# TOPONYMS OF MEHENDINȚI COUNTY

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**Abstract**

The analysis concerns the structure of Mehedinți county toponyms, as well as certain semantic and etymological aspects. Derivatives are formed with different suffixes, some of them specialized for marking the local origin. Most compounds contain either nouns and adjectives, or a noun in the nominative followed by another noun in the genitive. The semantics of the toponyms is related to the history of the people, the administrative organisation and the inhabitants' occupations.

**Key words**: *toponym*, *structure*, *derivative*, *compound*, *homonym*

**Résumé**

L'analyse vise la structure des toponymes du département de Mehedinți, leurs aspects sémantiques et étymologiques. Les dérivés sont formés avec des suffixes différents, certains en étant spécialisés pour marquer l'origine locale. La plupart des composés comprennent soit des substantifs et des adjectifs, soit un substantif au nominatif suivi d'un substantif au génitif. La sémantique des toponymes est liée à l'histoire du peuple, au mode d'organisation administrative et à l'occupation des habitants.

**Mots-clés**: *toponyme*, *structure*, *dérivé*, *composé*, *homonyme*

The various stages that language has completed throughout its historical development may be reconstituted on the basis of toponyms. Toponymy represents a genuine archive that can be used by historians in order to reconstitute remote epochs in the history of a people, epochs that no other documents can speak of. It has preserved testimonies from more or less remote periods which help us to get in-depth knowledge of the historical and linguistic past. Toponymy reflects the traditions of a people. Many researchers have been concerned with toponymy: Iorgu Iordan, *Toponimia Românească*; Alexandru Graur, *Nume de locuri*; Ioan Pătruț, *Nume de persoane şi nume de locuri româneşti*; Ion Toma, *Toponimia Olteniei*; Ilie Dan *Nume proprii româneşti*. The purpose of our research relies on the study of the toponymic material of Mehedinți county. The corpus of place names consists of a number of 358 toponyms.

They can be grouped as follows:

1. Simple toponyms

Semantically, some are homonyms of common names: *Alba, Albia, Arşița, Baia, Balta, Biserica, Buna, Buza, Cozia, Dobra, Fântâna, Flămânda, Galbenu, Găleata, Golu, Imoasa, Larga, Linia, Salcia, Vânăta, Vrancea*; some others are homonyms of the anthroponym: *Aldea, Aurora, Borogea, Bratilovu, Bucura, Elisabeta, Firizu, Giura, Manu, Marga, Vlădaia*.

Morphologically, the article is marked in the following examples: *Balota, Bârda, Brahna, Cazarma, Cerna, Cetate, Cremenea, Crivina, Dâlma, Halânga, Hinova, Isverna, Jiana, Obârşia, Negruşa, Ocna, Pădina, Pasărea, Pluta, Preajna, Poiana,*

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*Poroina*, *Lupşa*, *Recea*, *Rogova*, *Roşia*, *Rudina*, *Ruptura*, *Salcia*, *Scorila*, *Seliştea*, *Sfodea*, *Şiroca*, *Şovarna*, *Slaşoma*, *Strehaia*, *Studina*, *Tâmna*, *Târsa*, *Tismana*, *Turtaba*, *Varodia*, *Vişina*, *Vlădica*, *Vrata*, *Zegaia*, *Livezile*, *Măgurele*, *Pătulele*, *Pârlagele*, *Ponoarele*; the article is not marked in: *Bârâiacu*, *Cârş*, *Cearângu*, *Corzu*, *Dănceu*, *Godeanu*, *Gogoşu*, *Gutu*, *Higiu*, *Ilovu*, *Jugastru*, *Lazu*, *Ludu*, *Magheru*, *Marmanu*, *Nevăţu*, *Scăpău*, *Stejaru*, *Suharu*, *Şipotu*, *Tălăpanu*, *Ţânţaru*, *Viaşu*; the following toponyms are in the plural form: *Crainici*, *Dârvari*, *Gemeni*, *Greci*, *Livezi*, *Peri*, *Plopi*, *Vânători*.

