

**Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation Thesis**

**A HISTORICAL LINGUISTIC STUDY OF  
THE 1075 DEED OF FOUNDATION OF  
THE GARAMSZENTBENEDEK ABBEY**  
(Research considerations for the linguistic study of interpolated  
historical documents)

Köteles-Szőke Melinda

Supervisor: Dr. Tóth Valéria



UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

Doctoral School of Linguistics

Debrecen, 2013

## **1. Delimitation of the subject, objectives of the dissertation**

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is a historical linguistic and onomastic investigation of place names in the founding charter of the Garamszentbenedek Abbey. The Benedictine Abbey of Garamszentbenedek was founded by King Géza I in Bars County by River Garam. The founding document was written in 1075, and thus, it is from an early period of Hungarian literacy. There are about 250 place names to be found in the charter. The historical linguistic analysis of the proper names and their Latin context in the document is somewhat hindered by the fact that the authentic charter from the 11<sup>th</sup> century did not survive. Only a document from the 13<sup>th</sup> century is available for linguistic examination, which is based on the authentic, 11<sup>th</sup> century founding charter, but in addition to the original text, it contains extraneous material. Manuscripts like these are termed interpolated charters.

Foreign texts containing Hungarian words are indisputably important sources of data for the study of early periods of Old Hungarian, but the general view in historical linguistics that only authentic Hungarian documents (and the Hungarian proper names contained by them) can be considered as reliable sources, prevented other kinds of documents (of doubtful authenticity; like interpolated charters) that otherwise contained a great number of Hungarian elements, from being valuable source material for linguistic analyses. However, as this early period of charter writing is poor in sources and authentic charters are difficult to find in their original form, it is advisable to use the texts of unoriginal transcripts and falsified charters as well in linguistic historiography.

The choice of subject is also intended to prove that the almost overall rejection of these chronologically doubtful charters containing Hungarian linguistic elements from linguistic study is not rightful. The document chosen is ideal for this objective from multiple respects. On the one hand, the charter contains a great number of Hungarian place names scattered in it, and notwithstanding the fact that part of these may have been put into the Latin text during its interpolation, the portion of the data that belongs to the first chronological layer is still a significant amount. This layer originates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, which is a period not very rich in authentic sources. Secondly, as interpolated manuscripts may contain

such later added, falsified passages that became part of the original text during the transcription process, the linguistic analysis of this interpolated charter also contributes to a better understanding of how much documentary value falsified and transcribed manuscripts bear with from the point of historical linguistics.

Relying on the proper names of the Garamszentbenedek Founding Charter, the main objective of this paper is to lay the foundation of a novel methodology that is specialised in helping the processing of written records of doubtful authenticity.

## **2. Studies performed, and methods of the investigation**

In accordance with the objective of the dissertation, it is only a certain proportion of the Hungarian proper names scattered in the text that are discussed in detail. Of the approximately 250 Hungarian elements, only those names and text passages were chosen for investigation, the analysis of which would not only provide facts about the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century status of the Hungarian language, but would also aid a better understanding of the characteristics of interpolated charters. The last chapter of the paper discusses some further topics that may help in gaining more detailed knowledge about interpolated manuscripts, but which are not central to the processing of the date in our case. Such a topic is the analysis of Latinized names in the charter, which helped an understanding of certain norms and regularities in the charter writing practice of the time. Another similar subject is the historical linguistic analysis of two etymologically obscure names, *Hucueru* and *Susolgi*, which made me rethink certain conceptions and introduce methodologies different from traditional ones.

The names analysed in this dissertation were primarily studied from the respect of historical linguistic issues, but onomastic aspects of several names were also looked into. This latter subject contains much fewer factors of uncertainty than the historical linguistic investigation of names in interpolated manuscripts. On an onomastic basis, the place names from the parts of the Garamszentbenedek Charter that are considered to be authentic can all clearly be originated from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, while their historical linguistic characteristics can only be revealed through the resolution of a difficult issue demanding foresight. For, it is to be decided,

whether the transcription that followed interpolation caused changes in the spelling of the originally used Hungarian names or not, and if it did, what the extent of the modification was.

