egyház* 'church']

B) changes of the morphological structure (change of a name element)

a) reduction (by one name element): *Hodosd* > *Hodos* [the toponymant *-d*]b) complementation (extension by one name element): *Halász* > *Halászi* [the toponymant *-i*]c) change of a name element: *Nyárágy* > *Nyárád* [the toponymants *-gy* and *-d*]d) name constituent > name element change: *Kovácsstelke* [*kovács* 'blacksmith' + the geographical common word *telek* 'site' with a possessive personal marker] > *Kovácsi* [*kovács* + the toponymant *-i*]

C) changes of the semantic structure change the formal structure

a) deetymologization (obscuring): *Szentmária* 'Saint Mary' > *Somorja*b) popular etymology (assigning meaning): *Szentkozmadamján* [*Szent Kozma* + *Damján*, a patron saint's name] > *Szentkozmadombja* [*Szent Kozma* + the geographical common word *domb* 'hill' with a possessive personal marker]

2.1. Although the **change of the denotative meaning** can involve various linguistic processes, in all the cases there are mainly external, non-linguistic reasons. In the lives of settlements there can be various changes, mainly explicable by historical reasons, which can result, in the most extreme cases, in



the devastation or depopulation of the settlement. The Hungarians arriving from Eastern Europe in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the ninth century built a very dense settlement system during the ensuing two or three centuries, however, this system was radically transformed in significant areas of the country by certain historical events. The Tartars invading the country from Eastern Europe caused serious damage in 1241, and the conquests and the presence of the Osmanli-Turk Empire for one and a half centuries also resulted in significant changes in the settlement structure in the central and southern regions of the country in the 16th and 17th centuries. During the Tartar invasion the settlement structure of Bodrog county lying in the south of the country, between the River Tisza and the Danube, suffered a serious damage: out of the 52 villages mentioned in the first half of the 13th century and before, only 26 are later mentioned as inhabited places, and settlements like *Salamon* at the River Tisza (1234: *Solomun*: Gy. 1: 726), *Kakat* (1224/291/389: villa *Kokot*: Gy. 1: 721) or *Bulcsú(földe)* (1224/291/389: terra *Bulsu*: Gy. 1: 714) were wiped off the map so completely owing to the Tartar invasion that we cannot even define the location of the village afterwards. The devastation of the settlement as a process in settlement history can lead to **name disappearance** from a linguistic point of view.

Nevertheless, the devastation of the settlement (i.e. the referent) was not always accompanied by the disappearance of the name. We can raise several examples of names of earlier villages, which survived as a frontier section name (that is, with a different function and meaning, denoting a new object). The name of the village *Döbrés* in the medieval Veszprém county (cf. 1369: *Debres*: KUMOROVITZ 1953: 245), for example, subsided into the name of a frontier section of Tapolcafé settlement (HOFFMANN 1984–1985: 104). This process can be classified as a semantic change from a linguistic point of view, more exactly, as a special type of **transonymization**, a metonymic transonymization (or name continuation).

There may be changes even if the existence of the referent is continuous, which can be understood as name changes. In the history of medieval settlements villages often got divided into two or more legally autonomous parts because of ownership or population historical reasons. The division of the settlement could result in a partial change in the name form itself: several settlement names show this changing process in Bars comitat lying in the valley of the River Hron north of the Danube. The village *Apáti* (1253: *Apati*: Gy. 1: 442) for example, was divided into *Kis-* and *Nagyapáti* 'small and big Apáti' (1335: *possessorum maioris et minoris Apati*: Gy. 1: 425), and *Málás* (1156: *Malos*: Gy. 1: 460) into *Ködi-* (1297/367: but *Kudymalusy*: Gy. 1: 460) and *Mindszentmálása* (1327: *possessio Mendscenthmalasa*: Gy. 1: 460) settlements and *Pusztamálás* (1314: *Puzta Malas*: Gy. 1:



460) plains. To emphasize the separation, these modifications are called **name differentiations** because the change means a quantitative extension of the lexical structure of the primary name by an attribute (or often attributes) with a differentiating function. The change designated with this concept modifies not only the body of the name, but partly the denotative meaning, as well. However, it is important to emphasize that in the Middle Ages the concept of the division of the villages did not unconditionally mean the creation of independent, separate villages in each case, although the denotative meaning of the name *Kisapáti* is not identical with the denotative meaning of the name *Apáti*, because there is a kind of a whole-part relationship between them.

