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<b>Barbara BÁBA</b> (Hungary)	
The Source Value of Proper Names in Historical Dialectology .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Laimute BALODE</b> (Latvia, Finland)	
Name Change and Identity in Latvia .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Harald BICHLMEIER</b> (Germany)	
Is the Place-name <i>Rōma</i> Phoenician? Some Archaeological and Linguistic Annotations.....	<b>38</b>
<b>Hans-Peter EDERBERG</b> (Germany)	
What's in a Name? – Place-Names as Information Carriers.....	<b>57</b>
<b>Valts ERNŠTREITS</b> (Latvia)	
Latvian Place Names Based on Calques from Livonian.....	<b>70</b>
<b>Martyna GIBKA</b> (Poland)	
The Functions of Characters' Proper Names in <i>Feet of Clay</i> by Terry Pratchett.....	<b>81</b>
<b>Anna Elizabete GRIĶE</b> (Latvia)	
Tensions between House and Place Names: An Anthropological Case Study of Grāveri .....	<b>95</b>
<b>Otilija KOVAĻEVSKA</b> (Latvia)	
1599. gada Livonijas revīzijā minēto personvārdu pēdas mūsdienu vietvārdos (īpaši Vidzemē) / Traces of Personal Names from Livonian Revision 1599 in Contemporary Place Names (Especially in Vidzeme).....	<b>112</b>
<b>Денис КУЗЬМИН / Denis KUZMIN</b> (Russia)	
Средневековые имена женщин Карелии / Medieval Names of Karelian Women .....	<b>139</b>
<b>Philip W MATTHEWS</b> (New Zealand)	
The Structure and Future of Hybrid, Doubled Duplex, Alternative and Dual Names and the Principle of Univocity: A Study of New Zealand Geonames .....	<b>152</b>
<b>Solvita POŠEIKO</b> (Latvia)	
Personiskā, lokālā, globālā un glokālā aktualizācija Latvijas komerciālo nosaukumu ainavā / Latvian Commercial Namescape: Personal, Local, Global, and Glocal Perspectives .....	<b>175</b>

<b>Sanda RAPA</b> (Latvia)	
Latvijas vietvārdi un karš / Latvian Place Names and War .....	<b>197</b>
<b>Alena RUDENKA</b> (Belarus)	
Proper Names in Ancient Smolenska Agreements with Riga .....	<b>210</b>
<b>Renāte SILIŅA-PINĶE</b> (Latvia)	
Āru vārdi 17. gadsimta beigu Vidzemes kartēs. Sāvienas ( <i>Sawensee</i> ) un Aburtu ( <i>Lüggen</i> ) muižas piemērs / Microtoponyms in Late 17th Century Maps of Vidzeme: The Case of Sāviena ( <i>Sawensee</i> ) and Aburti ( <i>Lüggen</i> ) Estates .....	<b>222</b>
<b>Daiva SINKEVIČIŪTĒ</b> (Lithuania)	
Tendenzen von Bildung und Gebrauch der baltischen Vornamen mit dem Suffix <i>-(i)ut-</i> in Litauen / Tendencies of the Formation and Usage of Baltic Names with Suffix <i>-(i)ut-</i> in Lithuania .....	<b>240</b>
<b>Grant SMITH</b> (USA)	
Epithets, Hyperbole, and Irony in the Names of <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> .....	<b>260</b>
<b>Melinda SZÓKE</b> (Hungary)	
The Historical Linguistic Analysis of the Interpolated Sections of the Founding Charter of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek .....	<b>273</b>
<b>Joan TORT-DONADA</b> (Spain)	
On the Connection between the Physical Environment and the Toponym: Geography's Contribution to Clarifying the Problem.....	<b>286</b>
<b>Anta TRUMPA</b> (Latvia)	
<i>Sāmal-/samal-</i> un <i>saman-/sāman-</i> : divi aizguvumi ar nozīmi 'sūnas' Latvijas vietvārdos / <i>Sāmal-/samal-</i> and <i>saman-/sāman-</i> : Two Loanwords Meaning 'moss' in Latvian Toponyms .....	<b>300</b>
<b>Наталья ВАСИЛЬЕВА / Natalia VASILEVA</b> (Russia)	
Ономастика и норма: 40 лет спустя / Onomastics and Norm: 40 Years Later.....	<b>312</b>
<b>Christian ZSCHIESCHANG / Kito KŠIŽANK</b> (Germany)	
Ortsnamen und Gewässer – eine komplexe Beziehung / Place Names and Waterbodies – a Complex Relationship .....	<b>327</b>
<b>Ziņas par autoriem / About the Authors</b> .....	<b>342</b>

