

Names of settlements that have turned into borderland as name forming lexemes¹

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Abstract

In my paper I set out to describe microtoponyms having emerged in modern times and containing lexemes that used to be names of settlements depopulated or devastated over the centuries. Such village names usually develop into microtoponyms which continue to be used as synonyms to refer to that specific area and undergo minor structural changes only. On the other hand, they can appear embodied in the names of objects within the confines of the former settlement, with various structural and semantic alterations.

The new combinations of place names emerging as a result of this process constitute specific structures of the place name system insofar as direct lexeme coincidences with the one-time settlement names can be detected in their forms. In this way they can contribute to the reconstruction of the territorial bounds of early settlements which are mentioned in medieval charters but have not been localized so far.

The structural analysis of name combinations emerging from names of settlements that have become village fields can yield very instructive results for general place name history studies, which may reveal how certain processes, historical rather than linguistic, influence alterations in the place name system, i.e. in the language itself.

1. Within the Hungarian system of toponyms modern-time micro-toponyms registered in the second half of the 20th century whose name body preserves names of medieval settlements that have disappeared in the course of centuries constitute a specific type. Before looking into the significant structural features of this particular group of names, it is necessary to present the general characteristics of Hungarian modern-time micro-toponyms.

1.1. From a structural aspect names are composed of one or more name parts. We define as *n a m e p a r t* every unit of a name that carries any information on the settlement designated by the name (Hoffmann 1993: 43). The name bodies of Hungarian toponyms may consist of one or two name parts, i.e. they express one or two pieces of information related to the object, thus they are one-part or two-part toponyms: for instance the toponym *Akác* is a one-part settlement name as it contains one single piece of information on the place (i.e. '[area] covered in acacia trees'), whereas *Sós-patak* 'stream with salty water' is composed of two name parts and as such, it carries two pieces of information: 1. water stream 2. (whose water is) salty.

From the aspect of their origins, modern-time micro-toponyms may be constituted of common words, proper names, already existing toponyms and loan names (Hoffmann 1993: 18). Toponyms that are already present in the system of settlement names may be integrated into the structure of newly built toponyms in several ways. 1. On the one hand, as a consequence of formal modification of a toponym applied to designate the same place—that is, without a change in the denotative meaning of the toponym (the name of the water stream *Dávidka*: proper name *Dávid* + diminutive *-ka* > name of water stream *Dávidka-ér*: toponym *Dávidka* + *ér* 'brook' geographic common name), 2. on the other hand, through a change of

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the denotative meaning, either a) without modification of the form of the toponym (*Tedej*, which originally meant swamp > *Tedej* became the name of a ‘csárda’ [a traditional Hungarian country inn]) or b) with modification of the name body (*Mályvás*, which used to be first of all the name of a section of a field, originating from the composition of the plant name *mályva* ‘mallow’ and the suffix *-s* meaning ‘abounding in something’, and which later on came to denote the mound *Mályvás-hát*, where the secondary name was formed from the toponym *Mályvás* ‘abounding in mallows’ + the geographic common name *hát* ‘mound’). Onomastic literature calls the starting name form of the latter type (that is, the settlement names *Tedej* and *Mályvás*) *basic names*, whereas toponyms derived from these are referred to as *secondary names* (Kocán 2008a: 184). In the Hungarian toponymic system settlement names formed in this way through the creation of *name trees* are highly frequent. In the course of the mentioned phenomenon the name of a given area as a basic name is used to create further names, which can be observed not only in synonyms of the given object, but also in the names of bordering areas or even of units located right within the territory of the denoted object. Thus in the case of places located in or objects bordering with the areas denoted through the basic names, toponyms may be formed as name trees or word families from as many as 4-5 parts. Later on in their turn these secondary names may become basic names meaning that they may give rise to further new toponyms.

The reliance of micro-toponyms on already existing settlement names can be demonstrated best through an example (in the chart dashed lines signal linguistic synonymy).

