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The Relationship between Early Hydronyms and Settlement Names*

1. Being one of the most significant sources on the early history of the Hungarian language, 11th–13th-century charters have long been in the focus of scholarly attention. This is primarily due to the fact that linguistic records (toponyms and anthroponyms) written in these charters provide fundamental information on numerous aspects of language history: besides the history of words, they can provide guidance for scholars working mainly in the fields of historical phonology and orthography, historical morphology, historical toponomastics as well as anthroponym history. At the same time, the earliest linguistic records also provide essential information for other disciplines with a historical focus, primarily the field of history, as their investigation offers insights into the life and civilization of language users, thus also extending our knowledge on the history of Hungarians (cf. TÓTH 2001: 11, HOFFMANN 2014: 216).

Of the two types of proper names, I study toponyms from several approaches and by focusing on the following factors (for that, see for example, KOVÁCS 2015, 2018). Etymologization is traditionally considered to be the most important part of place name analysis in historical linguistics; therefore, the historical-etymological study of the data is very emphatic in my works as well. In connection with the description of the linguistic elements, I have referred to general historical phonetic and orthographic factors, and also to more recent historical linguistic findings. Not only the etymology, the linguistic origin of the words, was examined, but other points of interest of name analysis as well, in accordance with the method called place name reconstruction by ISTVÁN HOFFMANN (2010: 14, 220). The central aim of this method is localization, because it helps in the identification of linguistic elements from a spatial aspect, and it connects them to earlier (and sometimes subsequent) occurrences of the given place. The association of the Hungarian place name data with the corresponding physical space is of high importance both in the course of name reconstruction (i.e. historical-etymological analysis) and ethnic reconstruction because of the territorial relations; as toponyms of the Carpathian Basin come from different languages. Furthermore, the relationship of the Hungarian place names and the

* This work was carried out as part of the Research Group on Hungarian Language History and Toponomastics (University of Debrecen–Hungarian Academy of Sciences) as well as the project *International Scientific Cooperation for Exploring the Toponymic Systems in the Carpathian Basin* (ID: NRDI 128270, supported by National Research, Development and Innovation Fund, Hungary).



Latin text is also studied. The traditional methods of analysis hardly ever considered the texts in this respect: the Hungarian elements were usually just mechanically taken out of context. The consideration of this angle, however, enables us to gain more information about the morphological structure of the Hungarian elements in the text, and also about the spoken variants underlying the written forms. In the process of analyzing toponymic remnants, I consider both typological and structural features of names.

In this paper I discuss the relationship between settlement names and hydronyms recorded in an identical form in 11th–13th-century sources. After an overview of the most important research results, in the second part of the paper I scrutinize the relationship between some hydronyms and settlement names from early sources with the help of the toponym reconstruction method. This is because in this analysis the identification of the object denoted by the name is a significant factor. The main question in these cases is whether the settlement is named after the body of water or vice versa, i.e. whether the body of water received its name from the settlement.

2. The relationship between hydronyms and settlement names has received considerable attention in Hungarian onomastics. This relationship was examined in the most detail by LORÁND BENKŐ (1947a, 1947b, 1948, later cf. 1998, 2003), who provided several guidelines in his early work for the determination of the direction of name-giving processes.

2.1. In the case of settlement names and hydronyms of an identical form it is primarily the semantic content of the name that may help us in identifying the direction of change. BENKŐ considered it very likely that settlement names that were formed from the names of aquatic plants, aquatic animals and attributes of water were also originally hydronyms, but the settlement names derived from names of flora in general cannot be included among them as these could obviously be created independently of hydronyms as well (1947a: 260). The *Hodos* settlement name of Bihar County (1326: *Hudus*, possessio, cf. KMHsz. 1.) could be mentioned in this respect, which could have been formed from a hydronym of identical form (1326: *Hudus*, fluvius, cf. KMHsz. 1.), from the animal name *hód* ‘beaver’ with an *-s* formant (cf. GYÖRFFY 2011: 156–157). The name of the settlement of *Keskeny* in Csongrád County (1327: *Kesekun*, possessio, cf. KMHsz. 1.) was also created from a hydronym, the name of the *Keskeny* watercourse of identical form (1075/+1124/+1217: *Kesekun*, aqua, cf. KMHsz. 1.), which originally referred to the size of the riverbed (*keskeny* ‘not wide, narrow’). This idea is further confirmed by the earlier date of the hydronym. When considering chronology, however, we also need to keep in mind the eventuality of documenting names, i.e., the fact that the survival of toponyms used in the given era is to a certain extent accidental.



