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## SEMANTIC FEATURES OF GERMAN TOPONYMS

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### INTRODUCTION

Toponymy as an integral part of onomastics deserves serious study in view of its high linguistic, historical and ethnolinguistic content: Place name data help to adjust certain provisions regarding the origins of the language vocabulary in the pre-written period, to identify innovations in the vocabulary of a particular language after its separation from other language families, to clarify their dialectal division, to indicate what processes took place in lexical semantics after the emergence and development of writing.

Germanic studies has a large number of scholarly publications devoted to various aspects of the study of the toponymy of German-speaking countries from ancient times to the present. However, as this branch of linguistics develops, new controversial issues arise due to the growing interest in linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects of toponyms, the need to develop methods for comparative and historical studies of place name semantics, and the insufficient study of toponyms in relation to the physical and geographical environment and human mental activity.

The purpose of the study is to describe the semantic features of the toponymic system of the German language against a broad typological background. The object of the study is toponyms localized within the modern borders of Germany. The subject of scientific consideration is the semantic, etymological, historical and linguistic-cultural features of German toponyms in different synchronic sections. To achieve this goal, the following tasks are set: (1) to consider the existing approaches to understanding the systemic organization of toponyms; (2) to compile the factual basis for the linguistic description; (3) to describe the semantic features of German place names.

To solve specific tasks at different stages of the study, the following methods were used: (1) comparative historical analysis to identify processes taking place at different chronological stages, as well as to identify semantic similarities between place names of different territories; (2) typological analysis to identify common and distinctive semantic characteristics of place

names denoting different types of geographical objects; (3) etymological analysis to determine the time of origin of a place name, its initial semantic structure and the changes that occur in its semantics over the long period of its existence; (4) statistical analysis to identify quantitative correlations between different semantic groups of place names; (5) semantic analysis to identify extra-linguistic factors that influence the meaning of place names.

The research material was based on toponyms from D. Berger's dictionary "Geographische Namen in Deutschland: Herkunft und Bedeutung der Namen von Ländern, Städten, Bergen und Gewässern"<sup>1</sup>, published by Duden and considered an academic dictionary. It covers 6,977 names of settlements with more than 1,000 inhabitants, 894 names of rivers and their tributaries with lengths ranging from 10 to 2,000 km, 750 names of lakes with a size of more than 50 hectares, 274 names of mountains with an area of more than 50 m<sup>2</sup>, and a total of 8,895 place names. The dictionary explains the origins of modern and historical place names for the most famous geographical features of Germany: cities, towns, rivers, lakes, marshes, mountains, caves, forests, nature reserves, physical and geographical territories, historical and ethnographic areas, etc. The etymology of these names reflects the formation of place names in Germany from the time of the Indo-European ethnolinguistic community and the Great Migration to the present day, as well as centuries of linguistic and extra-linguistic (historical, geographical, ethnographic, cultural) information representing fragments of the linguistic world picture in the dynamics.

To trace the spread of certain place names, we used the German Road Atlas, compiled by ADAC, the German Automobile Club (ADAC)<sup>2</sup>. The atlas contains the names of all German settlements, updated as of 2023-2024.

### 1. Place names as a system in the common language

Toponymy (from the Greek *topos* – place and *onyma* – name, title) is an integral science that studies place names, their origin, semantics, development, current state, spelling and pronunciation, using data from three fields of knowledge – geography, history and linguistics. In linguistics, place names are studied by toponymy, which reveals the general patterns inherent in toponyms of different language systems, describes phonetic, morphological, word-formation and etymological features of place names, considers the spatial location of toponyms, the reasons for their appearance, the participation of different social groups in the creation of the onymicon, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Berger D. *Geographische Namen in Deutschland: Herkunft und Bedeutung der Namen von Ländern, Städten, Bergen und Gewässern*. Mannheim: Duden-Verlag, 1999. 320 S.

<sup>2</sup> ADAC Kompaktatlas Deutschland 2023/2024. 22. Aufl. Ostfildern: MAIR-DUMONT, 2022. 240 S.

The formation of toponymy as a science is associated with the discovery of the comparative historical method of linguistics. The following stages can be traced in the development of place names:

- (1) the preparatory period (second half of the nineteenth century);
- (2) the young grammar approach (first half of the twentieth century);
- (3) the period of a systematic approach to place names (since the 1950s).

During the preparatory period, researchers collect toponymic material on the basis of written monuments. The main works of this period are historical onomasticons containing all attested forms of names.

In the early twentieth century, the first scientific classifications of place names, their word-formation and structural descriptions appeared. Since the middle of the last century, the study of place names has been carried out in line with the systematic organisation of place names<sup>3</sup>.

Back in the middle of the last century, many authors emphasised that the question of systemic character is the main issue of onomastics, for which he proposed a programme of research into the systemic relations of onomastic units<sup>4</sup>. Eichler's systemic approach to proper names considers the onomastic space as a systemically dismembered integrity, which is especially closely connected with the extra-linguistic environment, due to the pronounced socially motivated identification function ontologically embedded in place names. This property is more precisely defined by R. Šrámek as the ability to distinguish a single object from a set of objects (phenomena) of the same class in order to identify this object as a single (singular) or its localisation in a certain place<sup>5</sup>. If we ask ourselves what makes such differently shaped linguistic signs as *Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Frankfurt, Leipzig* elements of toponymic systems, we can answer that in the system they are interconnected by paradigmatic relations, which makes the function of identification possible. The ability of the elements to enter into oppositional relations within the paradigmatic framework determined by the system, realising the function of identification, is recognised as the main systemic constitutive feature of the system (systemkonstituierendes Merkmal).

The systematic nature of place names is clearly manifested in the field of morphology. Such systemic features are typical for place names of a certain area, cf. suffixes *-tšch/-itsch*, *-gast*, which arose as a result of the numeration of Slavic toponyms, and German topographic elements *-au*,

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<sup>3</sup> Kohlheim V. Der onymische Bereich als autopoietisches System. *Wort und Name im deutsch-slavischen Sprachkontakt: Ernst Eichler von seinen Schülern und Freunden*. Hrsg. von K. Hengst, I. Bily. Köln / Weimar / Wien: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & Cie, Köln, 1997. S. 49–57.