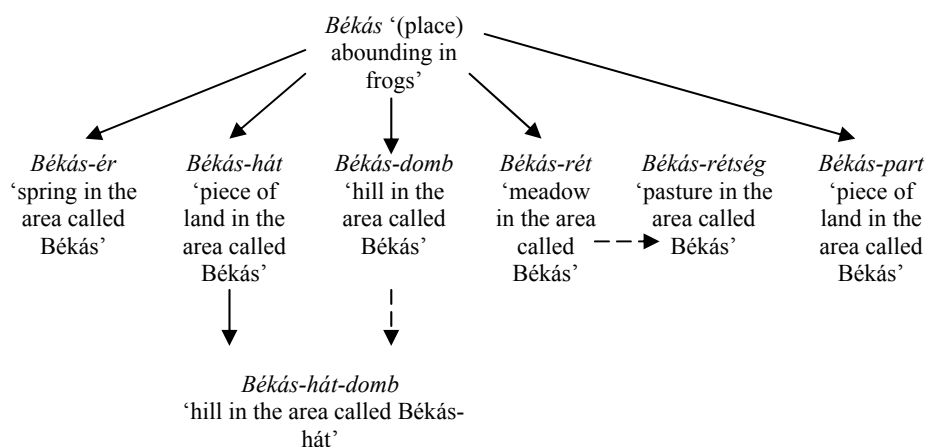


Table 1. Name tree of the toponym of Békás.

The example above shows the basic name *Békás* composed of the lexeme *béka* ‘frog’ and the toponym suffix *-s* with the primary meaning ‘abundant in something’. The secondary names *Békás-ér*, *Békás-hát*, *Békás-domb*, *Békás-rét*, *Békás-part* created from the basic name through syntagmatic formation refer to places (waters, pieces of land, hills, meadows, etc.) located in the area of *Békás*. Nevertheless, besides functioning as secondary names, the toponyms *Békás-rét* and *Békás-hát* also serve as basic names used to create further micro-toponyms: e.g. *Békás-rétság* and *Békás-hát-domb*.

Basic name micro-toponyms of modern times are mostly one-part place names, which means they contain only one piece of information on the places they denote: for example the above mentioned basic name *Békás* reflects the fact that at the time of the creation of the toponym the area was rich in frogs. From the point of view of the name structure the basis of these types of basic names is usually an etymologically transparent lexeme (e.g. *béka* ‘frog’) to which a suffix (e.g. *-s*) is added. As the above example shows, it can happen that a two-part toponym becomes a basic name carrying two pieces of information related to the

particular place, as in the case of *Békás-domb*, which is a 1. hill 2. located in the area of the place called Békás

1.2. Existing toponyms being integrated into new place names does not only characterise today's system of toponyms: the phenomenon is likely to have been widespread already as early as the Middle Ages, which in fact must have contributed to the gradual and continuous expansion of the Hungarian system of place names (Tóth V. 1999, Kocán 2008a, 2008b). In the period of Hungarian linguistic history spanning from the 13th to the 16th century in the development of toponyms place names are frequently created by using names of waters and settlement names, thus these occur mostly functioning as basic names. However, in the course of the next period of language history (from the early 16th until the second half of the 18th century) this role of macro-toponyms started to lose ground, and new toponyms were to emerge mostly from micro-toponyms (Kocán 2008a: 185, 2008b: 98–99). From the aspect of toponym structure, all through these periods (and as we could see, also in modern times) one-part basic names prevail (Kocán 2008b: 101).

1.3. A specific structure of new toponym formations emerging from existing settlement names are name associations constituted by the toponyms which in their basic name component preserve the names of earlier, disappeared medieval settlements of the Hungarian language territory. By discovering direct equivalence of lexemes between the name body of modern-time micro-toponyms and settlement names of the past, and by studying the often rather wide ranging name trees that have developed from particular toponyms, we can carry out a spatial reconstruction of early, destroyed and therefore so far unlocated settlements with fairly high likelihood. Before a more thorough exploration of the phenomenon itself it is sensible to take a brief look at the settlements devastated by time, an in general, at the network of Hungarian settlements.

2. In the past centuries, the network of settlements has undergone fundamental transformation in the whole area of the Hungarian linguistic territory. This means first of all that inhabited areas were located much denser than they are in our present times (Weidlein 1934: 611–630, 1936: 22–23, Györffy 1961: 35–38, Szabó I. 1966: 141, Várnagy 1991: 187). We must nevertheless add that in some cases these inhabited areas of early times could not even be regarded as real settlements in the traditional sense of the word, rather they were economic organisations owned by the squire (Balogh 1986: 134, 137–138). Bearing this in mind all through my study, I will nevertheless for the sake of simplicity refer to these types of early, once inhabited yet later on deserted areas as *settlements* or *villages*.