2.2. LORÁND BENKŐ also highlighted that settlement in which the *patak* ‘brook,’ *ér* ‘natural watercourse with little water,’ *víz* ‘water,’ and *tő* ‘estuary,’ *fő* ‘source’ hydrographic common names appear were also formed from hydronyms (1947a: 259–260, 1948: 98). For example, the settlement of *Sós-patak* (‘salty + brook’) in today’s Romania (1332–6/PR.: *Sospotek*, Gy. 2: 184) received its name from a salty brook flowing nearby (cf. BENKŐ 1947a: 259, FNESz. *Sós-patak*). The settlement names containing hydrographic common names can usually be considered to be the result of secondary name formation (cf. GYÖRFFY 2011: 158). Settlement names with *Ér* (1214/1550: *Her*, cf. *ér* ‘natural watercourse with little water’), *Sár* (1313>1350: *Saar*, cf. *sár* ‘marsh’) or *Hájó* (1249: *Hewyo*, the latter of an obscure structure cf. *hő* ~ *hév* ‘heat’ + *jó* ‘river’) can all be rooted in hydronyms. A great part of settlements including the *fő* ‘source’ and *tő* ‘estuary’ second constituents in their names were established at the source or estuary of a watercourse or nearby it, thus the settlement could receive its name referring to the area around the source or estuary based on a spatial relationship, as for example, in the case of *Tapolca-fő* ‘the source of the Tapolca brook’ > *Tapolcafő* ‘settlement established at the source of the Tapolca’ metonymy. Besides the metonymic source/estuary name > settlement name shift, however, this type of settlement name could also be created analogically, i.e., without the actual use of the source name or estuary name (GYÖRFFY 2011: 158–159). VALÉRIA TÓTH, in her analysis of settlement names with the *fő* ‘source’ second constituent, found that this lexeme moved away from its primary ‘source, beginning’ meaning, and with a certain degree of semantic change it became a secondary settlement name formant meaning ‘a settlement with a special attribute’, or more precisely ‘a settlement located next to a body of water, mostly nearby the source’ (2008: 182–183). The *Szuhafő* settlement with a river name + *fő* ‘source’ structure, for example, is a bit further away, about 4-5 kilometers from the source of the *Szuha* brook (cf. TÓTH 2008: 183, GYÖRFFY 2011: 159).

2.3. If there are several settlements along the river with an identical name to the hydronym, scholarly publications also suppose a hydronym > settlement name direction of change (cf. BENKŐ 1947a: 261, GYÖRFFY 2011: 159–160). In the valley of the *Ida* River in Abaúj County two villages were established under the name of *Ida*. The settlements were probably named after the *Ida* watercourse of an uncertain origin (cf. TÓTH 2001: 75). To end the settlement name homonymy, the settlement names received the distinguishing elements of *nagy* ‘large’ and *kis* ‘small’ (1324: *Kwsyda*, [1330 k.]: *Noghyda*, TÓTH 2001: 90, 108).

