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Valéria Tóth, *Personal names in a medieval context* (Translated by Balázs Venkovits), Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 2022, 237 pp., ISBN 978-3-96769-251-8

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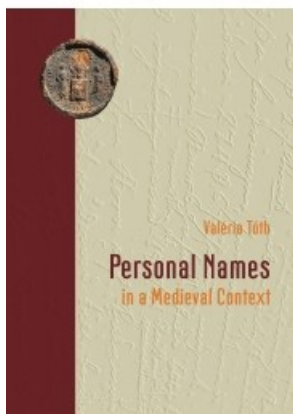
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The monograph by Valéria Tóth serves a double purpose effectively. On the one hand, the first half of the volume provides a comprehensive description of the basic categories of personal names, general issues of personal naming and personal name usage, and also their historical characteristics in a theoretically coherent framework and perspective that is applicable to personal name research of different languages. On the other hand, the second half of the volume provides a more detailed picture of Hungarian historical personal names and naming, in particular medieval Hungarian anthroponymy on the basis of these approaches. The latter part of the volume thus provides a more detailed and more concrete description of the previously discussed theoretical findings, and an example of the usability of the presented anthroponomastic model – while the former part of the volume also presented and illustrated its topics primarily with examples of Hungarian historical anthroponymy best known to the author. However, in both parts of the volume, of similar extent, the author effectively attempts to present her findings in a broader context, with parallels from different languages and peoples, and thus, in accordance with her objectives, in a more generic sense.

Valéria Tóth's theoretical background is based on modern language and onomastic theories. A particularly important component of her study is a uniform conceptual framework for the functional description of personal names, which, based on their essential cognitive-pragmatic features, may prove to be suitable for defining the basic categories of personal names, irrespective of their specific linguistic or historical context. The main features of this theoretical model may have been previously known from the paper by Hoffmann & Tóth (2015) in the international arena.

The essential linguistic and onomastic material of the monograph, as already mentioned, comes from the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, i.e., from the multilingual area of the Carpathian Basin, and primarily from the most exciting period in the history of names, the early Old Hungarian period (895–1350 AD). The empirical analyses presented in the relevant chapters extensively rely on previous literature, including dictionaries, compendia and other scholarly works providing and processing large amounts of historical anthroponyms from the given language, area and era. (The rich, mainly Hungarian-language onomastic material of the monograph, in its historical or modern form, is also found in the Index, included as an appendix to the volume; 227–237.)

The focus of this work on Hungarian historical (medieval) anthroponyms

also means that this volume, together with a previous English-language monograph on the similar topic by Mariann Slíz (2017), makes this subject comprehensively and in greater detail accessible to international scholarship. All these, together with the representative work on the history of Hungarian toponyms (Hoffmann et al. 2017), co-authored also by Valéria Tóth, present the most important issues of the two most important categories of Hungarian proper names in a well accessible way for those interested in them. This, in itself, is an important achievement for the study of names in any language.

The first, more generally oriented half of Valéria Tóth's monograph is organised around some key issues in historical anthroponym studies (11–112). First, and understandably, from the point of view of the historical approach, the author discusses the problem of interpreting linguistic structures denoting persons in written sources (11–30). She emphasises, also through terminology, that these structures, although they contain personal names, are not themselves personal names. On this subject, she discusses the issues of specific types of historical sources, the nature of the written level of name usage, the role of the Latin context, chronological issues related to the personal name types, the importance of the connection between the name and the name bearer, and the historical source value of anthroponomastic data.

Thereafter, the author turns her attention to the practices of personal naming and the use of personal names from a theoretical point of view (31–76). She emphasises that the systemic nature of personal names and their network-like relationships play a fundamental role in the emergence of new anthroponyms. She notes that personal names have a strong socio-cultural embeddedness (stronger than toponyms), which significantly determines the fundamental factors of name-giving and name usage. She then goes on to discuss the pragmatic and cognitive factors involved in name-giving and name usage, and to identify and describe the basic categories of personal names based on these factors.