As the survival of sources related to medieval times and charters written in Latin containing Hungarian fragments (place and proper names) is highly incidental and non-homogeneous, in most cases they do not clearly indicate whether the inhabited areas of which they make mention represented a continuous space of dwelling for the population, or if at some point in the course of their existence they became desolate, in some cases only to be re-inhabited again (Györffy 1961: 35, 1963: 53, Szabó I. 1966: 144, 187).

The chronologic relations of the deterioration of medieval Hungarian settlements can be outlined relatively clearly: some villages disappeared already as early as the 13th century, while many of them became deserted in great masses only later on, during the 14th–15th centuries, and there were also such ones that remained relatively thriving well into the 16th century (Szabó I. 1966: 185, Balogh 1986: 137–138). The process of devastation did not strike the different regions of the Hungarian linguistic area in the same grade: from the different regions it was first of all the regions of the Great Plains and Transdanubia which were more likely to fall victim to deterioration (Györffy 1963: 53, Szabó I. 1966: 139, 147,

177, Várnagy 1991: 185, Tóth V. 2008: 28). The reason of the phenomenon can be identified primarily in the wars (e.g. while the 13th century witnessed the Tatar invasion, the 15th–16th centuries experienced the Turkish conquest and occupation), in the gradual transition of economic systems, and in the different demographic influences—in some cases even more than one of these factors could have simultaneous impact on the formation of a particular region's network of settlements. In fact, the emergence of today's network of settlements is most likely to have been completed with the integration of the area of earlier villages into the borderlands of one or more neighbouring settlements (Weidlein 1935: 679).

2.1. On the one hand, realistic, contemporary locating of any particular desolate settlement can be facilitated with a substantial grade of certainty with the help of charters, which constitute a valuable source of onomastic research. We can first of all rely on those textual sections of the charters which provide so to say geographic guidance regarding the one-time location of the given settlements: any mention of the particular comitat, a nearby river or surrounding settlements—that is, in fact the context of the toponym—may indicate its location more precisely, e.g. “Razin vocata in comitatu de Zoboch iuxta Tyciam, in vicinitate Sulthe prope Dada esistenti” (MOL DI. 40304, Sopron vm. 1: 67/54, AOklt. 2: 77/164)² Furthermore, the process of locating may also be supported by data gained from the study of ownership relations, as well the examination of ethnic and familial relations of the given area.

2.2. In addition, in the spatial reconstruction of the location of one-time settlements we may well make use of onomastic methods, that is of modern-time micro-toponyms. Two types of these may indicate the one-time existence of desolate settlements: on the one hand, names that make reference to a settlement without direct correspondence of the lexeme in their name body with the earlier toponym, e.g. *Puszta* ‘barren land’, *Régi faluhely* ‘place of old village’, *Pusztafalu* ‘deserted village’, etc. On the other hand, the memory of earlier villages may be preserved also in name associations emerged through the creation of name trees.

3. Devastation of the village is a natural pre-condition for the emergence of these types of toponym trees: as mentioned before, under Hungarian circumstances this was characteristic of the network of settlements from the 13th century on. However, the study of micro-toponyms arising from the names of earlier settlements can be studied primarily from the 17th–18th centuries on, as it was this period of time when the circle of historic sources expanded, and a number of different types of documents appeared and started spreading (such as maps) which had not been available in previous centuries. As a consequence the datability of toponyms grew remarkably.

After deterioration of the earlier village, the name of the one-time settlement could reappear as a name component designating the given place. As a rule, the structure of synonymous namings of an area were formed from the toponym of the earlier settlement + a posterior constituent referring to the nature of the place (usually indicating the fact of desolation). For instance the posterior constituent could be *puszta* ‘barren land’ (*Jód* > *Jódipuszta*, *Ágóc* > *Ágócpuszta*, Kováts 2008: 323; *Taj* > *Taj-puszta*, Kováts 2008: 418 etc.) or *föld* ‘land’ (*Vid* > *Vidi-föld*, H. Fekete 1959: 118). In the name structure of these synonymous denotations (*Jódipuszta*, *Vidi-föld*) the toponym often stands with the suffix *-i*, which expresses that the particular place is ‘a barren, desolate area (1), named Jód/Vid (2)’ (cf. Hoffmann 1993: 133).

² (An estate) called *Razin* in the comitat of Szabolcs near the river Tisza, in the neighbourhood of *Sulthe*, next to *Dada*.

