

Oronyms in medieval Hungary

1. The antecedents and the objectives of the dissertation

Oronyms are invaluable early period sources; consequently, their analysis is an integral part of both onomastics and historical science. It has, however, become clear by now that the type of the denotatum determines to what extent the toponyms can be exploited. Namely, the different name giving and name usage tradition related to different toponym types can lead to linguistic differences between them and can influence their linguistic and historical values. It is therefore useful to approach the onomastic system with these differences in mind, since discovering the characteristics of certain name types individually may also expand our general knowledge.

The question of differences between name types was last approached by ISTVÁN HOFFMANN. He distinguished between two big groups of toponyms: cultural and natural names. Cultural names consist of place names formed by people, in the early period these were mostly settlement names. In their formation and usage, besides linguistic-communicative demands, social motivation also played a significant role. Contrary to them, natural names are predominantly formed according to linguistic-communicative needs; consequently, awareness and social references are less significant in their formation. This type includes names of waters and waterfront places, names of relief forms and names of regions. Due to a different name-sociological background, there are linguistic and systematic differences between the two big groups. The two groups diverge considerably in name formation, structure, motivational basis and sensitivity to change. Naturally, all these influence the linguistic and historical name usage. Since, similarly to modern times, the awareness of natural names in the early period most probably covered a small district only, one or two neighbouring settlements; the linguistic appearance of these names in documents is likely to reflect the dialect of the given region. In other words, since the area of name usage is well-defined, names present the most reliable sources for population history studies.

On the basis of outlined aspects, however, natural and cultural names may be classified into further categories. The ground for analyses like these is the precise delineation of name types according to place types. Although this is not an easy task, the significance and necessity of

delineation has been emphasised by many: EERO KIVINIEMI, with regards to Finnish toponym system description, and ISTVÁN HOFFMANN with regards to Hungarian toponym studies.

However, modern onomastic analysis of this kind is far from complete. While it is true that the literature on early settlement name giving norms is abundant, and that comprehensive studies on region names are also available, what is more, previous etymological analyses of hydronyms have been enriched by onomastic aspects; other name types – among them elevation names – have not yet received a systematic analysis of this kind. In this study, as a way of gap-filling, I attempt to present name giving and name usage tradition related to oronyms in the Early Old Hungarian period and, on the basis of a rich name inventory, to more extensively present the questions which have emerged so far. In my study I also try to illuminate the benefit of oronym analysis to onomastics and its associated disciplines, primarily historical science.

2. Studies conducted, methodology used

My work consists of three larger units. In the subchapters of the first unit, I present theoretical issues concerning oronyms. First, I survey linguistic and historical differences between toponyms and I show the way oronyms appear in historical, linguistic and onomastic works. I also discuss the difficulties posed by defining the concept and length of oronyms. In the second larger unit I survey orographic common names having a name constituting role in the early period. In the final, third unit of my work, I conduct an onomatosystematical analysis of Early Old Hungarian oronyms from a structural and etymological perspective. With respect to historical oronym inventory, it is especially difficult to determine the proper name status of data which consist of a simple orographic common name in the documents. I discuss the issue of name forming via semantic split within the historical analysis framework. In connection to the onomatosystematical analysis, through a comparative study, I attempt to present the relationship between ethnic relations and the characteristics of oronyms. Naturally, due to differences in the objectives and content of the three great units, there are also differences in their theoretical-methodological aspects.

Since the traditional linguistic methods and standpoints do not always offer soothing answers to question concerning oronyms, I consider it

worthwhile to examine my conclusions from a cognitive linguistic aspect as well. I adopted this theory when defining the term ‘oronym’. Based on our modern language use tradition, it seems that the classical (scientific) categorisation is less suitable for determining the class of oronyms, namely, certain place names are categories of our everyday knowledge of the world. In accordance with this, the category of oronyms is also most successfully determined on the basis of approach linked to them. Cognitive categories and processing them is modelled by a theory based on the concept of prototype: according to this theory, as the result of cognitive processes, people form categories which represent the most typical item or its characteristics. According to cognitive linguistic studies, these categories – contrary to classical category systems, and to the scientific categorisation concept based on it – do not hugely differ from each other, and in fact, the borders between them are often blurred. The extent to which a given object is similar to the prototype of a category is what determines belonging to the category, the concept. This theory may explain how elevations denoted as hills by name users may in reality be various forms of relief. As a result of my analyses, I have reached the conclusion that beyond the circle of items determined by geography (‘a lonely elevation on the surface of the Earth, higher than a hill, wider and usually steeper, consisting of rocks’) the term ‘oronym’ should be extended to the proper name value denotata of relief items which the speaking community refers to as ‘hills’. In my study, therefore, I use the first component of *hegy* in its widest sense, referring to a ‘surface elevation’.