2.4. When defining the etymological direction of hydronyms and settlement names of an identical form, the size of the body of water is also considered an important factor in scholarly studies. According to LORÁND BENKŐ, in the case



of larger bodies of water these could be the primary name givers, as their names were created much earlier than those of the settlements next to them (2003: 136, cf. GYÖRFFY 2011: 160). *Arrabona*, the Roman name for settlement which today is called *Győr*, has its roots in the *Arrabo* ‘Rába’ hydronym of Indo-European origin (cf. **ēreb(h)-*, **ōrob(h)* ‘dark red, brownish,’ cf. FNESz., GYÖRFFY 2011: 160). We have to be very careful with the hydronym > settlement name metonymy, however, because the other direction is also possible (as there is no taxonomical obstacle to this); thus it is not rare at all that certain settlement names became hydronyms metonymically, without adding any formants. Thus while in the case of larger bodies of water we can primarily suppose the hydronym > settlement name shift with higher probability, in connection with the names of bodies of water of medium and smaller size, there is the same probability for the settlement name > hydronym shift (1332–7/PR., 1333: *Barakun*, villa > 1344: *Barakun*, alveus, 1344: *Barrakun*, palus; 1281: *Chaslo*, terra > 1416: *Chazlo*, palus, 1526: *Chazlo*, fluvius, cf. JAKÓ 1940: 222, 337). BENKŐ’s studies have also highlighted the complicated structure of section names, i.e., that the smaller brooks passing through multiple settlements could be named differently in each settlement. “At the source of the brook, in most cases it bears the name of the boundary section it originates from. After merging with several other smaller watercourses the name changes and names of plants, anthroponyms, etc. are attached to it. At the lower section of the brook, at the estuary, the name changes again. Here it receives its name from the village in the direction of which it flows.” (1947b: 17, 1998: 155, for that cf. GYÖRFFY 2011: 158–159). This also means that we cannot generalize this phenomenon and each case has to be examined separately in terms of the direction of change and the name formation process.

3. In the following, I analyze the etymological relationship between some hydronyms and settlement names recorded in 11th–13th-century sources.

3.1. In the Land Survey of the Tihany Abbey from 1211, the name *Kolon* appears five times, twice as an estate name (“in predio *Colon*”, “terra predicti predii *Colon*”) and three times as a hydronym (“ad stagnum *Colon*”, “ultra *Colon*”, “ad stagnum *Colon*”, cf. KOVÁCS 2015: 25–26, 106). In the Founding Charter of the Tihany Abbey from 1055 this estate is included as a pasture for horses and without a name (“est locus ad pascua equorum”, SZENTGYÖRGYI 2014: 60), but in the detailed boundary description the body of water called *culun* is also mentioned (“aque que uocatur *culun*”, SZENTGYÖRGYI 2014: 60).

In terms of the relationship between the *Kolon* body of water and the *Kolon* settlement in the former Fejér County there have been two ideas expressed in scholarly publications. According to one of these (and obviously based on chronological arguments) the name of the water was primary (1055: “aque que uocatur *culun*”) and the settlement name was created from this with metonymy



(cf. for example, GYÖRFFY 1956: 409). According to the other approach, however, the exact opposite direction is specified based on name typological arguments: as the *Kolon* settlement name is usually seen as deriving from an anthroponym (cf. Old Turkic *qulun* ‘foal’ which also appears in Turkish as a personal name) and in the case of settlement names a personal name origin without a formant is much more frequent than among hydronyms; in this case also it was the settlement that was used to name the water (cf. FNESz. *Kolon-tó*, ZELLIGER 2005: 35). The text of the 1055 charter, however, supports the idea of the primacy of the hydronym, as the estate donated in the area of Lake Kolon appears in the charter without a name. If the estate and the settlement in it had been called *Kolon* at that time already, nothing would justify mentioning it without a name (cf. HOFFMANN 2010: 174, KOVÁCS 2015: 107–108). Among hydronyms, however, anthroponym structures without a formant that denote the place in question as a fishing place after the owner of the area are not rare (cf. HOFFMANN 2010: 174–175, for that, see *Kápás*, *Kara*, *Gény* etc. hydronyms, GYÖRFFY 2011: 61). It is very likely that in the case of the Kolon body of water recorded in the Tihany charter it was also this motive (cf. the ownership of the fishing place) that served as the basis of name giving. The homonymy of the settlement name and the name of the lake was terminated by the temporary depopulation of the inhabited place and the establishment of the new village with a new name (*Izsák*: 1421: *Isak*, Cs. 3: 333).