The name changes originating from settlement fusions appear to be a process contrary to the processes of division, and name differentiation. The settlement fusions were much rarer in the Middle Ages, and much more difficult to grasp and analyse than the divisions of the villages. This historical change may have various linguistic consequences. Two village names can merge without any change in the name form: the case of *Szurdok* (1234/234: *Zurduk*: Gy. 1: 149) and *Bénye* (1293/496: *Benye*: Gy. 1: 150), which are located in Abaúj comitat, probably exemplifies this: their fusion is realised in *Szurdokbénye* (1326/375: *Zurdukbenye*: Gy. 1: 150). Sometimes the name fusion can happen with certain contamination: the later settlement name *Pénzesgyőr* in Transdanubia, in the north of lake Balaton, in Veszprém county, was formed from the anterior constituent of the former *Pénzeskút* and the posterior constituent of the former *Kőrösgyőr*. The linguistic consequence of the settlement fusion may be called **name integration**, emphasizing its contrariness to the name differentiation, that is, emphasizing the integrating tendency.

2.2. All the modifications apart from this pattern of change, cause changes only in the name structure, leaving the denotative meaning intact. The **formal modifications** of settlement names naturally include the phonetic changes happening inside them. However, as there are no essential differences between the toponyms and common words regarding their phonetic-phonological aspect, and the general sound developmental tendencies involve the toponyms as well as the common words, an examination of the changes considering the structural modifications does not need to deal with this field. Because of this, in the following I treat only the systemic changes in the lexical-morphological structure of the settlement names when talking about their formal changes.

I refer to the modification in which an existing toponym shifts to another semantic class, that is, it conveys a completely different functional content from that of the primary name, as **entire change**. Judging the change is in-



dependent of whether the original name and the motives of name giving disappear, or whether the old form survives as a synonym or an optional variant of the secondary name form. Behind this change type there are also mainly exterior motives: a certain feature (it can be a feature of the landscape, the owner, or other factors) of the referent changes, or another feature comes to the fore, on the basis of which the name giving community calls it by a name with a different aspect. In the first original remaining charter in Hungary, the deed of foundation of Tihany Abbey, *Disznó* 'swine' settlement (1055: *gisnav*) received the name *Apáti* 'abbot's' at some time during the next two centuries, and following the temporary or optional use of the two names (1267/296: *Gesnov* vel *Apathy*) the latter repressed the earlier name (1275: *Apaty*) and it became exclusive (cf. BÁRCZI 1958: 149). These name forms are often connected by *alias* or *alio nomine* or a similar construction, apart from *vel*: +1247/+284/572: v. *Woffa Illeyse* al. nom. *Kwkenyer* vocatur (Gy. 1: 862), 1299: p. *Feluelnuk* que moderno vocabulo *Makofolua* (Gy. 1: 863), [1341/387]: p-es *Parishaza*, quam al. nom. *Zabopalfelde* vocare dixit (Gy. 4: 88), 1346 >351: p. *Appati* al. nom. *Zuha* (Gy. 2: 554). In the Hungarian onomatohistorical literature these temporary optional name variants, and double name forms have hardly received any attention. Though the thorough examination of this special type of synonyms or name variants, by which the internal relations of the type and their own nature can be explored is not self-contained meticulousness, since, as LORÁND BENKŐ warns us, "each issue has its significance in the physiology, typology, chronology of toponyms and in the historical teaching included in them" (1998: 114–115).²

I call the changing processes of *Disznó* > *Apáti*, *Felvelnek* > *Makófalva*, *Párisháza* > *Szabópálfölde* **name substitution**, and it means, supposing the sameness of the denotative meaning, the complete lexical and functional-semantic modification (the shift of categories on both levels) of the name. However, we can make an onomatological remark in relation with the names treated here, and connected by the *alio nomine* and similar constructions: examining a significant part of these constructions it is noticeable that the drafters of the charters treated separately only the names like this, that is, names with a completely different structure, and connected them by one of the constructions listed above. I do not know of any example where the connected names were only morphological variants (formal variants) of each

² ISTVÁN HOFFMANN's latest work (2004) somewhat lessened this deficiency, although his lengthy study paid attention to the linguistic background of toponymic fragments, in conformity with its intention, and the optional names appeared only marginally and when concentrating on the Latin wording.



other, meaning there is not any **Egres* al. nom. *Egresd* or **Petri* al. nom. *Peturfolua* among the occurrences connected by the *alio nomine* form.³

We can regard the pattern of change where there is a structural change only in the linguistic formation, or in the constituents of the primary settlement name as *partial change*. The method of description of structural changes which mainly have linguistic (intralingual) reasons, differently from the changes described so far, mainly depends on which framework we use to describe the structural characteristics of toponyms. The most appropriate basis for this is the name analysing model which was elaborated by ISTVÁN HOFFMANN (1993), and which accomplishes the structural description of toponyms on two levels. ISTVÁN HOFFMANN distinguishes the name constituents as direct name components on the functional-semantic level: according to him, the name constituent is the linguistic unit appearing in the name, and conveys certain information about the referent of the name (1993: 43). On the basis of this, for example, the settlement name *Péterlaka* is divided into two functional name constituents, and can be described semantically as follows: 'the settlement (the *lak* posterior constituent refers to this) which is owned by a person called Péter'. The analysis of the internal structure of name constituents is plausible on the lexical-morphological level in ISTVÁN HOFFMANN's opinion: the minimal name constituent forming unit is the name element (quoted work: 44), which can be a morpheme with a name constituent forming function: in the former example the first name constituent *Péter* contains only one name element: the personal name *Péter*, and the second name constituent consists of two name elements: the *lak* geographical common noun meaning 'settlement, seat of the Court' and the *-a* possessive personal marker.