Melinda  
Szóke

## The Historical Linguistic Analysis of the Interpolated Sections of the Founding Charter of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek<sup>1</sup>

The Latin charters containing vernacular toponyms and anthroponyms are important sources of the early history of European toponymic systems. However, a significant number of these charters is not authentic, but forged, and even among those that are authentic, many have been preserved instead of originals in the form of transcripts. Therefore, in order to probe and verify our onomastic and linguistic-historical knowledge, in my view it is important that in addition to authentic charters, we test also the source value of toponyms found in documents that are dubious from a linguistic point of view so that these linguistic elements, too, could be effectively utilised for the purposes of linguistic and onomastic studies as well as historical research in general.

The paper discusses this issue using the example of the Founding Charter of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek issued 1075. According to most recent research, the original charter could still be found in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, this document was interpolated at around 1237 and 1270. This charter could become a valuable source in philological and onomastic research due to its early date and rich toponymic corpus (it includes approx. 280 place names).

However, its use in linguistic research is made more complicated by several factors. Researchers need to keep in mind that the charter has not survived in its original form, only in a transcript made two hundred years later. The writers of the transcripts could change the spelling of Hungarian words. The philological analysis of the charter is also made more difficult by the fact that in the case of the founding charter we are not talking about a simple transcript. The transcription was preceded by the interpolation of the text also. Thus the charter known to us includes such sections that do not originate in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Using the critical edition of the charter as a basis, I analyzed what kind of information was added to the charter in the process of interpolation. An awareness of this

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1 This work was carried out as part of the Research Group on Hungarian Language History and Toponomastics (University of Debrecen – Hungarian Academy of Sciences).

is crucial for a linguistic analysis of toponyms as the different types of interpolations may serve as different clues for specifying the source value of names in language- and name-history.

### **Keywords**

11<sup>th</sup> century, non-authentic charters,  
source value of toponyms, interpolations

## **Introduction**

The medieval charters include founding charters, donation charters, surveys of estates and possessions, land surveyor's maps, and so forth (cf. Érszegi 1994: 504-505, Gervers et al. 2012: 1615). However, a significant number of these charters is not authentic, but forged, and even among those that are authentic, many have been preserved instead of originals in the form of transcripts (cf. Gervers et al. 2012: 1618-1619, 1638). Therefore, in order to probe and verify our onomastic and linguistic-historical knowledge, it is important that in addition to authentic charters, we test also the source value of toponyms found in documents that are dubious from a linguistic point of view so that these linguistic elements, too, could be effectively utilised for the purposes of linguistic and onomastic studies as well as historical research in general.

In the case of the Hungarian language, the era of linguistic records spans one millennium. Compared with later centuries only a few charters have survived from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, an era marking the beginning of Hungarian literacy. Of these, linguists have studied primarily those early charters that were also authenticated. I believe that besides the low number of authentic sources from this early period, those of uncertain authenticity should also be studied if we specify those aspects based on which these charters can also become sources of Hungarian and European philology.