When compiling the medieval Hungarian oronym inventory, the precise delineation of name length may also pose problems. Since the available literature on this topic does not offer satisfactory help, I attempt to formulate a few methodological principles myself. Based on today’s language use traditions, it seems that one single aspect is not sufficient in determining the borders of historical name data, rather, in case of each name form one needs to apply several aspects and pieces of information, as well as a method involving detailed philological examination. Besides investigating name usage tradition, it is necessary to analyse names as elements of name systems as well as parts of the documents containing them, furthermore, subsequent information about the names may further

refine the results. It can easily happen that in certain cases even this approach cannot help us in reaching a definite result concerning name length, however, considering the complex nature of the phenomenon, I believe we can get a more credible picture of certain names and about the oronym inventory on the whole if instead of taking a definite stand we take into account different possibilities.

Besides onomastic analyses, geographical common names taking part in the construction of names – because of their localisation and chronology – are especially useful in dialect etymological studies. In the second unit of my work, I survey orographic common names, a special layer of vocabulary, from an etymological, semantic and name geographical aspect, furthermore, I look into their role as name constituents.

I carried out the systematical analysis of oronym inventory on the basis of a model developed by ISTVÁN HOFFMAN. During the structural analysis I presented the functional-semantic and lexical-morphological characteristics of names not separately, but jointly, trying to illustrate the semantic and lexical basis of oronym name giving, in order to see in what form the different name giving motivations appear in oronyms. During the etymological analysis I took into account the change history of names. Complex analyses like this already have great tradition in Hungarian toponym literature. This analysis model however has so far been applied to examination of a given territory's complete name corpus only or when analysing the settlement names of a given region in a systematical unity. A comprehensive analysis of oronyms like this offers a solid basis for a comparative analysis of systematical features of certain toponym types.

3. New scientific results of the study

Similarly to introducing the theoretical-methodological background of processing, I present the reached results in accordance with the outline of the dissertation.

Theoretical issues concerning oronyms

Oronyms are not separate from other toponym types neither in the onomastic system nor in the knowledge of name users. Oronyms and other toponyms are actually in a quite close relationship with one another and this connection can already be positively recognised when studying

names from the early period. When studying the connections between linguistic elements denoting oronyms and other toponyms, one can clearly see that the largest number of examples from Early Old Hungarian period is settlement and elevation names. In their case, a change with a settlement name > oronym and oronym > settlement name direction caused a rather large number of new names. While oronyms mainly incorporate semantically non-transparent one-componential settlement names (e.g. *Báré* > *Báré-bérc*, *Kocsola* > *Kocsola mála*), toponyms often also contain semantically transparent and two-componential oronyms (as shown in the examples *Farkashalom*, *Szarvashalom*, *Meleghegy*). About the relationship between different natural names and oronyms we may conclude that in the case of natural name > oronym there are no limitations concerning the incorporated name neither with respect to its semantic nor structural features (*Holboka* hydronym > *Holboka* oronym, *Bodzás erdeje* forest name > *Bodzáserdeje* oronym, *Ökör-mező* field name > *Ökörmező* oronym). The appearance of oronyms in the secondarily created name forms is showing stricter limitations, though: presence of oronyms in forest names and hydronyms is hardly characteristic; however, they are quite common in relief form names, although they usually denote a part of a mountain by entering the toponym as its first component (as assumed in case of *Feket* oronym > *Feket feje*, *Feket kapuja*).

In the correlation of oronyms and other toponyms the incorporation of toponyms into other place names can be realised in two main types: besides pure metonymy, new names are formed via connecting to geographical common names. The third possibility, derivation, is not characteristic of this name type. This may be explained by the fact that derivation is basically not suitable for this toponym type's formation, derivational affixes play an active role in the formation and alternation of toponyms staying within the border of single toponym types.

Orographic common names

In the second large unit of my dissertation, as I already mentioned, I introduce oronyms having a name forming role in the early period. Among all of our orographic names the study of the word *bérc* proved the most edifying: this is the most widely documented geographical common name denoting an elevation, there are however fairly few and in many

details contradictory pieces of information about its history. According to literature, the word *bérc* most probably entered Hungarian from a Southern Slavic language (most probably Serbo-Croatian), according to my studies, however, the word geographical distribution of the word does not support this claim, what is more, the study results of the geographical common name parts of oronyms documented in the southern region of the language territory oppose the above claim. Since the different Slavic correspondents of the word are almost completely identical, a phonological approach does not help us to determine the conveying language, either. For this reason, I believe that we should restrain from taking a definite standpoint. I also contribute to the historical linguistic analysis of orographic common names more frequent in the early period (*hegy, malom, mál*).

Onomatosystematical analysis

During the onomatosystematical analysis of oronyms I juxtapose the functional-semantic and lexical-morphological aspects and attempt to illustrate the semantic and lexical basis for name giving motivation of orographic names, in order to see in what linguistic form the different name giving motifs appear. In oronyms – similarly to the majority of other toponym elements – the motif referring to the type of place name, i.e. denoting the toponym to which the denoted object belongs is fairly frequent. In the denotation of mountains we may come across a pure geographical common name, for example *Bérc, Domb, Halom, Mál, Tető*, however, their proportion within an onomastic system is rather low. Orographic common names are most frequently used as a base of one-componential names, connected to the additional part expressing a characteristic, e.g. *Agyagos-bérc, Kerek-domb, Bükk-fő, Homorú-tető, Nagy-gyűr*. The most common lexical element in the first component of structures like this is a one-componential (*Akna hegye, Apoc halma, Dorog-hegy*) but a personal name is equally frequent as an oronym component (*Gyula halma, Pete bérce, Szólát hegye, Balog Péter halma*). The name component denoting the type of the name can sometimes be connected to the toponymic first component: in the case of *Viszoka hegye, Lendece mála, Szlovik köve*, the orographic common name was added to borrowings, and in the case of *Nagy-dél verője, Vértés hegye* it was added to interior formed oronyms. Borrowed names are often used in an