On the basis of all these, the structural changes can alter the morphological structure of the settlement names either in positive or in negative directions, that is, the name size can increase or decrease, as well (see Figure 1.). The increase and the decrease both can modify the syntactic structure of the names, that is, can involve name constituents, like in complementation:

³ There is nothing unusual in it, after all we have no reason to suppose that the command of names would have worked differently in the earlier times. Still, the settlement name *Hajdúszoboszló* is simply *Szoboszló* in today's everyday use, and *Berettyóújfalu* is *Újfalu*, *Várpalota* is *Palota*, but our command of names considers their relatedness natural, and does not feel necessary to interpret the two forms connectedly. On the contrary, we can often hear about *Tiszaszederkény* that it was later called *Leninváros* (1970), and today *Tiszaújváros* (1991), because the settlement received a new, official name in the years mentioned. The name forms connected by *alio nomine* and the like in the earlier times are essentially similar explanations, too.

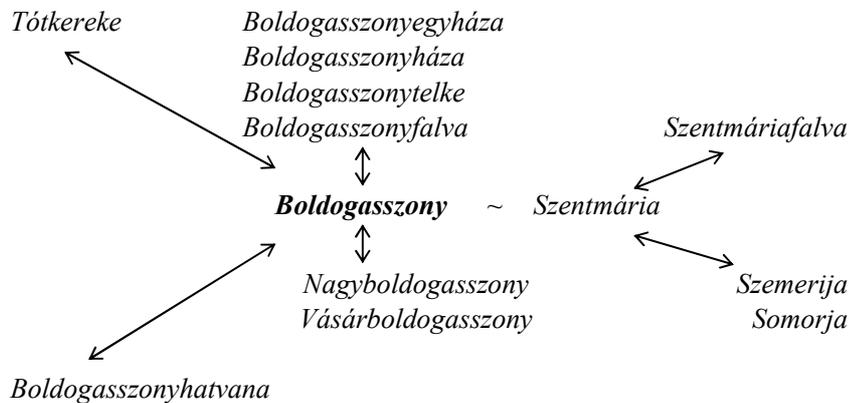


Óvár (1255: *Ouwar*: Gy. 1: 75) > *Nagyóvár* (1317: *Nogyowar*: Gy. 1: 126), *Körmöc* (1331: *Kremnicia*: Gy. 1: 454) > *Körmöcbánya* (1328: *Cremnychbana*: Gy. 1: 454) or in ellipsis: *Péterlaka* (1776: *Peterlaka*: INCZEFI 1960: 71) > *Laka* (this is the present name, too), *Remetefalva* (1395: *Remethefalua*: KÁZMÉR 1970: 292) > *Remete* (1710: *Remete*: KÁZMÉR 1970: 292), but it can result in a change of the morphological structure, that is, on the level of name elements, the affixal morphemes in the first place, as it is shown in the reduction: *Hodosd* ([1177]>405: *Hvdust*: Gy. 1: 178) > *Hodos* (1213/550: *Hudus*: Gy. 1: 178) or the extension: *Halász* (1335: *Halaz*: Cs. 3: 680) > *Halászi* (1497: *Halazy*: Cs. 3: 680). It is not unusual that a certain lexical-morphological unit of the toponym is replaced by another element with the same function: we can see a name constituent substitution in the case of *Erzsébetforra* (1274>340: *Elysabethforra*: Gy. 1: 175) > *Erzsébetkuta* (1471: *Elsewbethkwtha*: Gy. 1: 175), name element substitution in the case of *Nyárágy* (1299: *Naragh*: Gy. 1: 793) > *Nyárád* (1317: *Narad*: Gy. 1: 793), and a name element was replaced by a name constituent in *Kereki* (1327/335: *Kereký*: Gy. 1: 224) > *Kerekegyház* (1459: *Kerekeghaz*: Z. 10: 95–96), and a name constituent by a name element in *Kovácsstelke* (1320: *Kuachteleke*: Gy. 2: 76) > *Kovácsi* (1467: *Kowachy*: Gy. 2: 76). And lastly: we can list the following examples among the occurrences of structural changes since the lexical structure of the toponym is modified as well: the obscuring of the morphological structure in: *Szentmária* (1287: *Zenthmaria*: MEZŐ 1996: 208) > *Somorja* (1383: *Samaria*: MEZŐ 1996: 208), and the re-assignment of a meaning to the morphological structure in: *Szentkozmadamján* (1426: *Zenthcozmadomijan*: MEZŐ 1996: 133) > *Szentkozmadombja* (the present name, cf. FNESz.). (In the latter the saint's name *Damján* became the geographical common noun *domb* 'smaller elevation' supplied with *-ja* possessive personal marker.)