The methods used in the processing of authentic charters were of great help for us in the analysis of place names in the Garamszentbenedek Charter. It is a generally accepted principle in linguistics now that proper names of the documents are not to be analysed in separation, but together with their Latin context. The methods suitable for authentic charters, however, are not always useful for interpolated texts; therefore we must distance ourselves from these methods at some points. This is so, because authentic documents preserved in their original form contain proper names that bear with equal documentary value in relation to one another, while the names in an interpolated document cannot be considered as a homogeneous group of linguistic elements either chronologically or in relation to the language state in the given period. Depending on the point of time the names were written into the text, two chronological layers must be calculated upon: the original parts of the charter were put down in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, while the interpolated passages were inserted in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, as the charter available for study is a transcription, further distinctions must be made between place names from original and from interpolated parts of the text, for a proper evaluation of the documentary value of each element.

When studying documents of doubtful authenticity, it is important to take into consideration the primary purpose and the circumstances of their creation. It is sensible to presume that both falsified and interpolated charters were made to look like the original ones, and thus, certain Hungarian place names from the 13<sup>th</sup> century passages may have also been adjusted to fit in the linguistic environment of the falsified era, the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Still, it is not conceivable that the charter writers who inserted 13<sup>th</sup> century passages into the text were able to separate themselves from linguistic characteristics of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. their own era.

Therefore, a relatively precise estimation of chronological features of the charter's place names requires careful consideration. In this, a rethinking of the findings of related academic disciplines (historical scholarship and diplomacy especially) are of great help to us. The

cooperation with these related fields is always desirable through the course of the linguistic processing of charters, but in the case of a document that contains falsified passages inserted into the original text, such cooperation is indispensable and particularly fruitful. For, it is the critical editions prepared by historians that separate the original text from later added, falsified passages in interpolated documents, but differentiation within the two (or more) chronological layers is obviously the task of linguists. Therefore, a continuous dialogue between historical science and linguistic studies is essential for a precise analysis of Hungarian and Latinized Hungarian proper names in interpolated charters.

### **3. Findings of the study**

Hereinafter, the findings of the study are presented in accordance with the structure of the dissertation.

#### *Charters as sources for Hungarian historical linguistics*

The first chapter of the dissertation considers the most important characteristics of Hungarian charter writing, together with a description of the social and cultural context and background in which the Deed of Foundation of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek was written. I found it necessary to mention Hungarian institutions of charter-issuing, since besides the court chancellery, the so-called 'places of authentication' (rural centres issuing civil legal transactions) also served this purpose, and these were uniquely Hungarian institutions.

The rest of the chapter discusses the status of linguistic processing of the surviving charters, and describes the main characteristic features of interpolated documents, being special within the family of charters.

#### *The Deed of Foundation of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek*

In the second chapter, the circumstances of creation of the Garamszentbenedek Charter are discussed and the philological assessment of the document is described.

Three dates are usually given as the dating of the Garamszentbenedek Charter: the year when it was drawn up (1075), and the years when the text was transcribed (1124 and 1217). Although philological issues of the charter have been dealt with from as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was

no agreement among the scholars in this issue for a long period of time. On the one hand, several different opinions were held on whether the 1075 founding charter of Géza I and the 1124 document of Stephen II existed at all. On the other hand, those who did believe in the existence of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century charters did not agree on the authenticity or falseness of them.

The current analysis of the charter passages was based on the most recent findings of the literature, according to which the authentic charter was written in 1075 and still existed in the first years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, only the 1217 transcription of it has survived by the present day. This transcription, in fact, was not written at the date indicated, but decades later, around 1270, which was preceded by the modification of the charter through the insertion of falsified passages (i.e. interpolation) in the first and second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, according to this account, the original charter was interpolated twice in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although the interpolation may have taken place in two phases, I decided to take only two chronological layers into consideration. This is so, because a differentiation between the two 13<sup>th</sup> century interpolations (at the beginning and at the end of the century) would not help the study of the nature of interpolated charters, but would make it considerably more difficult or outright impossible.

#### *The historical linguistic documentary value of the Garamszentbenedek Charter*

The third, greater unit of the dissertation considered the issues of historical linguistic documentary value of the interpolated charter. Two of the critical editions of the charter are available for linguistic study. The first critical edition was published by the Slovakian RICHARD MARSINA in 1971, then GYÖRGY GYÖRFFY also published the text of the charter in 1992. The two editions significantly differ in the marking out of the interpolated parts of the text. During the analysis, I primarily depended on the GYÖRFFY edition, but the 1971 edition was also used when it was necessary. In the discussion of some of the issues, the agreements and differences of the two editions were considered as well.