In my paper, I use examples to illustrate how and to what extent the linguistic analysis of toponyms included in non-authentic charters and their context may help us specify the chronology of such charters. For this study, I selected a charter with an uncertain linguistic source value written in Hungary. The uncertain source value of the Charter of Garamszentbenedek in terms of toponym and linguistic history is due to the fact that this charter also includes interpolated sections added to the original charter subsequently. In the case of these charters, we may

designate the interpolated parts only after the careful consideration of several factors. Even if we are aware of these, however, we do not have an easy task if we want to specify the source value of toponyms included in these charter sections from the perspective of name history and historical linguistics. This is due to the circumstances of the creation of the charter, these data may not only refer to the original charter but also the age of interpolation.

From the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the determination of the date of writing of charters with an uncertain chronology has received growing international attention as well. It was at this time that at the University of Toronto they began working on the DEEDS (Document of Early England Data Set) database in order to develop a computer-based method for the determination of the chronological features of the large number of undated English charters. The program uses the formulas and word patterns recorded in charters with an authentic date to associate those charters without a date with a certain time (Gervers 2000, Fiallos 2000, Gervers et al. 2012). The method may also represent a major contribution to the identification of the recording date of forged charters (cf. Gervers et al. 2012: 1638).

Georges Declercq published a case study on this topic in 2000. When studying the time of writing of a forged charter, however, he found that the method does not provide clear results in the case of all types of forged charters. The method may be used better in those cases when the forger does not want to adapt to the norms of the age for which the charter was forged (Declercq 2000: 132-133).

Therefore the method is not yet suitable for the analysis of interpolated charters like the Charter of Garamszentbenedek chosen for this study. Even more so because in the case of the forged (also including interpolated) charters, the biggest problem is that it is difficult to decide to what extent the forger relies on the text of the original document serving as the basis of forgery and to what extent they adapt to the habits of their own age.

Through the example of the Charter of Garamszentbenedek, however, we have the opportunity to introduce a method that could help us explore the chronological features of Hungarian (and more, widely European) interpolated charters. The essence of this procedure is that it does not examine the sections added to the charter subsequently as one unit but classified into different types.

## **1. The Founding Charter of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek**

The Founding Charter of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek from 1075 is, according to most recent research, the original charter could still be found in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, this document was interpolated at around 1237 and 1270. The versions of the charter dated 1124 and 1217 were also recorded only after the forgery taking place at around 1270 (DHA. 1: 212).

This charter could become a valuable source in philological and onomastic research due to its early date and rich toponymic corpus (it includes approx. 280 place names). Its use in linguistic research is, however, made more complicated by several factors. Researchers need to keep in mind that the charter has not survived in its original form, only in a copy made two hundred years later. The writers of the transcripts could change the spelling of Hungarian words. This alteration became evident in the transcription of sounds absent in Latin. The philological analysis of the charter is also made more difficult by the fact that in the case of the founding charter we are not talking about a simple transcript. The copy was not made because of the disappearance of the original document (1075) or to confirm or preserve the charter, but was preceded by the interpolation of the text. Thus the charter known to us includes sections that do not originate in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. To study the founding charter from a philological aspect, it is not enough to know which parts were added later to the text, since due to multiple transcriptions it is true for the whole charter that certain parts reflect characteristics of the 11<sup>th</sup>, while others of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## **2. Types of interpolations**

A critical edition distinguishes the sections of the charter from these two different centuries (the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and György Györffy has also published the evidence that helped him to draw such a distinction (DHA. 1: 204-218, Gy. 1: 418). For example, sometimes the charter names places the ownership of which became the subject of the Abbey's legal disputes after the charter was written. Moreover, we may also rely on knowledge of settlement history when trying to identify subsequent interpolations and also make use of our knowledge of Latin word use.

Using the critical edition of the charter as a basis, I analyzed what kind of information was added to the charter in the process of inter-

polation. An awareness of this is crucial for a linguistic analysis of toponyms as the different types of interpolations may serve as different clues for specifying the source value of names in language- and name-history.