At the same time the name of the earlier village may play an active role as a name component in the creation of micro-toponyms: the name of the ancient settlement *Tedej* appears in the toponyms *Tedej-halom* (toponym *Tedej* + geographic common name *halom* ‘mound’), *Tedeji-legelő* (toponym *Tedej* + suffix *-i* forming an adjective + geographic common name *legelő* ‘pasture’), *Tedeji-kölesföld* (*tedeji* adjective meaning ‘belonging to Tedej’ + geographic common name *kölesföld* ‘millet field’), *Tedeji-templom* (*tedeji* adjective meaning ‘belonging to Tedej’ + geographic common name *templom* ‘church’) as the anterior component of the syntagmatic structure with a suffix *-i*; the above mentioned medieval settlement of *Taj* (1282: *Toy*, 1321: *Tay*, etc. Kováts 2008: 417) appears in the toponyms *Taj-hegy* (toponym *Taj* + geographic common name *hegy* ‘hill’), *Taj-tó* (toponym *Taj* + geographic common name *tó* ‘lake’). The name structure of these micro-toponyms shows that in most cases the name of the ancient settlement appears accompanied by the formant *-i*, which—as opposed to the suffix *-i* in synonymous namings of the perished settlement—does not signify that the particular place itself would be named in this way (in that case this would be marked also by synonymy itself), but the fact that the given settlement is located on the ancient estate. Micro-toponyms formed in this way become basic names giving rise to further toponyms: e.g. from *Taj-hegy* the micro-toponyms *Taj-hegy alatt* (toponym *Taj-hegy* + postposition *alatt* ‘below’) ~ *Taj-hegy alja* (toponym *Taj-hegy* + geographic common name *alja* ‘foot/bottom’) emerged, while the toponym *Taj-tó* played a role in the formation of such place names like *Taj-tó-hegy* (toponym *Taj-tó* + geographic common name *hegy* ‘hill’) and *Taj-tó tájék* (toponym *Taj-tó* + geographic common name *tájék* ‘surroundings’) (these examples come from this passage: Kováts 2008: 418).

We can identify one-time borders of the medieval settlement itself through comparison of the spatial distribution of the synonymous namings and the micro-toponyms emerged from the name of the settlement. From a geographic aspect the location of micro-toponyms can be detected either from the users of the name or from 19th–20th century maps.

4. Nevertheless, any locating procedure based on today’s micro-toponyms may occasionally lead to false conclusions. Merely the name trees themselves do not necessarily signal earlier presence of a perished village, since—as noted beforehand—on the one hand, also micro-toponyms tend to evolve into name trees, and on the other, most Hungarian toponyms are etymologically transparent names, thus names with identical lexical structure may occur in most parts of the linguistic territory. Should for example a proper name serve as basic lexeme in the structure of any studied medieval settlement name—which is highly characteristic of the Hungarian toponymic system—while formally it coincides with a common name, this fact makes potential locating rather uncertain. From an etymological point of view, the toponym of the ancient settlement *Süldő* emerged through metonymical name giving from a proper name without a formant (1228: *Seldeu*, ÁSz.). The proper name that served as basis for the creation of the toponym is formally equivalent with the common name *süldő* meaning ‘young animal, mostly pig or rabbit’ (TESz.). Therefore merely on the basis of modern-time East-Hungarian micro-toponyms like *Süldős*, *Süldős-halom*, *Süldős-ér* or West-Hungarian settlement names like *Süldő-szállás*, *Süldögödri-dűlő*, etc. we obviously cannot locate the medieval settlement.

5. In conclusion of the foregoing we can make the following statements: after becoming deserted, the name of any early settlement may re-occur as a name component of micro-toponyms which appear on the one hand as synonymous namings designating the area of the earlier settlement—that is, displaying certain formal transformations besides preserving their denotative meaning. On the other hand, in the course of another type of name modification, both meaning (i.e. the denotative reference) and the name body undergo transformations. It is

important to note that all of the settlements marked with toponyms formed in the latter way are located within the borders of the earlier settlement.

We may, in turn, draw interesting lessons from spatial reconstruction attempts: while to other disciplines such as archaeology or history these can provide useful data which are unlikely to be available from other sources, they might bring along novel results also to onomastic research. Due to general toponymic-historical aspects, it is rather revealing to examine how particular extra-lingual factors, and especially historical processes or processes of settlement history—in this case the disappearance of settlements—influence transformations of the toponymic system, effectuating intra-linguistic changes.

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