<sup>4</sup> Eichler E. *Slawische Ortsnamen zwischen Saale und Neisse*. 2. Aufl. Bautzen: Domowina-Verlag, 2010. 201 S.

<sup>5</sup> Šrámek R. Die Kategorie des Allgemeinen in der Namensforschung. *Der Eigename in Sprache und Gesellschaft I*. Hrsg. von E. Eichler, E. Saß, H. Walther. Leipzig, 1985. S. 164.

*-dorf, -hausen, -leben, -stedt*, etc. A place name composed of names with a common topographic element enables a person to assign them to the appropriate topographic class if they are unfamiliar with it. Word-formation toponymic models such as *A-hagen, B-hausen, C-reuth, D-stedt* are easily perceived by German speakers as place names<sup>6</sup>.

In the works of Ukrainian linguists<sup>7</sup>, the toponymic system is considered as a set of specific features or attributes that are naturally repeated in the process of formation of place names and their modern stability. This is a geographically organised set of topo-bases, topo-formants, as well as rules and methods of their connection with each other and specifics of perception of certain toponymic formations. At the same time, well-known objects and their names help to localise lesser-known ones.

Researchers specify the concept of place-name systems with the help of the concepts of structure and organisation of the system. Structurally, the toponymic system of the entire territory of any language is a macro-system consisting of local toponymic systems. In a macrosystem, place names take their places according to their rank, purpose, and role in society. Thus, the systematic approach is reduced to the concept of a place name system as an inventory of linguistic means (topo-bases, topo-formants, word-forming means), as well as to the relation of the system to its environment, which primarily means the specificity of the perception of a place name by the local population and the binding of place names to a certain territory. Thus, we propose to define a place name system as a set of elements in relations and connections with each other, forming a certain unity. A toponymic system implies the presence of a certain structure, internal hierarchical ordering of all substructures contained in it. A certain unity of the system is created by the commonality of territory, time and language.

## 2. On the history of the semantic study of German toponyms

The description and study of the semantics of German toponyms has a long tradition. The first sources of information on German place names were Greek and Latin historical documents, in which we find such place names as *Saltus Teutoburgensis, Hercunia, Bacenis silva*, etc.<sup>8</sup> In the sixteenth century,

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<sup>6</sup> Fleischer W. *Wortbildung der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1976. P. 185.

<sup>7</sup> Карпенко О. Ю. *Проблематика когнітивної ономастики*: монографія. Одеса: Астропринт, 2006. 325 с.; Карпенко Ю.О. Теоретичні засади розмежування власних і загальних назв. *Мовознавство*. 1975. № 4. С. 46–50; Карпенко Ю. А. *Топонимія Буковини*: автореф. дис. ... докт. філол. наук. 10.02.01–Українська мова. К.: КНУ, 1967. 41 с.

<sup>8</sup> Rasch G. *Die bei den antiken Autoren überlieferten geographischen Namen im Raum nördlich der Alpen vom linken Rheinufer bis zur pannonischen Grenze, ihre Bedeutung und sprachliche Herkunft*. Heidelberg: Winter, 1950. 137 S.

the German historian and humanist, author of the Bavarian Chronicle, Aventine (real name *Johann Turmayr*) was already trying to interpret place names that appeared in historical works<sup>9</sup>. Such attempts often relied on mythological interpretations of ancient authors or were folk etymological speculations. Sometimes, however, plausible explanations appeared, based on the geographical location of the object, its characteristic features, connection with historical facts, etc. However, regardless of the method used, the interpretation of the names in all cases remained "atomistic", i.e., it concerned only individual names, without attempts to search for interconnections and identify any common patterns.

Among German scholars, the philologist and founder of Germanic studies J. Grimm was one of the first to use geographical names. For the scientist, toponyms are the oldest linguistic monuments, the study of which sheds light on the language, customs and history of the ancestors. J. Grimm attaches great importance to the semantics and etymology of place names. Tracing the motif of the Swiss folk legend about Wilhelm Tell according to various sources, the author puts such proper and place names as *Tell*, *Toko*, *Egill*, *Wielands*, *Velents*, *Bell*, etc. in the same row. J. Grimm proves the kinship of these names on the basis of semantic and sound proximity (the forms *Tell*, *Ell*, *Bell* phonetically seem to the author to be related). J. Grimm traces *Tell* to the Latin *telum* "arrow", *Bell* to the Greek βέλος "arrow" and the Danish *Toko* to the Greek τόξον, which in plural means "arrows". He connects the Islamic name *Egill* with the Germanic word *Igel* "hedgehog". Stating the functional similarity between the arrowhead and the needle of a hedgehog, J. Grimm concludes that the name *Egill* is semantically close to the rest of the names in the chain<sup>10</sup>.

Another scientific work was the two-volume "Old German Onomasticon" edited by E. Förstemann. Based on more than 100 sources (historical archives, sources on German history, legal codes, etc.), the author tried to group place names by their meaning and common origin<sup>11</sup>. The historical place names available to the researcher had to be correctly identified, so the dictionary pays great attention to the localisation of geographical objects by indicating the nearby settlement, for example, *Bornheim*, *NO v. Landau*, *SW v. Speier*.

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<sup>9</sup> Turmair J. *Bayerische Chronik*. Bayern: Bauariz ducum, 1533. [online]. Access mode: <https://www.bavarikon.de/object/bav:BSB-HSS-00000BSB00029595?view=meta&lang=de>

<sup>10</sup> Grimm J. Über hessische Ortsnamen. *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde*. Kassel: Bohné, 1840. S. 139–154. [online]. Access mode: <https://arcinsys.hessen.de/arcinsys/detailAction?detailid=g111787>

<sup>11</sup> Förstemann E. *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*. Bd. 2: Orts- und sonstige geographische Namen. Nordhausen: Verlag von Ferdinand Förstemann, 1859. [online]. Access mode: <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb11069103?page=5>

A. Bach is particularly noted for his work on German toponyms. He authored a number of works, including a two-volume monograph on the study of proper names in the German language («Deutsche Namenkunde», Bd. II). An interesting aspect of our research is the section “German place names in their class stratification”, which deals with the influence of both individuals and various social groups (miners, fishermen, peasants, townspeople, nobility, etc.) on the emergence of place names<sup>12</sup>.