I suggest that we can distinguish between two main types of interpolated texts: those groups that are linguistically relevant and those that are irrelevant interpolations. I include in the group of irrelevant interpolations all subsequent additions that do not include (Hungarian) toponyms, thus such linguistic elements could serve as the basis of linguistic analysis. These interpolated sections without a toponym mostly complemented the text with information on the extent of donated land: “dedi aliam illam (...) ad arandum super eandem aquam *Sitoua* cum terra septuaginta duorum aratrorum” (DHA. 1: 214), “I gave another village (...) above the same *Sitoua* water for cultivation, with a land of 72 acres”<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.1. Linguistically relevant interpolations

In what follows, I will introduce the most important types of linguistically relevant interpolations (that is, those that also including toponyms) based on the Founding Charter of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek.

2.1.1. It happens in many cases that in the interpolated sections of the charter there are names that also appear in the authentic parts of the document. Although these toponyms may certainly be dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it does not mean that these name forms can be categorized in the 11<sup>th</sup> century based on their linguistic features. As these were inserted into the Charter of Garaszentbenedek only two centuries later, we need to look for the presence of 13<sup>th</sup>-century phonological and written norms. At the same time, the recording of toponyms interpolated in this way was most probably also influenced by the written forms of names already present in the charter.

Besides all these, possibly when these names were subsequently added the original name-forms of the authentic charter did not affect the new ones but they adjusted the recording of 11<sup>th</sup>-century name forms of the charters to conform to the name used at the time of interpolation.

The description of a village (called Sági) provides an opportunity for the comparison of the text of the original charter with its 13<sup>th</sup>-century interpolated version. A charter dated 1338 copied the section related to the village not based on the interpolated but on the authentic charter.

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2 The sections of the charter interpolated are indicated in bold.

The section appears in the interpolated charter as follows: “Villam, que dicitur *Sagi*, cum terra sua mercatumque in eadem cum vado libero; nullusque de hoc participetur, nisi solus abbas, dedi cum propriis terminis, qui termini ita dividuntur: primum ubi fluvius *Huger* de aqua *Tiza* egreditur, qui circuit totam partem aque *Kesekun* iuxta *aruch* dividens, usque ubi stat *Scilu* piscina, que cum tota insula in partem Sancti Benedicti devenit. Deinde *Taka* mons terminus est usque ad alium montem nomine *Sorul*, exinde ad quendam fontem, cuius decursus terminus existit, quoadusque circumveniens intrat ad eundem fluvium *Huger*, postea donec idem fluvius *Huger* decurrens prope villam *Kurth*, quam supra dixi, et cadit in *Tiza*, ultimus terminus est” (DHA. 1: 216-217). And the 1338 charter transcribes the section as follows: “Terram, que dicitur *Sagy* cum propriis terminis, qui termini ita dividuntur: *Hucu* fluvius *eru*, qui circuit terram totam, partem aque *Kesekun* iuxta *aruk* dividens usque, ubi stat *Scilu* piscina, deinde *Tacha* mons est usque ad alium montem *Suryl*, ubi idem fons intrat circumveniens ad eundem fluvium *Hucueru*” (DHA. 1: 205).

The *Ug-ér* ‘streamlet named Ug’ hydronym appears twice in the boundary description of the village. The *Hucueru* forms of the 1338 charter preserved the form closer to the 11<sup>th</sup> century version as opposed to the *Huger* name-forms of the interpolated charter as the stem-ending vowel is still present at the end of the name. The disappearance of these vowels was already at an advanced stage in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was practically completed by the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Bárczi 1958: 18-24). We cannot claim with certainty, however, that the name-forms in the 1338 charter preserved the toponyms of the original founding charter, as it is a general feature of charters that survived in copies that the toponyms from the original charter were not always copied with full observance of the original spelling (cf. Gervers et al. 2012: 1619). Placing the two sections (the original and the interpolated) next to each other reveals that at the time of forgery the boundary description was complemented and in this addition *Ug-ér* also appears in *Huger* form. Thus, in connection with this name we can see that at the time of using the name that was added subsequently to the charter, the writer of the charter did not choose the more original *Hucueru* form but adjusted the 11<sup>th</sup>-century names of the charter to fit the newer form. Thus in the interpolated charter all three records of the *Ug-ér* hydronym (an interpolated and two originals) appeared in *Huger* form.