As the charter only survived in a transcribed format, I saw it necessary to take a closer look at the critical editions: it is crucial from the aspect of the linguistic inquiry as well, why the authors of these editions considered

one or another passage to have been written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The critical editions mark off the original and interpolated parts of the text relying on various orientation points (e.g. the findings of settlement history, Latin usage information, the use of name variants with and without the stem-final vowel). Although the differentiation between the layers of interpolated documents is clearly a task of historians and experts in diplomacy, historical linguists also need to consider this issue during the study of place names in such texts. Linguistic studies often support the standpoint of the critical editions, but they may also prove it to be less reliable or may even contradict it. Therefore, historical linguistic inquiry should take the marking off of interpolated passages as a starting point and not as an objective, which can serve as a basis for further investigation.

The original parts and the interpolated passages in interpolated texts do not bear with equal documentary value; this is why the proper names from the original and interpolated sections of the charter are analysed under a separate subheading.

The original parts of the text are to be studied as a transcription, because in spite of the fact that these passages had been put down as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century, we know them only from the transcription modified by later insertions. The findings would be truly precise only if we had an opportunity to compare the names from the transcription with the forms in the original charter. This ideal condition is not achievable in the case of the Garamszentbenedek Charter; still, some kind of comparison is possible. Besides the interpolated charter, another charter from 1338 preserved a part of the founding document that is the boundary description of Ság settlement. From the aspect of the excerpt from the Garamszentbenedek Charter, this charter from 1338 is also a transcription, but the comparison of this text and the corresponding passage from the charter may reveal such agreements and differences in the spelling of the names that can highlight certain characteristic features of the transcriptions. This is the more so as the related literature assumes that the 1338 charter copied this boundary description from the original text and not from the interpolated document. I made efforts to find out about the documentary value of the original passages from the interpolated founding charter by an analysis of the above mentioned

boundary description and three place names appearing in other charters as well (charters which also relied on the original, 11<sup>th</sup> century founding charter). This comparative study showed beyond question that the Hungarian elements of various transcriptions cannot be handled as a homogeneous group from a historical linguistic point of view. These documents show a tendency to modernize some of the names in compliance with the spelling rules of the time, while other names were kept in the form used in the original charter. Therefore it is to be considered through the course of the linguistic analysis of the transcriptions, whether, from a linguistic point of view, the individual Hungarian elements belong to the time of the authentic charter or that of the transcription.

After the separation of interpolated passages from the authentic parts that appeared in the 1075 founding charter already, it is useful to make further distinctions between the later inserted text fragments for a precise evaluation of the proper names. Two types of the interpolated passages are distinguished here: linguistically irrelevant and linguistically relevant interpolations. The former category includes every kind of later addition to the text that does not contain (Hungarian) place names, i.e. linguistic elements that could form the subject of Hungarian linguistic inquiry. These passages (interpolated ones without place names) were usually meant to complement the Latin text of the charter with information related to the extension of the land donated. Relevant interpolations are the insertions that caused the occurrence of Hungarian place names in the Latin text.

On the basis of the Garamszentbenedek Charter, the following subtypes of the relevant interpolations can be established: 1. interpolated place names also appearing in the authentic parts of the charter; 2. inserted short sentences appearing in a list format; 3. additions to the names themselves; 4. interpolated boundary descriptions of the authentic land donations; and 5. interpolations affecting a certain part of the authentic boundary descriptions of the authentic land donations.

*The historical linguistic study of the Founding Charter of the Garamszentbenedek Abbey*

The first section of the fourth and last chapter contains the analysis of two boundary descriptions of great significance. One of these is important to study in detail for getting a better knowledge of the territory in Bars County where the abbey was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This description became part of the charter due to the 13<sup>th</sup> century interpolation; the 11<sup>th</sup> century text only informed the reader about one single characteristic of this area of land, namely that it was bisected by River Garam. The analysis established that the three villages that are mentioned after the boundary description of the territory later named Garamszentbenedek also belonged to the immediate neighbourhood of the abbey. An interpolated boundary description of one village is also given, which is thus a boundary description within the boundary description.