To illustrate how sophisticated and almost inextricably intertwined these changes are, that is, to illustrate the several directions of the possibilities for change, and instead of their further detailing, let us examine an example of a patrociny settlement name cluster. Several settlement names were formed from the patron saint name *Boldogasszony* ['Saint Mary', translated literally: 'the Blessed Virgin'] in the Carpathian Basin (see also MEZŐ 1996: 206–211), and the structure of most of them were modified in the course of time. The changes which can potentially involve the settlement name *Boldogasszony* (that is, the summary of the changes that can be substantiated in *Boldogasszony* names) are shown by Figure 2.



Figure 2. The possibilities of change of Boldogasszony settlement name



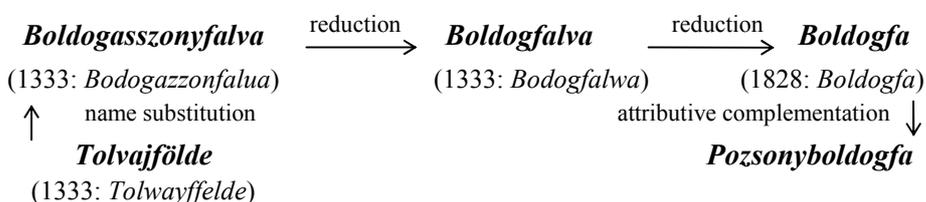
As we can see in the figure: the patronym settlement name can be complemented by various geographical common noun posterior constituents: *-falva*, *-telke*, *-háza*, *-egyháza*, by an attributive anterior constituent with a differentiating function (*Nagy-*, *Vásár-*), it can play the role of a differentiating attribute (*Boldogasszonyhatvana*), and it can be replaced by a name form belonging to a completely different semantic type (*Tótkereke*). The number of possibilities is extended by a variant of *Boldogasszony*, which is used as a synonym: *Szentmária*. The fact of synonymy is proven undoubtedly by that that the two name forms can vary in the data sequence of the same settlement. The *Szentmária* form can also undergo structural changes: can be complemented by a geographical common noun (*Szentmáriafalva*), can undergo several degrees of obscuring (*Szemerija*, *Somorja*). The indirect changes may further diversify the picture, of course, because, for example, the secondary name *Boldogasszonyfalva* can be further transformed: by leaving the name element *boldog* it can become *Asszonyfalva*, by leaving the name element *asszony* it can become *Boldogfalva*, and *Alsóboldogasszonyfalva* complemented by a differentiating adjective, etc.

Thus, in the case of *Boldogasszony* settlement name, these variants may be listed as possibilities of change coming about back and forth, but only few out of them are realized in the life of a settlement name. In Figure 3.1. the medieval and modern data of today's Pozsonyboldogfa in Pozsony county (see MEZŐ 1996: 208, KÁZMÉR 1970: 255) shows the occurrence of the following changes: *Boldogfalva* was formed from the probably primary name *Boldogasszonyfalva* by reduction, by omitting the name element *asszony*, and from this, with the *-falva* > *-fa* shortening (usual in the Hungarian linguistic area) the *Boldogfa* name form was created. During the ordering of settlement names the settlement name was complemented by an attributive anterior constituent referring to the county where the settlement belonged,



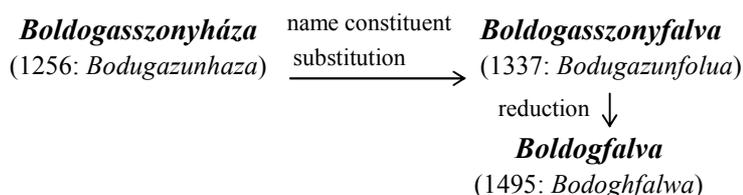
thus, the settlement bears the official name *Pozsonyboldogfa*. The picture is further diversified by the fact that the village was also called *Tolvajfölde* 'the thief's land' in the Middle Ages, apart from the *Boldogasszonyfalva* and *Boldogfa* variants. However, the data do not show whether this name form, or the one formed from the patrociny was the original name of the settlement. Although, the primariness of the form *Tolvajfölde* may be supported by the well-known fact that patrociny names replaced many original name forms.