For researchers of German toponyms, the monographs “Deutsche Namenkunde” by G. Bauer<sup>13</sup> are also of great interest. It examines modern theories of proper names, the semantics of toponyms and their clarifying components, diachronic aspects of naming, stratigraphy of place names (hydronyms and oikonoms, the oldest Germanic names with *-ingen* and *-heim*, Germanic-Romance hybrid formations, toponyms of the period of the development of new lands and modern names), diastatic aspects of proper names (social strata and typical proper names), etc.

The importance of semantic classification of place names is noted by a number of onomastics, since it is in this way that place names most subtly emphasise the history of the people. Thus, in his monograph, B. Karpenko provides a classification of toponyms of Bukovyna based on the source of their origin:

- 1) place names derived from geographical names or their features;
- 2) place names derived from anthroponyms, names of ethnic groups and other names of people;
- 3) place names from names of cultural objects and phenomena;
- 4) place names with an unclear source of origin<sup>14</sup>.

A detailed analysis of the semantics of German place names has made it possible to identify eight main semantic groups of toponyms:

- 1) names related to the settlement and cultivation of land;
- 2) names related to religious activities;
- 3) names related to legal relations;
- 4) names related to material culture;
- 5) physical and geographical names;
- 6) names reflecting flora and fauna;
- 7) names indicating land clearing and farming;
- 8) names related to the construction of roads, communication routes, dams, dikes, canals.

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<sup>12</sup> Bach A. *Deutsche Namenkunde*. Bd. II, 1: Die deutschen Ortsnamen. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1953. 451 S.; Bach A. *Deutsche Namenkunde*. Bd. II, 2: Die deutschen Ortsnamen. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1954. 615 S.

<sup>13</sup> Bauer G. *Deutsche Namenkunde*. 2. Aufl. Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 1998. 356 S.

<sup>14</sup> Карпенко Ю. О. Топонімія Буковини: автореф. дис. ... докт. філол. наук. 10.02.01–Українська мова. К.: КНУ, 1967. 41 с.

### 3. Semantic classification of German place names

On the scale of toponymic motivation, we distinguish three intermediate stages with different degrees of motivation depending on the presence of synchronicity with the generic appeals:

(1) place names with a transparent semantic structure: *Neustadt*, *Würzburg*, *Eichstädt*;

(2) place names with a semi-transparent semantic structure: *Niederhambac*, *Zelle*;

(3) semantically unclear (opaque) place names: *Main*, *Chemnitz*, *Bexten*, *Velsen* etc.

All toponyms are divided into eight lexical and semantic groups according to their meaning.

#### 3.1. Place names related to settlement and land cultivation.

This group includes toponyms with other components:

**-hausen** (dative case), the Low German equivalents **-husen**, **-haus**: *Adelzhausen* (on behalf of the name *Adelhelm*), *Mühlhausen*, *Kellinghusen*, *Husum*; **-hausen** is often reduced to **-sen**: *Bellersen*;

**-hofen** (dative plural), **-hof**, the Low German equivalent **-hoop**: *Königshofen*, *Oberhof*, *Ahrenshoop*, simplexes *Hof*, *Hofen*, Low German toponyms *Hove*, *Hoven*;

**-burg**, **-borg**: *Quedlinburg* (from proper name *Quidilo*), *Magdeburg*, simplex *Burg*;

**-stetten** (dative plural), **-stadt**, **-städt**, **-stedt**, **-statt**, **-stätt**, **-stett**: *Dornstetten*, *Immenstadt*, *Helmstedt*, *Rastatt*, *Eichstädt*, *Althengstett*;

**-dorf**, **-druf**, the Low German equivalents **-trop**, **-trup**: *Düsseldorf*, *Ohrdruf*, *Hattorp*, *Heckentrup*;

**-weiler** (< Latin *villare* "yard, manor"), phonetic variants: **-weier**, **-weil**, **-will**: *Rappoltswailer*, *Appenweier*, *Bolschweil*, *Rapperswil*, simplexes *Weiler*, *Weier*, *Weil*;

**-gaden**, **-kammer**, **-kemnath**, **-stuben**, **-zimmer(n)** (ancient word *Gaden* means "one-room house"; *Kammer* "chambers", *Kemenate* and *Stube* mean "heated room"): *Berchtesgaden*, *Stubenkammer*, *Badstuben*, *Neckarzimmer*; *Kamnath*, *Kamnathen*, *Kemmoden*;

**-beuren**, **-beuern**, **-büren** (from Old High German *bûri* "house, dwelling"): *Benediktbeuren*, *Grasbeuern*, *Amelsbüren*, simplexes *Beuren*, *Beuern*;

**-büttel** (< Germanic *\*buþla* "house, dwelling", compare the verb *bauen* „to build“): *Wolfenbüttel*, *Büttel*;

**-kotten**, **-köt**, **-katen** (from Low German *kot[e]* "hut"): *Hinterkotten*, *Meinkot*, *Bergkaten*, simplexes *Kotten*, *Kötten*, *Kothen*, *Köthen*, *Käthen*;

**-sassen, -sessen, -sass, -sess, -sis, -soos**, Low German **-sat, -set** (< *sitzen* “to sit”): *Waldsassen, Neusaß, Neusäß, Neuses, Neusis, Ottensoos; Sassen, Saß*;

**-siedel(n)**, Low German **-sel(l), -seel** (< Old High German *sēdel* “residence” – “place of residence”): *Wunsiedel, Einsiedeln*; **-sal** (< Old High German *sala* “manor house”): *Bruchsal, Neuensaal*; “village”, borrowed from Latin *vicus* “village”): *Kettwig, Katzwich, Osterwick, Sefferweich, Braunschweig, Osterwieck, Weichs, Wieck*;

**-lar** (< “housing, settlement”): *Goslar* “settlement on the Gosse River”, *Dinklar, Wetzlar*.

### 3.2 Place names related to religious activities:

**-zell, -zella** (< Latin *cella* first “storeroom”, then “cell, hermitage”): *Radolfzell, Paulinzella; Zell, Zella, Zellen*;

**-kloster** (< Latin *claustrum*), **-münster** (< Latin *monasterium*), **-pforte** (< Latin *porta*): *Neukloster; Kloster; Klösterle, Kremsmünster, Münster, Schulpforte, Seligenpforte*;

**-kirche** (< German *Kirche* “church”), **-kirchen, -kapel(le)** (< German *Kapelle* “chapel”): *Altkirch, Partenkirchen, Waldkappel, Kapellen*.