2.1.2. Mentions of settlements in short sentences make up another type of interpolation including (Hungarian) toponyms. These interpolations follow one another in the first part of the founding charter as if in a list and they are about the donation of land of various sizes: “In *Sari* terram unius aratra cum silva et fenetis”, “I (gave) one acre of land at a place called *Sari* with forests and meadows” (DHA. 1: 214). It is a common feature of interpolations included in this group that they include a single toponym and the charter provides no information whatsoever about the location of the place denoted by the name.

Members of this group include *Mikolafalu* ‘Mikola personal name + village’: “In *Mikolafalu* terram unius aratri”, “I (gave) one acre of land in *Mikolafalu*” (DHA. 1: 215) and *Sároufalú* ‘Sáró personal name + village’: “In *Saroufalú* a superiori parte dedi terram ad quatuor aratra”, “I gave 4 acres of land in *Saroufalú* starting from the upper part of the village” (DHA. 1: 215). In the case of these two names the fact of forgery may be based on clues in the name system, as the toponyms with a *-falu* ‘village’ second constituent are known in Hungarian toponyms from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on (Gy. 1: 418, 462).

I suggest that the identification of the interpolated parts of the charter should be the task of historians primarily but due to the linguistic, grammatical clues mentioned in connection with these two names it still seems useful to reexamine this opinion that has been voiced by many scholars, and then taken over and passed on by others (Kniezsa 1964: 469, Kázmér 1970: 31, Tóth 2001a: 156).

It is a generally accepted idea in linguistics that the toponyms with the *-falu* ‘village’ second constituent were not yet present in 11<sup>th</sup>-century toponyms, the first authentic records of this name type are from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Kázmér 1970: 31-32). Based on this observation, it seems justified that the *Mikolafalu* and *Saroufalú* names would not be included in the Latin text of the charter in this form in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. If, however, we look at the additional data of the names of these settlements, we observe in the case of both names that the two-component name forms of the Charter of Garamszentbenedek are unique in the data set of settlement names. The other charters from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and those dated from later centuries mention these settlements only under the personal name toponyms of *Mikola* and *Sáró* (cf. Tóth 2001b: 218, 232, Gy. 1: 462, 471, ComBars. 90-91, 124-125, KMHsz. 1: 188, 237-238). *Mikolafalu*: 1075/+1124/+1217 (DHA. 1: 215); *Mikolafalu*, 1247>357, 1274, 1331,

1337 (Str. 3: 301), 1391 (DF. 7738), 1414 (DF. 10263), 1454 (DF. 14854): *Mykola*, 1274, 1297/344, 1348 (A. 5: 204): *Mykula*, 1293: *Mycula*, *Mikula*, 1293, 1307, 1391 (DF. 7738): *Mikola*, 1307 (A. 1: 122): *Nikola*, 1332: *Micola*, 1332/PR.: *Miquala*, 1359 (DF. 4895): *Mykala*, 1350 (A. 5: 422-423): *Mykala* ~ *Mychala*, 1458 (DF. 15233), 1459 (DF. 15347), 1489 (DF. 19548, 19558), 1497 (DF. 20575): *Nykola* (Gy. 1: 462). *Sárófalú*: 1075/+1124/+1217 (DHA. 1: 212, 215): *Saroufalú*, 1245, 1259, 1305, 1307, 1324, 1328, 1332, 1339 (Str. 3: 342-344), 1343 (ÓmOlv. 161-164), 1347 (A. 5: 150), 1348 (A. 5: 216), 1391 (DF. 7708): *Sarow*, 1255, +?1255, 1271, 1292: *Sarov*, 1266, 1274, 1287, 1293, 1317, 1339 (Str. 3: 341-342): *Sarou*, 1332/PR.: *Sarro*, 1350. (A. 3: 423): *Sarouu*, 1272, 1305, [1305]/306, 1306: *Saroy*, 1454 (DF. 14827): *Saron*, 1423 (DF. 11395): *Saro*, \*1327/519: *Solon* (Gy. 1: 471).

