ONOMASTICA Uralica

Settlement
Names
in the Uralian
Languages

3

Debrecen–Helsinki
2005

Settlement Names
in the Uralian Languages

Edited by

SÁNDOR MATICSÁK

Debrecen–Helsinki

2005

Onomastica Uralica

The studies are to be found at the Internet site
both in English and in their original language.

http://onomaural.klte.hu

Contents

Preface

The aim of the third volume of the series Onomastica Uralica is to describe the system of settlement names of the individual Uralian languages. This volume, similarly to the other pieces of the series, aspires to fill in the theoretical framework of onomasics with the findings of the research in the field of settlement names of individual Finno-Ugric languages.

The examination of settlement names in the Uralian languages, as in most other languages, is possibly the most studied onomastic field. It is especially true for the smaller Uralian languages, where the mycrotoponymic, hydronymic, anthroponymic, etc., research do not reach the level of thoroughness of settlement names; mainly, there is backwardness in the historical onomastics. The individual treatment of settlement names can also be explained by the fact that this name type seems to be a category which can be defined relatively unequivocally and can be apprehended relatively easily owing to its denotatum character. In this name group several historical changes can be modelled on the basis of the cultural-social determination of settlement names. The settlement names provide great help in the historical research of smaller Uralian languages, of course, and they may have essential significance in the exploration of the ethnogenesis of peoples. Besides the recognition of the absolute importance of research into this field, our intention was that the authors remain inside the framework of linguistic analysis, and do not touch upon material concerning local and demographic history.

Although there are some Uralian languages where onomastics almost exclusively means the analysis of settlement names, most studies up to now have had a predominantly etymological character or they are just collections and formal descriptions of settlement name material of a certain area. There have hardly been any comprehensive studies describing the settlement name system of a language, thus this volume seems to supply a great want. Unfortunately, not all the languages are represented in this volume, but we hope that in the ensuing pieces of the series which deal with settlement names we can read about the Cheremiss, Vogul, Ostyak and Samoyedic names, as well.

While recognising the importance of etymological research, when planning this volume we did not wish the authors of the papers presenting the system of settlement names of individual languages be lost in the labyrinth of etymological questions. There are some Uralian languages which are still in the phase of etymological foundations, and the handbooks and main studies often publish vague, doubtful and accidentally incorrect etymologies. The task of this volume is not an etymological purification but a description of systems.

During the examination of settlement names of Uralian languages, we can speak parallelly of similarities and differences. The appearance of similarity

comes from certain phenomena corresponding to each other, which derives from the linguistic (and onomastic) affinities (see the number of names which came into being through grammatical construction, containing common geographical nouns, which phenomenon is typical in many Uralian languages), while the differences are the results of various linguistic, social, and cultural influences of the last centuries and also of the different linguistic environment.

The authors of the volume apply both historical and descriptive perspectives. Among the categories of the history of name formation, we have to point out the group of names formed with common geographical nouns (within this category special attention has to be paid to such typically Finno-Ugric categories as plain common geographical names becoming valued as settlement names and also names formed with grammatical construction) and the group of elliptic names in complement function. Names formed with toponymic suffix, semantic name forming and structural change seem to be important from a taxonomic point of view.

During the descriptive presentation of systems, the authors have tried to treat functional-semantic, lexical-morphological and syntactic analyses as well, and tried to describe the system of derivative suffixes, and methods of compounding, and attempted to outline the results of toponymic geography.

Adaptation is an important point in the examination of settlement names. Although the fourth volume of the series (*The borrowing of place names in the Finno-Ugric languages*) is fully dedicated to this topic, it is natural that the problem of adaptation may not be disregarded in the present volume, either, since due to centuries of coexistence with Turks and Russians, the Uralian languages that can be found in the present territory of Russia did not only adapt foreign names and name elements, but the contact greatly influenced the onomastic system of the given language too. The authors of the studies attempted to describe the taxonomic difference between the construction types characterising the Finno-Ugric onomastic system and the Slavic name giving type in a broader sense. During the examination we had to pay attention to the fact that a significant part of the individual languages has stuck outside the present borders due to the social and political changes in the last century, and to considerable changes concerning the political borders, thus the extension of the analysis to the toponyms of the neighbouring settlements is necessary.

We hope that the present volume of the series *Onomastica Uralica* will give You a satisfactory overview of the achievements of the researchers of individual Uralian languages in the examination of settlement names, and in the light of this summary the questions that should be in the center of future research will have an even more definite light.

The Editor