### 3.3 Place names related to legal relations:

**-bünde, -point, -paint** (< Old High German *piunta, biunda* “a fenced land plot whose owner had special rights to cultivate it”): *Hemsbünde, Hochpoint, Paint*;

**-kamp, -gard** “fenced area”: *Berkenkamp, Stuttgart* (< *Fohlenhof* “yard, paddock for foals”);

**-eigen, -hube** (< Old High German *huoba* “land allotment”) express the value of ownership: *Ruhmannsaigen, Aigen, Hub, Huben*, Low German *Huf, Hufe, Hufen*;

**-erbe, -leben** (< Old High German *leiba* “inheritance”) indicate a family estate: *Sechserben, Aschersleben, Gardelegen*;

**-mal** (< Old High German *mahal* “place of court hearings”) underlies the names *Detmold, Gesmold*.

### 3.4. Place names related to material culture

**-mühle, -kern** (< Old High German *quirn* “mill”): *Neumühl, Obermühle, Moselkern*;

**-grub, -zeche, -stollen, -schacht, -schmelz, -ofen, -schmied, -hammer**: *Tiefengrub, Amalienzeche, Leimstollen, Bleischacht, Altschmelz, Glasofen, Eckernschmied, Neuhammer*;

**-markt, -zoll, -wehr, -schleuse, -brücke**: *Neumarkt, Hochzoll, Lachwehr, Rheinschleusen, Langehbruck, Saarbrücken* etc.



### 3.5. Physical and geographical place names:

a) names that reflect the elevated forms of the terrain: **-berg, -höhe, -höchte, -hügel, -pard, -bühel, -bühl, -bohl, -boll, -hübel, -buckel**: *Nürnberg, Friedrichshöhe, Sandhögte, Steinhügel, Boppard, Eichbühel, Steinbühl, Bechtersbohl, Homboll*; simplexes *Berg, Bergen, Biehl, Bichl, Boll*;

**-kopf** (the term refers to the peak and the village located on its slopes; from German *Kopf* – “head; mountain peak”): *Schneekopf, Ochsenkopf, Biedenkopf*;

**-haupt**: *Breitenhaupt, Berghaupten, Bergeshövede*; this term can refer to the source of a river or its headwaters: *Bachhaupten, Seeshaupt*;

**-First, -Spitze, -Eck, -Rücken, -Hang**: *Schillingsfirst, Hainspitz, Saalecke, Ziegenrück, Reilhäng*;

б) names motivated by bodies of running water:

**-ach, -ache, -a** (< Old High German *aha* “running water”): *Ach, Aach, Aachen*;

**-bach**, Low German **-beck, -beke**: *Ansbach, Hardenbeck, Wandsbek, Beck, Beeck, Beeke*;

**-lauf(en)** “river flow”: *Braunlauf, Laufen*;

**-siepen, -siefen, -seifen, -seif** “stream”: *Heusiepen, Herkensiefen*;

**-spring(e)** “spring, fountain”: *Urspring, Lippspringe*;

**-fließ**, Low German **-fleet, -fliet** “stream”: *Altenfleiß, Depenfleeth*;

**-brunn(en), -born, -bronn** “spring, well”: *Heilbronn, Paderborn*;

**-bad(en), -münde, -gemünd**: *Wiesbaden, Neckargemünd, Münden, Gemünd, Gemünden*;

в) names motivated by bodies of standing water:

**-see, -wag, -wiek, -wyk** “bay”: *Weißensee, Kaltenwag, Burtleswagen; Schleswig, Herrenwyk*;

**-lache(n)** “small lake”: *Berlachen, Lache*;

**-maar** “an extinct volcano crater”: *Wismar, Maar*;

**-teich** (Low German **-dick**), **-weiher** “forest lake”: *Altenteich, Tiefendick, Ochsenweiher*;

**-pfuhl** “puddle”: *Krotenpfuhl, Poggenpohl*;

г) place names motivated by lowland or marshy terrain:

**-bruch, -brock, -brook, -broich, -fehn, -venn, briel, -moor, -moos, -marsch**: *Breitenbruch, Herzebrock, Klingebrook, Diepenbroich, Breitenfenn, Venne, Bannensiek, Lichtenmoor, Todtsmoos*.

### 3.6. Place names reflecting flora and fauna:

a) vegetation types:

**-wald, -forst** “wood”: *Greifswald, Eberswalde, Kammerforst*;

**-holz** “timber”: *Holzen, Kleinholzen, нижнеоим. Holt, Holten*;

**-busch, -strauch** “bush”: *Eichbusch, Birkenstrauch, Strock, Struck*;

**-hain** “grove”: *Lichtenhain, Hain*;

**-heide, -wiese, -weide** “meadow”: *Hohenheide, Wiesentheid; Metzterwiese, Herrenwies, Langenwiesen; Viehweide, Weiden*;

6) from the names of individual tree species and other plants. Such place names are of considerable scientific interest as one of the sources of information for reconstructing the former vegetation:

**-birke** “birch”: *Hohenbirken, Unterpirk*;

**-buche** “beech”: *Altenbuch, Schönbuchen, Puchen*;

**-linde** “linden”: *Kirchlinde, Linden*;

**-hasel** “hazel”: *Hasel, Haseln*;

**-tanne** “spruce”: *Altenhann, Hohentann*;

**-fichte** “fir”: *Schönficht, Feuchten, Viecht*.

**3.7. Names indicating land clearing and farming.** This group includes oikonyms that reflect the peculiarities of the economic life of the population. The most widespread is the main type of activity – agriculture, primarily names related to slash-and-burn agriculture, which in the past dominated the forest zone for a long time. The importance of slash-and-burn agriculture for the economic life of medieval Germany, the longevity of this method of farming, and its spread throughout the forest zone led to the formation of a developed terminology to denote the various stages of land preparation and use. The following topographic bases were widely used in the formation of settlement names:

**-hag, -hagen** (< Middle High German *hac, hages* “fencing, fenced property; grove, thorn bush”; the first step in cultivating the land was to fence it off): *Grünhag, Lichtenhaag, Schwarzenhagen, Hag, Hage, Haage, Hagen*;