The lack of two-component name forms questions not only the interpolated nature of the names but also the actual existence of the name variant with the *-falú* 'village' second constituent. This view has partly been voiced in the work of Miklós Kázmér who wrote a monograph on this name type. Kázmér considered the connection of the *-falú* second constituent to the personal name first constituent (*Mikola* and *Sáró*) as truly exceptional among the frequent occurrences of personal name + *falva* 'village' + third person singular possessive attribute types of names (for the personal name origin of the names cf. ÁSz. 548, FNESz. *Nagysáró*). Most probably due to the idea that the personal name + *-falú* type of names could only be the result of secondary *-falva* > *-falú* changes in the Hungarian toponymic system, he included the names of *Mikolafalú* and *Sárófalú* in the Charter of Garamszentbenedek among the names with the *-falva* second constituent, although in an uncertain way (Kázmér 1970: 31, 298, 300).

Valéria Tóth, in refuting this proposition, notes that the settlement names with a personal name first constituent + geographical common word second constituent lexical structure may appear both in marked (for example, *falva*) and unmarked (for example, *falu*) possessive structures (2008: 106). Based on this assumption, we would not doubt the existence of the *Mikolafalú* and *Sárófalú* names in the 11<sup>th</sup> and certainly not in the 13<sup>th</sup> century due to their personal name first constituent + *-falú* unmarked possessive structure. But, the above mentioned circumstance showing that with the exception of the Charter of Garamszentbenedek none of the numerous documents mentioning the names record the two-component forms must make scholars pause.

Examining the other names appearing near the villages in the charter, we may find answers to questions that have emerged in connection with the names. The writer of the Charter of Garamszentbenedek concludes the list of donations of Bars County by mentioning the name of these two villages, although sometimes donations made in neighboring counties (Komárom and Nyitra) also appear among those of Bars County. Separating the interpolated names of the founding charter from the authentic names of the charter, we observe, however, that in this part of the document only names of settlements of Bars County were inserted subsequently into the Latin text. The interpolation starts with the two settlements by the Zsitva (Sári and Tajna settlements) near which in old times there was a settlement named *Mikófalva* ('Mikó personal name + village'), which name has survived to this day as the name of a barren land near a settlement (called Szelepcsény) (Borovszky 1903: 73, Fekete 1943: 75, Kázmér 1970: 283). I suggest that the scribe, being familiar with the name of this village and due to the resemblance of the *Mikola* and *Mikó* names, recorded the two-component *Mikolafalu* name instead of the single-component *Mikola*. He might have been deceived by the fact that after the listing of settlements by the Zsitva near *Mikófalva*, the charter mentions a *Mikola* name that is similar to *Mikó*. This possible mistake could also be supported by the fact that one of the charter versions transcribes the name form of the Garamszentbenedek Charter not as *Mikolafalu* but *Mikofalu* (F. 1: 431, 2: 71). Based on this charter version, historical geography locates this place near the settlement named Taszár by the Zsitva (Teleki 1863: 255), thus to a place where a settlement called *Mikófalva* really existed. If we look at the photographic copy of the Charter of Garamszentbenedek, we note that the charter clearly includes *Mikolafalu* and not *Mikofalu* (DF. 235 997). Based on mentions in other charters, we also know that *Mikolafalu* mentioned in the charter does not refer to Mikófalva by the Zsitva but Mikola by the Garam River. The above-mentioned charter version is full of misspellings, but in this case probably these are not simply clerical errors but the influence of the name of *Mikófalva* by the Zsitva upon the name of the settlement by the Garam.

All these, however, may only serve as an explanation for the presence of the *Mikolafalu* name in the charter but it still remains a question why Sáro settlement appears in the charter as *Saroufalva*. As of now, we might only propose the analogical effect of the name structure of the *Mikolafalu* name as an explanation.