Figure 3.1. The realizations of the possibilities of change in the example of (Pozsony)Boldogfa



The chronological order of the data in the case of Boldogasszonyfalva settlement in Csanád county, destroyed in the Middle Ages (Figure 3.2.) shows the realizations of the possibilities of change more clearly than the previously analysed case: its earliest appearance is in *Boldogasszonyháza* form, from which *Boldogasszonyfalva* was formed by the substitution of the posterior constituent. The latest data of the settlement appear as *Boldogfalva* after the reduction of the *asszony* name element.

Figure 3.2. The realizations of the possibilities of change in the example of Boldogasszonyfalva



Seeing such diversity, it is not surprising at all that constituting the rules of change in the case of a settlement name often encounters difficulties even in case of a rich corpus. Either because the changes may have several directions, or exactly because of their convergence, to disentangle them is usually possible only through time consuming, thorough investigation, taking into consideration several factors (for example, the general tendencies of the language development, and the chronological features of the individual name types).



3. Historical onomastics has to deal not only with typifying the phenomena, but also with uncovering the reasons for change. Of course, we also have to take in to consideration that science cannot explain every change, but still, the motives exist, of course, and changes never happen without a reason. Nevertheless, to uncover the reasons for changes taking place a long time ago is especially difficult when the factors eliciting the change are in obscurity, hidden from the researchers eyes because of the distance in time (see also BENKŐ 1988: 119–120). The majority of the linguistic changes originate in the synchronic linguistic system in the case of proper names, as much as in the case of common words: the names are also members of a system, and as such, they are defined and their changes are elicited by their relations and correlations to the other elements, and their place in the system.

At present we know little about the linguistic reasons behind the settlement name changes because the technical literature has paid attention principally to the changes elicited by external reasons which can be more easily described. The linguistic reasons that can be taken into consideration are like the frequency of use, that is, its spread in the society, the common word identifiableness, the need for the elimination of homonymy and polisemy, the analogy, etc. In the following we will survey these reasons, which have already appeared in the Hungarian literature of historical onomastics, too.

3.1. The thought that the **frequency of use** can influence the changes of the names appeared earlier: the wider the field of use of a settlement name the sooner it becomes closed from the linguistic and formal points of view, or using GÉZA INCZEFI's terminology, it becomes "name fossil".⁴ Consequently, the changes principally involve those linguistic elements which are more rarely used (cf. 1970: 56). The frequency of use, as generally true for linguistic signs, can actually influence the sensitivity to change of some settlement names to some extent: as the elements of the basic vocabulary and the peripheral vocabulary show essential differences in this respect, so there can be differences between the well-known names and the names used peripherally in the likeliness to change. We can say that the social widespreadness and the general currency protect against changes in a way. It may not be incidental that there were not any changes during the centuries in the name of *Győr*, a significant settlement along the River Danube, which was a comitat seat and a cathedral town, too, while the name structure of various *Győrs* in Borsod or Nyitra county were modified: the town in the former county appears in the documents as *Diós-* and *Nagygyőr*, or even as *Újvár* 'new castle', and the town in the latter county gained a permanent

⁴ INCZEFI regards the "name fossils" real names supposing the gradual formation of proper names from the common word forms (1970: 57).



name in the form of *Szolgagyőr*. These changes took place in spite of that these settlements were also significant and well-known from as early as the early Middle Ages.⁵ (I'm returning to the need of the elimination of the settlement name homonymy later.)

3.2. In LAJOS KISS's opinion, who is one of the most influential onomasticians in the twentieth century, the weaker aspect of proper names (including personal names and toponyms, as well) is the meaning (in the etymological sense), and because of this, as a precursory theoretical supposition, we can suggest that "radical changes more probably happen in the cases of geographical names with an obscured meaning, or in the cases of completely **meaningless geographical names**" (1995: 3). This intuitive supposition may be partly true, but perhaps, not so much for the lexical-morphological structure of names, which is relevant here (although it also gets modified), but for their phonetic-phonological aspect: the name *Szikaszó*, which originally consisted of constituents meaning 'drying valley, dry valley', owing to the tendency of two open syllables, typical of the Hungarian language, becomes *Szikszo* more easily if the *aszó* part has already lost its 'stream, valley' meaning, and because of this, the users are unaware of the morphological complexity of the name. Although, even here, we must observe this scientific hypothesis with a critical mind, because the phonological changes are not essentially influenced by the name being etymologically obscure or transparent: *Malica*, the toponym coming from the personal name of a Slavic origin (1285/287: *Malicha* personal name: FNESz.) becomes *Málca* (1274: *Malcha*: FNESz.) by the disappearance of the vowel of the second open syllable in the same way as *Besenyő* (1332: *Besenev*: Gy. 2: 350) becomes *Besnyő* (today also: FNESz.), or *Németi* (1331: *Nemethy*: Gy. 4: 276) *Nemti* (1332: *Nemty*: Gy. 4: 276, today also: FNESz.) though the appearance of *besenyő* 'Pecheneg' and *német* 'German' common words in names are clear for each speaker. Only one factor has significance in connection with the phonological change: whether the phonetic form, the phonetic structure of the lexeme is appropriate for the input structure of the change, in our case, for the CVCVCV structure.