**-schwende, -schwenden, -schwand** “eradicate, uproot”: *Molmerschwende, Wolpertschwende, Kleingeschwenda, Feuerschwenden, Ottoschwanden, Weltenschwann, Schwande, Schwanden, Schwende(n), Geschwend*;

**-brand, -brunst, -seng, -sang** (the bases indicate the burning of logged and uprooted forest): *Brand, Brande(n), Brunst, Brünst, Sang, Seng; Neuenbrand, Oberbränd, Vorderbrunst, Hinterbrünst, Vogelsang* (< *sengen* “to burn”);

**-schlag, -hau, -stock**: *Schlag, Schlage(n), Hau, Haue(n), Stock(en), Oberschlag, Altenhau*;

**-reut, -kreat, ried(t), -rod, -rode, -rad, -rath** (Old High German *riuti*, Middle High German *riute* “a plot of land cleared from under the forest and prepared for ploughing”): *Bayreuth, Wiggenreute, Bernried, Buchenrod, Wernigerode, Friedrichroda, Stockenrieth, Nesselröden, Niederrad, Neuenrade, Benrath, Reut(h), Reut(h)en, Gereuth, Grit, Grütt, Ried, Rieden, Rode, Roda, Roden, Rohden, Rade, Raden*;

**-acker, -brache** (< *Brache* “plough-land; fallow”), **-breite** (in place names means “a narrow, elongated strip of arable land”), **-brak, -esch** (Old High German *esch* “sown field”): *Langenacker, Rottebreite, Großenbreden, Hohenbrach, Altenbrack, Farenbracken, Bramsche* (1097 – *Bramezche*), *Varenesch, Schildesche, Ternsche; Acker, Breite, Breidt, Breiten, Bra(a)ch, Brachen, Brächen, Braak, Brake*.

**3.8. Place names related to the construction of roads, railways, dams, dikes, canals:**

**-straß, -weg, -steig, -pfad:** *Hochstraß, Altweg, Altensteig, Bockstiege, Rempfad;*

**-furt, -ford, -förde:** *Erfurt, Herford, Lemförde, Eckernförde;*

**-siel, -graben, -kanal:** *Altensiel, Sulzgraben, Coppengrave;*

**-deich, -damm, -wall, -werb, -koog, -polder:** *Norderdeich, Altendamm, Brunsbüttelkoog, Charlottenpolder.*

Our results are summarised in Table 1 (see Table 1):

Table 1

**The main semantic groups of topobases**

Semantic groups	Other components of toponyms	Examples
Names associated with the settlement of a particular area	-hausen, -husen, -haus	<i>Mühlhausen, Kellinghusen</i>
	-hofen, -hof, -hoop	<i>Königshofen, Ahrenshoop</i>
	-burg, -borg	<i>Quedlinburg, Magdeburg</i>
	-stetten -stadt, -städt, -stedt, -statt, -stätt, -stett	<i>Dornstetten, Immenstadt, Helmstedt, Rastatt, Eichstädt</i>
	-dorf, -druf, -trop, -trup	<i>Düsseldorf, Ohrdruf, Hattorp</i>
	-weiler, -weier, -weil, -wil(l)	<i>Appenweiler, Rapperswil</i>
	-gaden, -kammer, -kemnat, -stuben, -zimmer(n)	<i>Berchtesgaden, Stubenkammer, Neckarzimmern</i>
	-beuren, -beuern, -büren, -büttel	<i>Grasbeuern, Amelsbüren</i>
	-kotten, -kot, -katen	<i>Meinkot, Kötten</i>
	-sassen, -sessen, -sass, -sess, -sis, -soos, -sat, -set	<i>Waldsassen, Neusäß, Neuses, Neusis, Ottensoos, Sassen, Saß</i>
	-siedel(n), -sel(l), -seel, -sal	<i>Wunsiedel, Bruchsal</i>
	-wig, -wich, -wick, -weich, -wiek	<i>Osterwick, Sefferweich</i>
Names associated with religious activities	-lar	<i>Goslar Dinklar, Wetzlar</i>
	-zell, -zella	<i>Radolfzell, Paulinzella, Zellen</i>
	-kloster, -münster, -pforte	<i>Neukloster, Seligepforte</i>
	-kirche, -kirchen, -kapel(le)	<i>Altkirch, Partenkirchen, Waldkappel, Kapellen</i>

Table 1 (continuance)

Names, related to the rights of the parties	-bünde, -point, -paint	<i>Hemsbünde, Hochpoint, Paint</i>
	-kamp, -gard	<i>Berkenkamp, Stuttgart</i>
	-eigen, -hube	<i>Ruhmannsaigen, Hub</i>
	-erbe, -leben	<i>Aschersleben, Gardelegen</i>
	-mal	<i>Detmold, Gesmold</i>
Names associated with material culture	-mühle, -kern	<i>Neumühl, Moselkern</i>
	-grub, -zeche, -stollen, -schacht, -schmelz, -schmied, -ofen, -hammer	<i>Tiefengrub, Amalienzeche, Leimstollen, Neuhammer</i>
Physical and geographical names	-markt, -zoll, -wehr, -schleuse, -brücke	<i>Neumarkt, Hochzoll, Lachswehr, Saarbrücken</i>
	-berg, -höhe, -höchte, -hügel, -bühel, -pard, -bühl, -bohl, -boll, -hübel, -buckel	<i>Nürnberg, Friedrichshöhe, Sandhögte, Steinhügel, Eichbühel, Steinbühl, Bechtersbohl</i>
	-kopf, -haupt	<i>Schneekopf, Bergeshövede</i>
	-first, -spitze, -eck, -rücken, -hang	<i>Schillingsfirst, Reilhäng</i>
	-ach, -ache, -a	<i>Ach, Aach, Aachen</i>
	-bach, -beck, -beke	<i>Hardenbeck, Wandsbek, Beck</i>
	-lauf(en), -spring(e)	<i>Braunlauf, Lippspringe</i>
	-sieden, -siefen, -seif(en)	<i>Heusieden, Herkensiefen</i>
	-fließ, -fleet, -fliet	<i>Altenfließ, Depenfleeth</i>
	-brunn(en), -born, -bronn	<i>Heilbronn, Paderborn</i>
	-bad(en), -münde, -gemünd	<i>Wiesbaden, Neckargemünd</i>
	-see, -wag, -wiek, -wyk	<i>Schleswig, Herrenwyk</i>
	-lache(n)	<i>Berlachen, Lache</i>
	-maar	<i>Wismar, Maar</i>
	-teich, -dick, -weiher	<i>Tiefendick, Ochsenweiher</i>
	-pfuhl	<i>Krotenpfuhl, Poggenpohl</i>
	Names that reflect the flora and fauna	-bruch, -brock, -brook, -broich, -fehn, -venn, -briel, -moor, -moos, -marsch
-wald, -forst, -holz		<i>Eberswalde, Kammerforst</i>
-busch, -strauch		<i>Eichbusch, Birkenstrauch</i>
-hain, -heide, -wiese, -weide		<i>Lichtenhain, Herrenwies</i>
-birke, -buche, -linde, -hasel, -fichte, -tanne		<i>Hohenbirken, Kirchlinde, Viecht, Feuchten, Altenthann</i>