In terms of this issue, it is also worth mentioning that another critical edition offers a different approach to the interpolated nature of the two names. Richard Marsina's edition considers only the *-falu* second constituent to be from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and not the entire name (CDES 1: 55). Based on our current knowledge, we cannot decide between the two approaches. Besides the fact that the name itself is entirely the result of interpolation, it could also happen that the original charter already included the *Mikola* name, which in the process of interpolation was forged with the *-falu* secondary constituent as an effect of the *Mikófalu* name. There are examples in the Charter of Garamszentbenedek also for cases when an 11<sup>th</sup>-century name form is complemented with a newer name constituent during interpolation in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The use of the name of Ártánd in Bihar County in a *RikachiArtand* form could be the result of subsequent modification, for example, as the name of the settlement in the 11<sup>th</sup> century was most probably *Rikachi*.

2.1.3. Based on the critical edition of György Györffy, we may conclude that the biggest change affected the beginning of the charter (DHA. 1: 213-218). He believes that the 11<sup>th</sup>-century charter stated about the location of the monastery only that the Garam River ran through it, while its boundary description is the result of 13<sup>th</sup>-century interpolation. He has the same opinion about the appearance of another village (Tolmács) in the charter, which we should consider as an area belonging to the direct environment of the monastery despite the fact that its donation is presented separately from the location of the monastery and we also have its boundary description. The forged boundary descriptions of these authentic land donations may represent a newer group of interpolations.

The largest difference between the two critical editions is found in the identification of such interpolations; while György Györffy considered only the description of the monastery's location to be forged (meaning the description of the later Garamszentbenedek and Tolmács village), Richard Marsina accepted the estate donations as fundamentally authentic and with the exception of one boundary description (that of Csany settlement in Csongrád County) considered the description of all estates to be the result of subsequent addition.

Györffy includes the two boundary descriptions mentioned among the additional interpolations of the charter because these parts refer to the castle occupants with the word *castrensis* that was used in the 13<sup>th</sup> century instead of the Latin *civis* and *urbanus* expressions that were widespread

in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Gy. 1: 418, 443). The DEEDS method introduced at the beginning of my paper also links the undated charters to a century based on similar matches and differences in word use (cf. Declercq 2000, Gervers et al 2012: 1616).

We could better determine the source value of names used in forged boundary descriptions if we had written documents featuring the names discussed from the period between the writing of the charter and the transcription of the interpolated charter. At the same time, due to the contingent nature of the names that survived in the charter and the few charters of the period under scrutiny, the lack of the prevalence of these names does not clearly indicate the absence of the names themselves. These boundary descriptions, despite being subsequent interpolations, may also include full-value toponyms that could be dated prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century from a linguistic, name-historical perspective. It is possible that the descriptions recorded circumstances valid in the 11<sup>th</sup> century but were added to the charter recording the foundation itself only two centuries later. Moreover, it is also possible that the scribes only forged the extent of the boundary. These, however, remain only suppositions due to lack of data and even though names included in the description also appear in the authentic parts of the charter raises the possibility of dating the toponyms of the interpolated boundary description to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but we need to be cautious about including these toponyms among 11<sup>th</sup>-century names.

## **Conclusions**

I hope that even based on this short analysis, it is illustrated well that the investigation of sections added to the charter subsequently (the interpolations) according to different types is indispensable for the linguistic analysis of interpolated toponyms and their general utilization in historical linguistics. The characteristics of these charters, I believe, may be explored most accurately only if we can compare Hungarian charters with those of other countries. By means of the analysis of interpolated charters of European countries according to similar principles, the types of interpolations introduced here could most probably be expanded. The issuing of charters recorded in Latin, i.e., in the administrative language of the Medieval Ages, followed strict rules at the time, thus they must abound in features that are valid internationally and which were learned by scribes participating in the drafting of the text of the charter in the

same European schools. We can specify this universal set of rules, however, only if we have as many European (interpolated) charters available for analysis as possible.

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