According to the model presented by the author, personal names can be classified into four basic categories from a pragmatic and a cognitive point of view. *Created names*, from a pragmatic viewpoint, can be characterised as *feature-indicating* or *descriptive names* from a cognitive point of view. *Chosen names*, or *list names*, pragmatically, taken from a (relatively) closed name stock can be identified as *referential names* according to their cognitive content. The next basic category can be considered *automatic names* from the pragmatic aspect of name-giving, and understood as *relational* or *nexus names* from a cognitive point of view. The fourth basic category of personal names is of a secondary nature to the first three, as its elements are derived from the elements of the previously mentioned categories. This last category is of *modified names* from a pragmatic viewpoint, which can be specified as *affective names* according to their cognitive content.

Of these, created names (descriptive names) and modified names (affective names) constitute dynamic categories, while chosen names (referential names)

and automatic names (nexus names) represent static categories of the personal name system. These basic categories can be interpreted in synchrony and diachrony, and can be characterised in terms of their changes and the relationships among them. They can, however, be matched, in historically changing ways, with the traditionally registered types of personal names (as nicknames, given names, family names or hypocoristics).

After presenting this categorisation of personal names, the author emphasises the importance of the abstract and specific name models of existing names in the process of name-giving. These models are important components of name competence, the knowledge of individuals and communities about proper names. The author also discusses the most typical sociological factors of name-giving and name usage concerning personal names: the aspects of social class, religion, ethnicity and gender, and addresses the questions of formal and informal name variations and attitudes towards names.

The last chapter of the first part of the monograph deals with the socio-onomastic value of the structures denoting persons in the written historical sources (77–112). The typical, Latin elements of these structures are: *filius*, *dictus*, *de*, *de genere* in the sources, which could constitute varied and complex formations. The author deals with the issues of the adherence to norms and the role of scribes concerning these historical data, and discusses the criteria that can be used to determine the real onomastic value of these structures denoting persons in the sources.

The second half of Valéria Tóth's monograph deals with the historical Hungarian personal name system, its development and the interconnections of its basic categories within the theoretical framework presented in the first half of the volume (113–194). The author discusses the medieval Hungarian anthroponymic system in detail, while she also refers to the later development of the different name categories. These categories of personal names are discussed in successive chapters, according to the logic of their historical development and taxonomic position: descriptive names (115–136), referential names (136–152), nexus names (153–184) and affective names (184–194). For each of them, the author discusses to some extent different key questions characteristic to the given type of anthroponyms. The most typical of these questions are: first and foremost, and in more detail, the taxonomic features of the given category of names, and also the question of their chronological specificities.

The oldest type of anthroponyms, which dates back to pre-Christian times, is the category of descriptive names, which however continues alongside the expansion of referential names in the medieval type of bynames. An important characteristic of these names is that they are always semantically motivated. Their system can be relevantly analysed from several different aspects, as exemplified by the author in his work.

The category of referential names, unlike the type discussed above, comprises several etymological groups, which form chronologically partially distinct layers

(in the case of Hungarian anthroponymy, starting with names of Old Turkic origin). Their socio-onomastic background and morphological characteristics are also briefly touched upon in the respective chapter.

Two main types of nexus names are discussed in the monograph. Clan names are a less important and therefore less studied topic in Hungarian historical onomastics, but they are presented briefly and comprehensively here. The more important topic of surnames receives a more extensive overview, including the causes of their emergence and their dimensional (temporal, spatial and social) characteristics, among other aspects.

In the case of affective names, besides their secondary nature, their specific function and possible ways of formation deserved a special attention of the author. The latter are illustrated in a spectacular way by the example of the various possible (once existing) derivatives of the Latin *Petrus* ~ Hungarian *Péter* given name.

The Summary of the volume concludes (195–198) that the previous two-base personal name system (consisting of descriptive names and referential names) was extended to a three-base system with nexus names, which was supplemented also by the category of affective names. Along with this, the process has taken place in which the two-component (or multi-component) name structure (in typical Hungarian name order: family name + given name structure) was becoming common in the use of personal names instead of a former single-component one.

In conclusion, Valéria Tóth's monograph on the history and the theory of personal names and their system is an important contribution to the field of onomastic studies, which can and hopefully will serve as a good basis for future comparative studies as well.

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