Table 1 (continuance)

Names that indicate land cultivation and land use	-hag, -hagen	<i>Grünhag, Lichtenhaag, Hagen</i>
	-schwende, -schwenden, -schwand	<i>Molmerschwende, Geschwend</i>
	-brand, -brunst, -seng, -sang	<i>Brünst, Vogelsang</i>
	-schlag, -hau, -stock	<i>Oberschlag, Altenhau</i>
	-reut, -kreut, ried(t), -rod, -rode, -rad, -rath	<i>Bayreuth, Wernigerode, Stockenrith, Nesselröden, Grit</i>
	-acker, -brache, -breite, -brak, -esch	<i>Acker, Breidt, Schildesche</i>
Names associated with the buildings	-straß, -weg, -steig, -pfad	<i>Hochstraß, Bockstiege</i>
	-furt, -ford, -förde	<i>Erfurt, Herford, Lemförde</i>
	-siel, -graben, -kanal	<i>Altensiel, Coppengrave</i>
	-deich, -damm, -wall, -werb, -koog, -polder	<i>Norderdeich, Brunsbüttelkoog, Charlottenpolder</i>

Thus, toponyms in Germany are names associated with economic, legal and religious activities, material culture, flora and fauna, as well as with the settlement of a certain territory and its physical and geographical features.

#### 4. Semantic peculiarities of the qualifying components of composites

The qualifying components of German toponyms can be divided into three groups:

- (1) qualifiers expressed by names, nicknames, ethnonyms or indications of social status;
- (2) qualifiers that characterise the named object from the internal side;
- (3) qualifiers characterising the named object from the external side.

The first group includes the oldest German oikonyms dating back to the period of “land settlement” (Landnahmezeit) and containing anthroponyms as clarifying components. The origin of such names is different, but in all cases it is connected with social conditions. The number of vicarious names of villages and towns in different regions depends on the peculiarities of their historical development: time and density of settlement, types of land tenure, land relations, etc. In the toponymy of Germany, among the names of inhabitants that motivate the emergence of a significant part of German oikonyms, one can distinguish different subtypes of named persons according to their relation or affiliation to a certain society that inhabited this area or owned it as property:

- relatives or descendants of the former owner, i.e. people who are in a patronage relationship with the owner;
- persons who are in feudal dependence on their vassal;
- people engaged in a particular trade or professionally performing certain duties.

In general, a person and his/her name have long been the most significant factor determining the future name of a settlement – an oikonym. The most common type of relationship between the motivating anthroponym and the motivated oikonym was a possessive relationship, indicating both the owner and the founder of the settlement, and sometimes the first settler in the area: *Petersdorf* “Peter’s village”, *Steffenshagen* “fence of Stefan”, *Arnstadt* “settlement of Arn”, *Bautzen*, lusatian *Budysin* “place of Budy”. The predominant type of vidantroponymic oikonyms in German are complex formations with the name as the determining component, while the second component can be various, mostly regionally determined components such as *-beurn*, *-hagen*, *-hausen*, *-rath*: *Benediktbeuren*, *Benedikthagen*, *Friedrichshagen*, *Waltheshausen*, *Heinzerath*, etc.

In vidantroponymic names, ancient names are preserved, often in a distorted form, which have long since fallen out of active use, which makes it impossible to determine the original phonetic form of the name, for example, *Albertshofen* (< *Albolteshofen*), *Ammerschweier* (< *Amelrichswilere*), *Ansbach* (< *Onoldsbach*), *Aschersleben* (< *Ascegeresleba*), *Ehrenbreitstein* (< *Erembrechtstein*), etc.

The names often included single-root names or short forms of two-syllable names as qualifiers: *Hausbergen* (< *Hugesbergen*, *Hug*), *Gersbach* (< *Ger*), *Braunschweig* (< *Brunswik*, *Brun*), *Poppenhausen* (< *Poppo*), *Roggenhausen* (< *Roggo*), *Sitzendorf* (< *Sizzo*). Examples of oikonyms created in modern times based on this model include *Karlsruhe* (the city was founded in 1745 by Margrave Karl Wilhelm of Baden-Durlach and named after him), *Karlshafen*, *Leopoldshafen*, *Ludwigsburg*, *Ludwigshafen*, *Charlottenburg*, etc. These are so-called personal memorials. These examples clearly demonstrate that Western European monarchs often gave royal names to cities.

The names of saints are widely reflected in toponymy, particularly in the names of cities, towns and streets: *Annaberg*, *Clausthal*, *Georgenthal*, *Johanneskirchen*, *Kiliansroda*, *Marienthal*, *Martinskirchen*, *Mergentheim*, etc. Undoubtedly, the use of a saint’s name in a place name can only be discussed if we have historical facts of the motivation for naming a place. Otherwise, the motive for the nomination is not the name of the saint, but the name of an ordinary person named after the saint.

Names of peoples – ethnonyms – are also used to form oikonyms. The territorial distribution of ethnotoponyms, the nature of the objects to which they refer, the form of the names, and the taxonomic rank of the ethnonyms used are closely related to the historical and geographical conditions of the names' origin. The most important factors include the form of ethnic settlement, the nature of ethnic contacts, the type of land tenure, and the specifics of economic activity. Initially, only certain oikonyms *Dietfurt*, *Detmold*, *Tieffenbach* were known, connected with the most common Old High German word *thiot*, Middle High German *diet* “people”, which later became used to refer to the German ethnic group *deutsch*. This term is particularly significant because of its antiquity, as it has been used continuously since the earliest written records of the German language. The derivative adjective *diutisc* originally referred to the language of the country, the vernacular as opposed to Latin. Later, it became an ethnonym for some Germanic tribes, who referred to themselves as “those of the people” in the sense of “belonging to the same people as us”, “belonging to the same community”.