1.2. Derived toponyms

Toponyms derived with the suffix *-eni* (making reference to the local origin and name) (13): *Bârlogeni*, *Boceni*, *Brânzeni*, *Broşteni*, *Cârceni*, *Ceptureni*, *Cioroboreni*, *Deleni*, *Delureni*, *Moşneni*, *Motruleni*, *Roşoreni*, *Selişteni*.

The following toponyms are derived with the suffix *-eşti* (31): *Albuleşti*, *Argineşti*, *Avăteşti*, *Baloteşti*, *Bădiţeşti*, *Bâlvăneşti*, *Budăneşti*, *Buseşti*, *Butoieşti*, *Căpăţâneşti*, *Căzăneşti*, *Costeşti*, *Crăguieşti*, *Dragoteşti*, *Drăgheşti*, *Gheorgheşti*, *Grozeşti*, *Hurduceşti*, *Jupâneşti*, *Mărăşeşti*, *Moiseşti*, *Negoieşti*, *Negreşti*, *Oprăneşti*, *Păuneşti*, *Pârvuleşti*, *Priboieşti*, *Proiteşti*, *Răduţeşti*, *Răiculeşti*, *Răscoleşti*; with the suffix: *-iţa* (13): *Bălăciţa*, *Bobaiţa*, *Cerveniţa*, *Dâlbociţa*, *Dumbrăviţa*, *Jidoştiţa*, *Gârniţa*, *Gvardiniţa*, *Pistriţa*, *Poroiniţa*, *Smadoviţa*, *Sviniţa*, *Şuşiţa*; with the suffix -(*i*)*oara* (5): *Breznicioara*, *Husnicioara*, *Fântâioara*, *Luncşoara*, *Trestioara*; with the suffix *-işoara* (4): *Cornişoara*, *Crucişoara*, *Ocnişoara*, *Scărişoara*; *-aş* (4): *Colibaşi*, *Dudaşu*, *Puşcaşu*, *Ţigănaşi*; with the suffix *-işor*(*i*) (3): *Oprişor*, *Prunişor*, *Roşiori*; *-el* (3): *Almăjel*, *Corlăţel*, *Voloicel*; *-iş* (3): *Alunişul*, *Păltinişu*, *Periş*; *-ani* (3): *Giurgiani*, *Molani*, *Păsărani*; *-oaia* (3): *Cotoroaia*, *Gărdoaia*, *Ghelmegioaia*; *-eţ* (2): *Colareţ*, *Vânjuleţ*; *-eţi*: *Cerneţi*, *Brădeţi*; *-oasa* (2): *Igiroasa*, *Imoasa*; *-ea* (2): *Stăngăceaua*, *Prisăceaua*; *-işte* (1): *Seliştea*; *-ov* (1): *Bratilovu*.

2. Compound toponyms

2.1. noun + adjective (30): *Baia Nouă*, *Balta Verde*, *Burila Mare*, *Burila Mică*, *Câmpu Mare*, *Cracu Lung*, *Cujmiru Mic*, *Dealu Mare*, *Dedoviţa Nouă*, *Dedoviţa Veche*, *Dunărea Mică*, *Fântâna Domnească*, *Fântânile Negre*, *Gârla Mare*, *Izvoru Frumos*, *Jiana Mare*, *Jiana Veche*, *Măru Roşu*, *Oreviţa Mare*, *Pădina Mare*, *Pădina Mică*, *Poroina Mare*, *Poşta Veche*, *Satu Mare*, *Satu Nou*, *Slătinicu Mare*, *Slătinicu Mic*, *Valea Bună*, *Vânju Mare*. Adjectives generally express certain characteristics of the place: *mare* ‘big, large’ (11), *nou*, *nouă* ‘new’, *veche* ‘old’, *mic*, *mică* ‘small’, less often the toponym includes a chromatic adjective (3).

2.2. noun + noun in the genitive (24): *Adunaţii Teiului*, *Coada Cornetului*, *Cracu Muntelui*, *Dudaşu Schelei*, *Faţa Cremenii*, *Faţa Motrului*, *Gura Motrului*, *Gura Văii*, *Izvoru Aneştilor*, *Izvoru Bârzii*, *Lunca Banului*, *Ostrovu Corbului*, *Poiana Gruii*, *Schela Cladovei*, *Schitu Topolniţei*, *Valea Anilor*, *Valea Copcii*, *Valea Coşuştei*, *Valea Marcului*, *Valea Petrii*, *Valea Teiului*, *Valea Ursului*. One can notice the frequency of the entopic *valea* ‘valley’ (7) in the structure of the toponyms.