⁵ The same point was important in the official settlement name ordering: this makes understandable that the one-time *Tihany* in Abaúj county got a river name attribute, thus becoming *Hernádtihany*, and the larger settlement with historical and cultural historical significance and abbatial center in the Tihany Peninsula next to Lake Balaton kept its original name, *Tihany* (see also on the issue MEZŐ 1982). However, we must add that this fact could only influence the attributive complementation of the names, and in other types of name changes does not seem to have played any role.



Nevertheless, we have to agree with LAJOS KISS, and let us make it with the words of LÁSZLÓ HADROVICS, another excellent lexicologist: “The word element, obscure or meaningless from the beginning (coming from a foreign language) inherently tempts us into assigning a meaning to it” (1992: 83). That is, the non-transparent structure provides an excellent basic material for the changes of a popular etymological nature, because “The toponyms having become obscure and meaningless [...] capture the people’s imagination. People would like to make them meaningful again, so they change the phonological body of the words, bring them closer to words with which they rhyme. People make up stories about their genesis, which are very interesting from an ethnographic point of view, but every hundredth of them guesses the truth well, at most.” (HADROVICS 1971: 458–459).

We must also refer to that the renewal of a popular etymological nature makes up only a very little, though diverse group of the settlement name changes, despite that a very significant part of our settlement names are loan toponyms, which have never been “understandable” for the Hungarian users, that is, they have never been identifiable with any common word structure. Nevertheless, most of these names have been living their lives for centuries unchanged (only with some phonetic modifications), without being assigned a meaning.

However, obscuring not only provides an excellent source for the popular etymology, but also can be understood as an important causative factor of lexeme substitutions. “A constituent becoming archaized, or for a different reason rarer, sometimes less expressive, or faded, can be replaced by its synonym.” — claims LAJOS KISS (1995: 29). The name form *Erzsébetforra* in Arad county (1274>340: *Elysabethforra*: Gy. 1: 175) was replaced by the form *Erzsébetkuta* (1471: *Elsewbethkwtha*: Gy. 1: 175) in this way about two centuries later, with the change of the posterior constituent, because the word *forr* ‘spring of water’ had fallen out of the language and had been replaced by the form *kút* generally used in the same sense.

Obscuring as a historical process can influence not only lexemes but suffixes, too. Obscuring, or rather, the cessation of productivity in the case of suffixes has resulted in suffix substitution in certain settlement names. The toponymic suffix *-gy*, which played an active role in the toponym formation during the the 10th and the 11th centuries, that is, in the early Ancient Hungarian Age, lost its productivity after a few centuries, and as a result of this, lost not only its significance in the formation of new names, but, in many cases, also gave way to the suffix *-d* in existing settlement names after a shorter or longer period of variation: *Nyárágy* (1299: *Naragh*: Gy. 1: 793) > *Nyárád* (1317: *Narad*: Gy. 1: 793), *Gyiógy* (1264: *Gyog*) > *Diód* (1332–5/Pp. Reg.: *Gyod*), *Libágy* (1287: *Lybag*: Gy. 2: 299) > *Libád* (1325: *Libad*: Gy. 2: 299).



3.3. The phenomenon in which a common word lexeme frequent in certain toponyms gets isolated from its common word equivalent, and as a consequence it cannot resist the changes in the toponymic usage, can be regarded as a special case of obscuring. MIKLÓS KÁZMÉR believes that the reduction processes of the settlement names with the posterior constituent *-falva* (in the first place, the *-falva* > *-fala*, *-falva* > *-fa* changes appearing from the 17th and 18th centuries) may have been influenced also by the fact that *falu* had become a single form root early in the biggest part of the Hungarian speaking area. Namely, originally there was a *v* sound in the root in certain occurrences of the word *falu* 'village': e.g. *falu* – *falvak* 'villages', *falva* 'the village of', that is, the word used to belong to the cluster of nouns with the *v* in their root. At the same time, however, the *falu* – *faluk* 'villages', *faluja* 'the village of' versions, without the *v*, also appeared, and they were generally used in the 15th and 16th centuries, in the age of the codexes, according to KÁZMÉR.⁶ But the root with the *v* was preserved in the toponyms, although in this way it became isolated from the single form *falu*, and became more exposed to change (cf. KÁZMÉR 1970: 67–68). This situation could have even resulted in such a wide reduction of the lexeme *falva* (e.g. see the shortening *-falva* > *-fa*), that could only be observed in association with the formation of a certain group of our adverbial suffixes (another similarity is that the reduction of the form was preceded by a functional shift there, too), but such a systematic change is not known among geographical common noun posterior constituents, especially in the case of one so frequently used as *falva*.