The territorial distribution of ethnotoponyms is uneven: in areas of ethnic contact, they are used more frequently, due to the dispersed settlement of different ethnic communities. In these circumstances, the name of the ethnic group living in a particular village acquires an important differentiating value, such as: *Baierthal* (Baden), *Frankenhausen* (Thuringia), *Friesenheim* (Baden and Alsace), *Schwabhausen* (Thuringia), *Dänischenhagen*, *Frankfurt*, etc.

Place names that refer to people by their social status allow us to establish the social affiliation of the people from whom the name of the settlement originates: *Kaiserslautern*, *Königsstein*, *Fürstenstein*, *Herzogenweiler*, *Grafenhausen*, *Vogtsdorf*, etc. In this respect, potamonyms are clearly opposed to oikonyms: river names contain half as many elements with the above semantics as names of anthropogenic objects. The naming of anthropogenic objects probably belonged to the wealthy strata of society, who either to perpetuate their memory (genitive names) or for the highest levels of society (king, emperor, etc.) gave settlements appropriate names. On the other hand, the peasant masses, associated with the cultivation of land and, therefore, with small objects that were constantly in their field of vision, gave these physiogenic objects names whose semantic motivation differed from that of the oikonyms. Even if some potamonyms contained motivations related to the designation of persons in terms of their social status, they were constantly subject to spontaneous renomination, a process that is reflected in the presence of toponymic doubles in modern language. For example, the duplicates *Luberbach* and *Königsbach*, which refer to the same stream near Frankfurt am Main.

The second group is made up of oikonyms, whose refiners give a topographical description of the object. Refiners indicate:

1) the relative location of an object, the location of individual objects in relation to each other: *Hohenheim*, *Homburg* (< *Hohenburg* “a high castle”), *Hannover* (< *zum hohen Ufer* “to the high bank”), *Aufheim*, *Aufkirchen*, *Ober-*, *Unter-*, *Mittel-*, *Vorder-*, *Hinterburg*, *Ostheim*, *Nordhausen*, *Westhofen*, *Sundhausen*, *Sonthofen* (< *sund*, *sont* “south”);

2) location near a water body: *Bachhausen*, *Bornefeld*, *Brunthal*, *Seehausen*, *Moorbach*;

3) location near the river: *Donaueschingen*, *Mainroth*, *Rheinau*, *Salz(ach)burg*;

4) location in a mountainous area: *Harzgerode*, *Bergheim*, *Felsberg*, *Steinbach*;

5) location near a grove, meadow, forest, shrubs: *Heidhausen*, *Wiesenbronn*, *Waldhausen*, *Buschhausen*, *Hardheim*, *Riedheim*, *Rohrbach*;

6) location near a road, water ditch, bridges, dams: *Wegscheid*, *Straßburg*, *Grabenstadt*, *Brückenau*, *Schleusenau*, *Dammheim*, *Fährhof* etc.

The qualifying components reflecting the level of development of productive forces inform about the separation of crafts from agriculture and the improvement of production tools: *Drechsler-*, *Gerber-*, *Büttner-*, *Mühl-*, about the emergence and development of medieval cities: *Burg-*, *Stadt-*, *Markt-*. We suppose that the most frequent component is *Mühl-*. However, not all names with this component necessarily refer to a mill that threshes grain. Some of them, especially place names localised in mountainous areas, can be reduced to denoting sawmills (cf. *sege-mül*), devices in forest forges (cf. *hamer-mül*).

The third group includes oikonyms with qualifiers to denote natural phenomena that are in a certain relationship with the named object:

a) mineral resources: *Eisenach*, *Erzbach*, *Goldberg*, *Kalkreuth*, *Kupferberg*, *Silberhausen*;

б) trees: *Ahornberg*, *Apfelbach*, *Birnbach*, *Buchheim*, *Erlenbach*, *Kirschgrund*, *Lindenhammer*;

в) cereals: *Dinkelsbühl*, *Haberloh*, *Haferfeld*, *Hirsau*, *Korntal*, *Weizenbach*;

г) vegetables and fodder crops: *Arbesthal*, *Arbischichel*, *Erbishofen* (*Erbse*), *Krauthofen*, *Grasbeuren*, *Heudorf*, *Kleeberg*;

д) flowers: *Rosenberg*, *Veilchenthal*;

е) pets: *Rinderfeld*, *Stierstadt*, *Kuhbach*, *Kälberfeld*, *Schaffhausen*, *Schafau*, *Ziegenhain*, *Roßbach*, *Pferdsfeld*, *Fohlenhof*, *Mährenhausen*, *Katzensteig*;

ж) wild animals: *Auerbach*, *Bärenbach*, *Biberach*, *Dachswangen*, *Elchesheim*, *Fuchsmühl*, *Hirschberg*, *Rehwalde*;



3) birds: *Arnstadt, Adlershof, Entenberg, Falkenhagen, Habichhorst, Kranichfeld, Таубендорф*.

Our results are summarised in Table 2 (see Table 2):

Table 2

**Semantics of the qualifying components of compound names**

<b>Qualifying components</b>	<b>Semantics</b>	<b>Examples</b>
1. Qualifiers expressed by names, nicknames, ethnonyms or indications of social status	relatives or descendants of the owner who are in a patronage relationship with the owner	<i>Petersdorf, Steffenshagen, Arnstadt, Bautzen, Budysin</i>
	persons who are in fiefdom dependence on their vassal	<i>Kaiserslautern, Fürstenstein, Vogtsdorf</i>
	representatives of a certain ethnic group	<i>Baierthal, Frankfurt</i>
2. Refiners that characterise the named object from the internal side	relative location of the object, the place of individual objects in relation to each other	<i>Homburg, Hannover, Aufkirchen, Ostheim, Sonthofen, Westhofen</i>
	location near a water body	<i>Bornefeld, Moorbach</i>
	location near the river	<i>Donaueschingen</i>
	location in a mountainous area	<i>Harzgerode, Steinbach</i>
	location near a grove, meadow, forest, shrubs	<i>Heidhausen, Wiesnbronn, Rohrbach</i>
	location near a road, ditch with water, bridges, dams	<i>Wegscheid, Straßburg, Brückenau, Fährhof</i>
3. Refiners that characterise the named object from the outside	minerals	<i>Eisenach, Erzbach</i>
	trees	<i>Apfelbach, Buchheim</i>
	cereals	<i>Haferfeld, Hirsau</i>
	vegetables and fodder crops	<i>Erbishofen, Heudorf</i>
	flowers	<i>Rosenberg</i>
	domestic animals	<i>Rinderfeld, Stierstadt</i>
	wild animals	<i>Bärenbach, Biberach</i>
	birds	<i>Adlershof, Entenberg</i>

Our analysis shows that qualifiers are expressed by names, nicknames, ethnonyms, and indications of a person's social position. They can also characterise the named object from the internal or external side.