2.3. noun + the preposition *de* + noun (4): *Baia de Aramă*, *Dumbrava de Mijloc*, *Obârşia de Câmp*, *Porţile de Fier*.

2.4. noun + noun in the nominative, hyphenated (4): *Breziţa-Motru*, *Breznita-Ocol*, *Cerna-Vârf*, *Drobeta-Turnu-Severin*.

2.5. noun + the preposition *de* + adverb (10): *Bala de Sus*, *Călineştii de Jos*, *Călineştii de Sus*, *Dumbrava de Jos*, *Dumbrava de Sus*, *Gârbovăţu de Jos*, *Gârbovăţu*

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*de Sus*, *Izvorălu de Jos*, *Lupşa de Jos*, *Lupşa de Sus*. Within pair toponyms, the distinction is made by means of an adverb preceded by the preposition *de* (*de sus*, *de jos*).

The numeral + noun structures are rare: *23 August*, *Trei Fagi*; similarly, those making reference to proper names of personalities: *Nicolaie Bălcescu*.

The village name pairs are differentiated by mentioning the name of a specific part of the village (the name of a commune): *Bâltanele* (Greci), *Bâltanele* (Prunişor): "Ctitorie: 1910, Tip: Biserica, Religie: ortodox, Localitate: Bâltanele, Comuna: Greci, Jude□: Mehedin□i, Arhiepiscopia Craiovei, Mitropolia Olteniei"/'Foundation: 1910, Type: Church, Religion: orthodox, Locality: Bâltanele, Commune: Greci, County: Mehedinți, Archdiocese of Craiova, Metropolis of Oltenia' (www.crestinortodox. ro/17.02.2009, *Biserica Bâltanele* (com. Greci) "Satul aparține de parohia Bâltanele (Prunişor)"/'The village belongs to the parish of Bâltanele (Prunişor)' (www. Televiziuneaseverin. ro, *RTS Radio Televiziunea Severin*); *Şipotu* (Ponoarele), *Şipotu* (Poroina Mare), "Distanța şi traseul de la Şipotu (Ponoarele), Mehedinți la Baia de Aramă"/'The distance and route from Şipotu (Ponoarele), Mehedinți to Baia de Aramă' (http://hartaromânieionline.ro); "În Şipotu (Poroina Mare) sunt înregistrate 4 firme"/ 'There are 4 firms registered in Şipotu (Poroina Mare)' (www.companii.ro/mehedinți, *Firme din Şipotu* (*Poroina Mare*), *județul Mehedinți*); *Şuşița* (Breznița Motru), *Şuşița* (Grozeşti), *Valea Ursului* (Ponoarele), *Valea Ursului* (Tâmna) "Undeva în Mehedinți, în comuna Tâmna, sat Valea Ursului, ascuns de copaci şi bălării, lemnul bisericii încă rezistă"/'Somewhere in Mehedinți, in the village of Valea Ursului, in a commune called Tâmna, behind trees and weeds, the wood of the church still resists' (ddunia.wordpress.com/09.10.2010, *Comuna Tâmna*, *sat Valea Ursului*); "aferente localității Valea Ursului, comuna Ponoarele județul Mehedinți"/'belonging to the village of Valea Ursului, the commune of Ponoarele, Mehedinți county' (www. apnpm.ro, *Anunț public privind decizia etapei de încadrare FC CEZ DISTRIBUTIE-comuna Ponoare*).

