

GEOPHICAL AND LANDUSE TYPES OF SETTLEMENTS IN BODROGKÖZ IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

In adherence to the recognition published in certain studies in ethnography in the last two decades that culture, especially agriculture can not be interpreted without taking into account the natural environment, the present article intends to contribute the research of flood-plain economy with new results. Using geographical, cartographical and mathematical methods, it sets up a categorization of the flood-plain settlements in Bodrogeköz in North-East Hungary. This region is bordered by three rivers (the Tisza, the Bodrog and the Latorca). Today its northern part belongs to Slovakia.

The author characterizes the territory of 53 settlements in Bodrogeköz according to 8 geographical features: geographical subregion, altitude of the village center, orography (relative relief of the territory and location of the settlement), structure of the settlement, average temperature and rainfall, and distribution of soil-types. Using these features as mathematical variables, a cluster analysis renders the settlements into 10 geographical types.

The land use of the settlements is characterized on the basis of the above geographical groups, with the help of analyzing the survived land-tenure and land-use maps of the last century. The summary of the conclusions is the following:

Before the channelization of the rivers in the second part of the last century the territorial distribution of land-use was influenced mainly by three (partly connected) features only: the belonging to a certain geographical subregion, the geographical location of the settlement and the distribution of territories of different altitudes within the borders of the village. The land-use of the settlements could be characterized on the basis of the last two features. Consequently, in Bodrogeköz we could identify three settlement-types: riverside, island and pediment settlements. A subdivision of riverside settlements could be done on the basis of the first feature, as the geographical structures of the land-use of the riverside settlements in certain subregions are very different. All three settlement types were characterized by the zonation of altitude in landuse, with special differences.

In island-settlements the highest zone, the plough lands – as the village itself – were on the top of sandhills. The meadows were on the hillsides and on the lower, sometimes overflowed hills, while the lowest, sometimes wet areas were used as pastures.

In the territory of riverside settlements the plough-lands were on the highest riverbanks separated from the river by a narrow meadow or pasture stripe. The main meadows and pastures were far from the river, in a lower area. The meadows were still less wet than those of the island settlements. The six subgroups were: settlements on the bank of the River Bodrog, the River Tisza, and the northern and southern bank of the two former Tisza-branches: the Tice and the Karcsa.

In the case of pediment settlements the highest part – on the top of the mountain – was pasture and/or vineyard, sometimes wood. On the pediment, close to the villages were the ploughlands, following the shape of the mountain, and in the lowest part were the meadows and the rest of the pasture-lands.

Pure types were relatively rare. The territory of most villages had the characteristics of two or more types.

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