## CONCLUSIONS

A detailed analysis of the semantics of German place names has allowed us to identify eight main semantic groups of place names: 1) names related to the settlement and cultivation of land; 2) names related to religious activities; 3) names related to legal relations; 4) names related to material culture; 5) physical and geographical names; 6) names reflecting flora and fauna; 7) names indicating land clearing and farming; 8) names related to the construction of roads, railways, dams, dikes, canals. Each group of place names has typical components. Thus, toponyms related to settlement and land cultivation include oikonyms with the following components: *-hausen, -hofen, -burg, -borg, -stetten, -stadt, -städt, -stedt, -statt, -stätt, -stett, -dorf, -druf* (Low German *-trop, -trup*), *-weiler* (with phonetic variants *-weier, -weil, -will*), *-gaden, -kammer, -kennat, -stuben, -zimmer(n), -beuren, -beuern, -büren, -büttel, -kotten, -kot, -katen, -sassen, -sessen, -sass, -sess, -sis, -soos* (Low German *-sat, -set*), *-siedel(n)* (Low German *-sel(l), -seel*), *-wig, -wich, -wick, -weich, -wiek, -lar*. Place names related to religious activities include *-zell, -zella, -kloster, -münster, -pforte, -kirche, -kirchen, -kapel(le)*. Place names related to legal relations are represented by the following components *-bünde, -point, -paint, -kamp, -gard, -eigen, -hube, -erbe, -leben, -mal*. Place names related to material culture contain the components *-mühle, -kern, -grub, -zeche, -stollen, -schacht, -schmelz, -ofen, -schmied, -hammer, -markt, -zoll, -wehr, -schleuse, -brücke*. Physical and geographical place names include *-berg, -höhe, -höchte, -hügel, -pard, -bühel, -bühl, -bohl, -boll, -hübel, -buckel, -kopf, -haupt, -first, -spitze, -eck, -rücken, -hang, -ach, -ache, -a, -bach* (Low German *-beck, -beke*), *-lauf(en), -siepen, -siefen, -seifen, -seif, -spring(e), -fließ* (Low German *-fleet, -fliet*), *-brunn(en), -born, -bronn, -bad(en), -münde, -gemünd, -see, -wag, -wiek, -wyk, -lache(n), -maar, -teich* (Low German *-dick*), *-weiher, -pfuhl, -bruch, -brock, -brook, -broich, -fehn, -venn, briel, -moor, -moos, -marsch*. Place names reflecting flora and fauna are represented by the following components *-wald, -forst, -holz, -busch, -strauch, -hain, -heide, -wiese, -weide, -birke, -buche, -linde, -hasel, -tanne, -fichte*. Geographical names indicating land clearing and farming cover the following topographical areas *-hag, -hagen, -schwende, -schwenden, -schwand, -brand, -brunst, -seng, -sang, -schlag, -hau, -stock, -reut, -kreat, ried(t), -rod, -rode, -rad, -rath, -acker, -brache, -brak, -esch*. Place names related to the construction of roads, communication routes, dams, dikes, canals contain components *-straß, -weg, -steig, -pfad, -furt, -ford, -förde, -siel, -graben, -kanal, -deich, -damm, -wall, -werb, -koog, -polder*.

The qualifying components of place names can be divided into three groups: (1) refiners expressed by names, nicknames, ethnonyms or

indications of social status; (2) refiners characterising the named object from the internal side; (3) refiners characterising the named object from the external side. The first group includes the oldest Germanic oikonyms dating back to the period of "land settlement" (Landnahmezeit). The second group consists of oikonyms, the refiners of which give a topographical description of the object and indicate the relative location of the object, the location of individual objects in relation to each other, the location near a reservoir, river, in a mountainous area, near a grove, meadow, forest, shrubs, near a road, ditch with water, bridges, dams. The qualifying components reflecting the level of development of productive forces inform about the separation of crafts from agriculture, the improvement of production tools, and the emergence and development of medieval cities. The third group includes oikonyms with qualifiers for natural phenomena – minerals, trees, cereals, vegetables and fodder crops, flowers, wild and domestic animals, birds.

## SUMMARY

A toponymic system is an orderly organisation of elements that form a certain integrity. The organising factor of the toponymic system is the commonality of semantics, which allows each class of place names to be in very close connection and dependence with the names next to them.

The semantic analysis of German place names allowed us to distinguish eight groups of toponyms: (1) names related to the settlement and cultivation of land; (2) names related to religious activities; (3) names related to legal relations; (4) names related to material culture; (5) physical and geographical names; (6) names reflecting flora and fauna; (7) names indicating land clearing and farming; (8) names related to the construction of roads, railways, dams, dikes, canals. Each group of place names has typical components.

We divide the clarifying components of place names into three groups: (1) qualifiers expressed by names, nicknames, ethnonyms or indications of social status, which include the oldest German oikonyms of the period of "land settlement"; (2) qualifiers that characterise the named object from the internal side, give a topographical description of the object and indicate the relative location of the object, the level of development of productive forces, the emergence and development of medieval cities, etc.; (3) qualifiers that characterise the named object from the external side on the basis of designation of natural phenomena.

The emergence of a significant number of place names can be explained by substantial changes in the cultural life of the people, which was embodied in the expansion of the boundaries of their habitation, in new landscapes, large and small physical and geographical objects in the development of new

territories. Despite significant migration of the population due to political and economic reasons, the Germans transferred their former nominal traditions, as well as place names themselves, to new settlements.

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