Nevertheless we must also say a few words about the fact that the toponyms have preserved many archaic features, morphological and root-related ones in a significant number among them, and in spite of their clear common word relations, they have resisted standardisation: the analogy of the parallel with the morphological structure of the common word did not influence any of our settlement names (also in a significant number) with the posterior constituents *-hida* and *-kuta*, and these settlement names have not taken the forms *-hidja*, *-kútja*, even if the two common words (*hid* 'bridge', *kút* 'well') are used only in the latter forms. All I want to emphasize by this is that a form with a frequently used possessive personal marker should become an inducement for radical changes not only because it is not suffixed in the way as the corresponding common word form. Not to speak about the fact that the users' command of name hardly makes a mistake in this respect, and it

⁶ We can actually find the form *faluk* instead of *falvak* several times in the Jókai Codex (1373/1448), and it may indeed refer to the drawing-away. But I have not found this lexeme in other codexes: the word does not appear in the Apor, Guary, and Festetics Codexes from the 15th century, at all.



perceives the lexeme *falu* suffixed by a personal marker in the settlement names with the posterior constituent *-falva* whether the settlement name has entered another root type, or not.

3.4. Homonymy (and polisemy, of course), also frequent in toponyms, does not cause a communication problem beyond a certain boundary, usually a name user community, because the name users do not know too many (or even more than one) places with identical names. Thus, originally there is a much smaller need to eliminate the homonymy of toponyms, that is, to eliminate the sameness, than in the case of personal names (see J. SOLTÉSZ 1979: 84). Furthermore, in the early times the phenomenon of two settlements having identical names and located on the two sides of a geographical object (mostly a river) can often be observed, mainly as a linguistic consequence of settlement and ownership historical reasons: for example, we can find two villages called *Kinizs* and two villages called *Dobsza* in Abaúj county at the River Hernád from the early Ancient Hungarian Age, whose history is inseparable. However, the complementation of these names with a distinguishing attribute happened several times only centuries later.⁷ Homonymy does not seem disturbing to a certain extent, in the case of nearby places, either.

The situation is similar in the case of **polysemy** caused by shifts between different kinds of places (such as metonymy and transonymization). Settlements lying on the banks of waters, mainly smaller streams, sometimes medium size rivers, often receive a name identical with the hydronym. The Hungarian onomasticians claim that this happened most often to the name of the first settlement created next to the water: *Nyitra* 'the River Nitra joining the Vág at Komarno, flowing into the Danube' > *Nyitra* 'the settlement next to the River Nitra', *Eger* 'waterflow on the frontier between Heves and Borsod comitatus' > *Eger* 'the settlement next to the stream Eger in Heves comitatus'.⁸ The primary hydronym and the metonymic settlement name mostly co-exist without problems, maybe also because of belonging to different kinds of objects, though sometimes the name users' community attempts to eliminate the homonymy, and they complement the settlement name (rarely both names) with a geographical common noun referring to the type of the place. Thus, the following settlement name changes were elicited by natural reasons of the language development: *Talabor* > *Talaborfalva*, *Hortobágy* >

⁷ The villages mentioned here were later called *Kis-* and *Nagykinizs* 'small and big *Kinizs*' (from the 17th and 18th centuries), and *Alsó-* and *Felsődobsza* 'lower and upper *Dobsza*' from the 15th century.

⁸ In the case of bigger rivers there are no such shifts, i.e. we do not have any *Tisza* settlement names, for example.



Hortobágyfalva, or *Szamos* > *Szamosfalva*.⁹ The source of the change in the form *Szamosfalva* was “the syncretism [...] of a settlement name, and a hydronym in the form *Szamos*. This linguistic-communicational problem could have been resolved unilaterally by the modification of either the hydronym, or the settlement name, thus leaving the other unchanged” (BENKŐ 1998: 154). But here both modifications were carried out, and the hydronym became *Vízsamos* [‘water’ + *Szamos*], and the settlement name *Szamosfalva* [‘the village of *Szamos*’], and while *Vízsamos* became *Szamos* again, the settlement name *Szamosfalva* became constant.¹⁰

The significant number of counterexamples indicates that the intention to eliminate polysemy in itself would not automatically modify the settlement name without other factors effecting change. The name change *Szamos* > *Szamosfalva* may have been supported by a double analogy, apart from the above mentioned reason: the general analogy of a significant number of name types of the settlement names complemented by the posterior constituent *-falva*, and the direct inductive effect of the morphological structures of the two neighbouring settlements with the posterior constituents *-falva* (see also BENKŐ 1998: 154). This shows well that there is usually more than one motive at the same time behind a settlement name change, which head in the same direction, and thus, they press for a certain change reinforcing each other.