unaltered form among Hungarian speakers, as in the case of Slavic origin *Papaj* (< Proto-Slavonic **popelъ* 'ashes'), *Dobóc* (< Proto-Slavonic *dobъ* 'oak'), *Pizun* (< Slavic *pšeno* 'millet'), *Holica* (< Slovakian *holý* 'bald'). Among oronyms from the early period it is less typical to find last components in a denoting function, there are examples of this in the name formants of *Kis-Galya*, *Nagy-Galya*, *Szár-Somlyó*.

Summarising the results of historical linguistic analysis we may conclude that almost all two-componential names are formed via syntactic construction. The most typical are the attributive quality phrases (*Iker-hegy*, *Csókás-kő*), there are also quite a few names formed via attributive possessive phrases (*Mátyás hegye*, *Dolna bérce*), in comparison with this, there is only a small number of attributive qualification phrases denoting several elevations (*Három-hegy*). Only a small proportion of early oronym inventory was formed via morphematic construction and via derivation (*Somogy*, *Szilad*). Structural change (completion, ellipsis, reduction, augmentation), based on data from documents, is also less present in the formation of new oronyms. Completion, during which a one- or two-componential name is added to a new component, affected mainly Slavic borrowings which took up secondary type denominating geographical common names after entering the Hungarian system to fulfil their identification role more precisely (*Viszoka* > *Viszoka hegye*, *Brizó bérce*). Occasionally even a Hungarian origin oronym takes part in the process (*Dió-mál* > *Dió-mál hegye*). In the majority of cases however the structural alternation of names is not easy or at least not impossible to separate from the elliptic change which has a reverse direction and in which the body of the name is reduced with a size of a name component. Namely, the old and the new name formant are usually used parallelly at the same time. Augmentation and reduction, which leave the functional build-up unchanged and modifying the morphological structure, have a minor role in the formation of oronyms.

During semantical name formation the existing interior element inventory is used as toponyms so that the form and structure of the name is left unchanged while the new (toponymic) meaning is formed. Metonymy based on spatial connection is how the largest number of oronyms developed in the studied period. However, the dating of the new meaning development based on historical data poses difficulties. The data

consisting of geographical common names only (*Bérc, Halom, Mál*) pose further considerable problems: it is often difficult to decide whether the linguistic elements have real proper name value, in other words, whether the semantic split had already happened. To answer the question, besides onomastic and name sociological aspects it is also useful to examine split toponyms from a cognitive linguistic point of view. The pure geographical common place names – shown in the fact that it is difficult to define their status – are obviously the peripheral elements which can be interpreted as a transitional category between proper names and common names. I have therefore attempted to review all the factors and properties playing a role in the proper name judgement of geographical common name formants. It is striking, for example, that this name forming method is more common among natural names and even among them it is the geographical common names that denote a place with special or unique features that can become a proper name. The meaning of the name is also determining: words denoting places of a more special content are more prone to becoming toponyms. In the case of historical data however due to the lack of information on early name usage it is only the involvement of data in the texts may be of help to us. For their judgement, it is also of outmost importance to analyse the whole document in details. On the basis of my analysis I consider it probable that behind the numerous *bérc* data we need to presuppose the linguistic influence of the document writer: this word functioned as a document word in the early period, i.e. there is an attempt to set up some kind of a norm in the background of its use.

The typological analysis of toponyms, besides illuminating characteristics of name types may also have influence on history of population. To illustrate this aspect, I present linguistic-chronological layers that can be found in Arpad age oronym inventory. I also validate the aspect of regionality: I compare toponyms from two mountain ranges lying close to each other from a linguistic aspect: on the one hand I compare names from a part of today's Northern Medium Mountains, i.e. Börzsöny, Cserhát, Mátra, Bükk and Cserehát and on the other hand names from Selmeci Mountains, Jávoros and the Slovak Ore Mountains.

There is a significant difference among name users of the two areas in the early period: on the northern mountain range we have to take into

account the greater Slavic population. There is a considerable difference between the name forming and name changing tradition of Hungarian and Slavic people: while a great majority of names deriving from Hungarian name users was formed by syntactic construction and from compounds, among Slavic names there is only a small number of names created in a similar way. During the study regional difference of name systematic character also appeared. Within the name inventory created via Hungarian name giving we experience difference between one- and two-componential name formants: among the names of the northern mountain range there are more one-componential names, while among the southern ones there are more names consisting of several components. This may be explained by the influence of Slavic name model, namely, in the northern region – as shown in the great number of Slavic origin names – the proportion of Slavic population using one-componential oronyms is greater, consequently, their name giving and name usage habits may have had an effect on Hungarian name users.