The other boundary description is the one that was preserved in a further charter besides this founding document. Moreover, the 1338 charter in question was, in all probability, based on the 11<sup>th</sup> century, authentic document and not on the 13<sup>th</sup> century, interpolated one. As the original founding charter is not available anymore, we are compelled to accept that no complete certainty is possible about which passages were part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century text already and which passages were put in there during the interpolation. This boundary description is exceptional from this respect and this is why it had to be included in the linguistic study of the charter. The comparison of the interpolated charter and the charter from 1338 revealed such characteristics of interpolated documents that would have remained hidden if the analysis had only covered the interpolated charter. For example, different Latin epithets stand before the name of the estate in the 1338 and the 1217 charters. This difference shows another type of modification implemented during charter transcriptions. For, based on these excerpts, modernized spelling seems to have been applied not only for Hungarian names, but also for the Latin context of these names. It was also the comparison of these two boundary descriptions that shed light on the fact that the linguistic processing of the interpolated charter is hindered not only by falsified passages inserted, but by missing parts of the text as well.

Furthermore, this chapter also intends to provide some information for the historical linguistic investigation of two place names the etymology of which is very much uncertain: *Huger* and *Susolgi*. These names have already been discussed by some of the historical linguists, but a satisfactory etymology of them has not been provided as yet. A rethinking of the issue is also justified by the fact that the researchers did not consider the names of this charter, or if they did, they disregarded that this is an interpolated document.

The fourth section of the chapter is related to a rather novel direction in research. The Latin context of the Hungarian place names in the text was taken into account throughout the dissertation, but this chapter particularly emphasises the importance of the issue: here, I examined how the Hungarian place names, especially the ones translated into Latin or appearing in a Latinized form, fit into the Latin text of the charter. This investigation established that the Latinized names in the Garamszentbenedek Charter are in a suitable correlation with the Latinized name variants in mediaeval written sources. This is so, because the present document also uses this technique of charter writing in the case of settlement names and hydronyms. The phenomenon is connected with the fact that the Latinization of names in charters was not only influenced by linguistic prestige relations, but also by the notoriety and importance of the places named. It is these two name categories that contain widely known and used place names.

The last section of the chapter was written about the history of changes in the names of the Garamszentbenedek abbey-lands. A special viewpoint was applied in this investigation, because only the names originating from the noun *apát* (=abbot) were studied. This study showed that the changes in ownership influenced name-giving practices and (natural and official) changes of names.

#### 4. Publications in the topic of the dissertation

##### Essays

1. A garamszentbenedeki apátság alapítólevelében szereplő szórványok nyelvi alkata és szövegbeli helyzete. In: Kovács Zoltán–Szirák Péter (szerk.): *Juvenilia I. Debreceni bölcsész diákkörösök antológiája*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 2006, 263–274.
2. Régi helyneveink latinizálása. In: Bölcskei Andrea–N. Császi Ildikó (szerk.): *Név és valóság. A VI. Magyar Névtudományi Konferencia előadásai*. Budapest: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem BTK Magyar Nyelvtudományi Tanszéke, 2008, 267–271.
3. A hiteleshelyi oklevelek helynévi szórványainak nyelvészeti hasznosíthatóságáról. *Helynévtörténeti Tanulmányok* 4 (2009), 149–162.
4. A garamszentbenedeki apátság alapítólevelének nyelvtörténeti forrásértékéről. *Helynévtörténeti Tanulmányok* 5 (2010), 95–103.
5. A garamszentbenedeki apátság 1075. évi alapítólevelének kronológiai rétegeiről. *Helynévtörténeti Tanulmányok* 6 (2011), 59–65.
6. Ság birtok leírása a garamszentbenedeki apátság alapítólevelében. *Magyar Nyelvjárások* 49 (2011), 55–74.
7. Interpolált oklevelek és a magyar nyelvtörténet. In: Kiss P. Attila–Piti Ferenc–Szabados György (szerk.): *Középkortörténeti tanulmányok 7. A VII. Medievisztikai PhD-konferencia (Szeged, 2011. június 1–3.) előadásai*. Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2012, 23–30.
8. *Talmach* birtok leírása a garamszentbenedeki oklevélben. *Helynévtörténeti Tanulmányok* 8 (2012), 49–60.
9. A 11. századi interpolált oklevelek mint a magyar nyelvtörténet forrásai. *Magyar Nyelv* 109 (2013). Megjelenésre elfogadott.
10. A latin szöveg és helynévi szórvány kapcsolata (különös tekintettel a garamszentbenedeki apátság alapítólevelének latinizáló helyneveire). *Helynévtörténeti Tanulmányok* 9. (2013). Megjelenésre elfogadott.

##### Review

1. Solymosi László–Szovák Kornél, *Regestrum Varadinense* (1208–1235). Arcanum CD. 2009. *Magyar Nyelvjárások* 47 (2009), 244–250.