

River names in the early old Hungarian period

In the history of Hungarian toponomastics, hydronyms were the second most popular topic after settlement names. However, while the oikonym system turned out to bear numerous features derived from the system itself which are not or only barely characteristic of other name types; we have very little information about hydronyms and the fact whether they have these features.

Almost all toponym researchers draw attention to the importance of hydronyms, however, this area of study, although having rich literature, is characterised by a certain disproportion: the majority of works have aimed at etymological analysis of larger waters and drawn conclusions from them. Since these names have entered the Hungarian toponymicon from other languages' toponymic systems, the unilaterality above also indicates that borrowed hydronyms received greater attention than hydronyms of internal genesis, although, understandably, the latter provide us with more insights.

Hydronym analysis offers more than l'art pour l'art onomastics, it is of importance to other disciplines as well: history of language and dialect, population and settlement history, historical geography, plant and animal geography.

In my dissertation I deal exclusively with the analysis of hydronyms. I attempt to draw a picture of the whole stock of river names based on its sample. The basis of my study is the hydronymicon from Árpád age, I have, however, expanded the borderlines of the periods to 1350, to the beginning of early old Hungarian period – partly to conform to the chronological borderlines of my references.

My thesis consist of thee larger chapters. The first chapter is a review of Hungarian hydronym literature. The next chapter deals with the theoretical questions concerning hydronyms. First, I attempt to give a definition of a river name. I review all explicit and implicit definition attempts and weigh them. As a conclusion, I regard natural brooks, brooklets, rivers, as well as artificial ditches and ducks as members of this name type. What should precede an onomatosystematic analysis, besides classification of river names, is a detailed clarification of the relationship between compared names. In the onomastic corpus of charters we can find numerous names which denote water objects, not in any kind of connection. Among the analysis data we can find three or even more (in certain cases ten) rivers bearing the following names: *Almás*, *Aranyos*, *Aszú-patak*, *Béla*, *Bükk-patak*, *Egres pataka*, *Ér*, *Fekete-patak*, *Fok*, *Füzegy*, *Hársány*, *Láz pataka*, *Megye-patak*, *Mély-patak*, *Patak*, *Rákos*, *Sár*, *Száraz-patak*, *Szuha* and *Tapolca*. The relationship between the names can be best shown in an analysis of the relationship between the phonetic form and semantics.

Since modern name use is characterised by multilingualism, the same river could have had several names in the ancient period as well. Certain waters had different names as settlements (these are the section names), however, during the

language use one name becomes more dominant than others. I discover a connection between section names and the different mental pictures in different name communities and I explain the dominance of one of the name variants by cultural, economic and linguistic prestige factors.

The central chapter of the dissertation is the onomatosystematic analysis of river names in which I studied them from structural and etymological point of view. From the results, we can conclude that certain structural types (pure type denotatum, settlement names and hydrographic names) and etymological methods (semantic split, syntagmatic editing) do not have a period determination, while others have age-determining roles. In the case of monocomponential names, for example, we have to consider plant names and animal names rather ancient, and the same way the metonymic denotations deriving from plant names. All this may be applicable to other one-componential names deriving from adjectives (especially those derived by the *-s* derivational suffix). In the case of tow-componential plant and animal names we may also suspect an old name genesis.

In the successive chapter, I have made an attempt to present the role of river names in denoting other places. In the ancient period, the largest number of river names was attested as settlement names and rarely we may come across mountain, region and castle names descending from hydronyms. In order to present the phenomenon in an even broader manner, the chronological expansion of the source material seemed unavoidable. Namely, this way I made it possible to analyse the names of objects which were not (or not in great numbers) recorded in the ancient period but which are in a more direct natural contact with the river names (pond, valley, cave, strait, pass names, etc.).

In the last subchapter of the thesis I have compared river names with lake names, the two closest types. There are significant proportional diversions between the functional-semantic structure types of the two name types and accordingly, the etymological modes are also different. The results have confirmed my choice to present only one category of the numerous classes of hydronyms: a joint study of all hydronyms would have covered up the unique features of individual name types. At the same time, with the sketchy comparison of the two hydronyms I aimed at showing that comparing certain partial systems of the Hungarian toponymicon can only be conducted after a detailed study of the given types on their own. A thorough mapping of toponym characteristics on their own can be a perfect basis for their comparison with other toponyms from other languages.