3.5. I am closing the list of the factors producing the possible changes by the description of one which is the most fundamental, in my opinion. The formation of toponyms is basically defined by the name models, i.e. the new name is created by adjusting it to one of the existing name types. The settlement names of plain personal names could become prevailing in the Carpathian Basin during the centuries after the Conquest because the Hungarians had already had a name giving model (which they had preserved). Thus, name giving and name formation are “regulated” by **following models**. There can be changes in these models during the times, of course: the name giving model dominant earlier may fall into the background, and it is replaced by another one. The change does not only influence the structure of the new names (via following models and via model influence), but it may

⁹ Nevertheless, we may suspect the intervention of the writers of charters, and an exaggerating accuracy in the naming of places.

¹⁰ Certainly, the possibility of a communicational problem is questionable supposing a conscious name giving activity (and the consciousness of the name giving activity is gaining more and more emphasis in the latest technical literature), because, obviously, the community gives only such a name that can completely perform the function of the identification of the referent.



influence the structure of those already existing, and (by **analogy**) it may result in their modification.

If we seek the reasons for structural change in the linguistic formation of settlement names (and toponyms, in general), eventually we must find out which factors govern the name models themselves, that is, what influences the changes taking place in them. The answer to this question, in my opinion, is in the **general tendencies of language development**. The general tendencies of language development, similarly to the influence on the structural rules of common words, prefer certain name types and name structures in given time limits. During the early Ancient Hungarian Age the word and name formations also used to be dominated by the lack of suffixes, or formants in the earlier times. The lack of formants is well reflected in the settlement names from a plain personal name, from a tribe's name, from a name of occupations, and in the ethnonymic settlement names, etc. in the earliest records. During the period of the dominance of toponym formation not only the rules of the word and name formation, but the rules of change also followed this: that is, original name forms without an original suffix were often complemented secondarily by a suffix in these times, as shown by the examples of ethnonymic settlement names: *Német* > *Németi* (Abaúj comitat), of settlement names from names of occupations: *Kovács* > *Kovácsi* (Bars comitat) or from personal names: *Peter* > *Peterd* (Baranya comitat), etc.

The priority of suffixation vanished at some time, and it was replaced by the word and name formation by composition. When the processes of the language development became favourable for the composition as a way of creating names, there was a change in the rules of change: the secondary complementation of names with a geographical common noun constituent (and partly with an attribute) may have this linguistic motive, as well. This rule of change was so intense, that formants of several toponyms suffixed earlier were replaced by a geographical common noun: the medieval village *Kerek-egyház* had been *Kereki* before, in the first half of the 14th century, *Peterhely* (Békés comitat) had been *Peterd*, and *Halásztelek* had been *Halászi* (Fejér comitat) in the Ancient Hungarian Age. The increase of the name size because of such reasons was counterbalanced by a traversing tendency: a general shortening process which, as a special enclitic process, for example, eliminated the posterior constituent from settlement names with *-falva* (and other geographical common noun) posterior constituents (the beginning of the change can be dated to the 14th and the 15th centuries): *Szentjakabfalva* > *Szentjakab*, *Remetefalva* > *Remete* (on the change of the type see KÁZMÉR 1970: 286–294), or reduced to the forms *-fala*, *-fa*: *Pálfalva* > *Pálfala* (quoted work: 267–274), *Asszonyfalva* > *Asszonyfa* (quoted work: 252–267). In connection with this, we might consider the possibility that the



shortening process and the shorter forms mainly used to characterize the spoken language, and the more complicated forms used to characterize the written language more, since the latter has a different function with a broader influence.

4. I only make two closing remarks: one refers to the possibility to explore the reasons, the other to the importance and the benefits of the first. The linguistic changes themselves are to be blamed for the impossibility of exploring the reasons of the linguistic changes (among them the settlement name changes). The reasons of changes taking place very long time ago disappeared because of the distance in time, and only the results are carried on by the language. However, since the latest changes often happen in front of our eyes, “their circumstances are perceived synchronically, so they are more easily accessible”, says LORÁND BENKŐ (1988: 120), and their analogies may help explore the reasons of the earlier changes.

The changes in the name structure happening for linguistic reasons, similarly to the majority of the changes of a linguistic nature, must have a chronological frame that cannot be defined too exactly, of course. If we accept this supposition as a starting point, the examination of the changes can help us to define the chronological value of the toponym types, which is often debated and regarded scientifically as being more and more flexible.

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