Semantically, some toponyms indicate a characteristic of the place[1]: *Bala de Sus*, *Balta Verde*, *Bunoaica*, *Bistrița*, *Cerna-Vârf*, *Cernaia*, *Cerneți*, *Crivina*, *Dealu Mare*, *Dâlbocița*, *Dobra*, *Golineasa*, *Şiroca*, *Ostrovu Mare*, *Roşia*, *Slătinicu Mic*, *Suharu*; property relations[2]: *Moşneni*; the social status of people[3]: *Crainici*; categories of inhabitants with a special status in the organisation of the state[4]: *Puşcaşu*; the occupation of the inhabitants[5]: *Blidaru*, *Cărămidaru*, *Făuroaia*; former human settlements[6]: *Poșta Veche*, *Seliştea*, *Selişteni*; names of peoples[7]: *Arvătești* < Hung. *Arvat* (obsolete) 'Croatian'; *Greci* < the ethnic name of the Greeks; *Jidoştița* < *jidov* (in old language) 'Jew'; (in modern language) almost limited to the language of the

[1] Iordan, 1963, p. 105.
[2] Iordan, 1963, p. 189.
[3] Iordan, 1963, p. 204.
[4] Iordan, 1963, p. 218 *Puşcaş* (old use): a body of 500 soldiers, commanded by the great 'armaş', guarding prisons (*Dicționarul enciclopedic ilustrat*, Bucureşti, 1931).
[5] Iordan, 1963, p. 224.
[6] Iordan, 1963, p. 254.
[7] Iordan, 1963, p. 267.

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church; local origin[8]: *Jiana Mare*, *Jiana Veche*, *Olteanca*; historic events[9]: *Drobeta-Turnu-Severin*.

3. While analyzing the etymology of the toponyms of Mehedinți county, we can notice the variety characterising their origin. The Slavic influence is also visible in the toponymy of north-western Oltenia: *Bistrița* < Slavic *bystru* 'fast', also 'clear'[10]; *Crivina* < Slavic *kriv* 'inclined, curved'; < Slavic *Krivina* 'turn'[11]; *Glogovi* < Slavic *glog* 'hawthorn' (*Crataegus oxyacantha*)[12]; *Iablanița* < Slavic *jablanu* 'apple'[13]; *Peşteana*, *Peştenuța* are derived from Slavic 'cave, grotto'[14]; *Racova* < *rakov* 'of the crab' therefore '(rich in or) with crabs'[15]; *Rogova* < Slavic *rog* 'horn' (of an animal)[16]; *Şiroca* from Slavic, Bulg. *Sirokz* 'wide'; *Şuşița* < a derivative from *suh* 'dry, barren'[17]; toponyms of Bulgarian origin: *Dâlbocița* < Bulg. *dezlbok* 'deep, curved'[18]; *Dedovița* < Bulg. *dedov* 'of grandfather'[19]; *Orevița Mare* < Bulg. *Orehov* 'of the nut(tree)'[20]; *Pădina* < Bulg., Russian *padina* 'deep valley'[21]; of Serbian-Croatian origin: *Hinova* < *hina* 'cunning, delicacy'[22]; of Latin origin: *Imoasa* < Lat. *Limosus* 'muddy'[23]; of Hungarian origin: *Almăjel* < Hung. *alma* 'apple'[24].

Some toponyms are also found in the counties of Dolj and Vâlcea: *Almăjel*, *Balota*, *Bistrița*, *Broşteni*, *Cocorova*, *Costeşti*, *Deleni*, *Delureni*, *Dragoteşti*, *Floreşti*, *Gura Văii*, *Livezi*, *Lazu*, *Negreşti*, *Moşneni*, *Ohaba*, *Olteanca*, *Poiana*, *Puținei*, *Răduțeşti*, *Roşia*, *Ruptura*, *Salcia*, *Suharu*, *Stăneşti*, *Stoeşti*.

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[8] Iordan, 1963, p. 295.
[9] Iordan, 1963, p. 305.
[10] Iordan, 1963, p. 500.
[11] Iordan, 1963, p. 508.
[12] Iordan, 1963, p. 101.
[13] Iordan, 1963, p. 83.
[14] Iordan, 1963, p. 39.
[15] Iordan, 1963, p. 479.
[16] Iordan, 1967, p. 480.
[17] Iordan, 1963, p. 355.
[18] Iordan, 1963, p. 105-106.
[19] Iordan, 1963, p. 476.
[20] Iordan, 1963, p. 351
[21] Iordan, 1963, p. 525.
[22] Iordan, 1963, p. 467.
[23] Iordan, 1963, p. 470.
[24] Iordan, 1963, p. 182.


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