3.2. When attempting to establish the etymological relationship between the *Morotva* water (“super stagnum, quod vocatur *Mortua*”, “de predicta *Mortua* trahuntur naves in Ticiam”, “idem *Mortua*”) and the *Morotva* settlement of the same name (“in predio *Mortua*”, “terra predicti predii, scilicet *Mortua*”, KOVÁCS 2015: 27, 123) in Csanád County recorded in the 1211 Tihany Land Survey, we can rely primarily on semantic arguments: the semantic content of the Slavic geographical common noun (cf. Serbian-Croatian *mrtav*, *mrtva*, *mrtvo* ‘dead’) *morotva* ‘the cut part of the river due to changes in the riverbed, dead river, backwater’ supports the primacy of the hydronym (cf. KOVÁCS 2015: 124).

3.3. The name *Zamárdi* in Somogy County appears in the 1211 charter both as a settlement name (“terram *Somard* ~ *Zamad*”) and a hydronym (“ad stagnum *Somardy* ~ *Somardi*”, “et per mediam piscinam *Somardy* ~ *Somard*”, KOVÁCS 2015: 36, 182). The latter structures, however, can certainly not be interpreted as ‘the lake named Szamárdi’ but as ‘the lake of Szamárd (settlement)’, as this name is not recorded later as a hydronym but only as a settlement name. Similar examples occur several times in the Tihany charters: for example, in the 1055 Founding Charter we can find the names *lacus turku* and *lacum segisti* names, the first of which refers to the lake of the *turku* ~ *Turk* settlement next to *Zamárdi*, and the other to that of the *segisti* settlement (cf. HOFFMANN 2010:



70, 211–212). The lake of the settlement of Zamárdi (1171: *Zamard*, FNESz. *Zamárdi*) could most probably be the lake extending from the south of the village in a north-south direction, which can be seen also in 19th-century maps (MKFT). The microtoponyms mentioned in the settlement of Zamárdi in contemporary collections indicate this also: *Tóközi folyó eleje*, *Tóköz* (“surrounded on both sides by a lake”, SMFN 142, 146).

The (S)zamárdi toponym can be considered the derived form of the *szamár* ‘donkey’ animal name. The *szamár* lexeme was also used as an anthroponym during the Árpád Era (cf. 1138/1329: *Samar*, *Zamar*, ÁSz. 839), thus we cannot disregard such an origin either. The charter also includes versions of settlement names with a *-d* formant (*Szamárd*). The later mentions record it as a name with the *-d* formant for a long time; the first form with a clearly *-di* ending appears only at the beginning of the 19th century (1806: *Szamárdi*, cf. LIPSZKY, Mappa). This indicates the extension of the name with the *-i* toponym. Based on the above, there is justification for the idea that the *Szamárdi* forms appearing in 1211 when the lakes are mentioned in the descriptive text do not contain this *-i* toponym, but they rather mark the Szamárdi lake with the *-i* adjectival suffix, a mixed Latin–Hungarian marker (for that, see 1211: *de Batay*, cf. KOVÁCS 2015: 183).

3.4. Next to the *Garadna* brook (1234/1243: fluvius *Grathna*) in the former Abaúj County, two settlements called *Garadna* (1. 1234/1243: villa *Gradna*; 2. 1259: terra *Granna*, KMHsz. 1.) were established with the identical name. As already noted before, in such cases (thus when there are several settlements with an identical name to the hydronym along the watercourse) scholarly publications usually argue for the primacy of the hydronym. In the case of *Garadna*, however, based on the etymological antecedent, the settlement names could rather be considered to be primary. The toponym is of Slavic origin; cf. Serbian-Croatian *Gradna* and Czech *Hradná* toponyms, the basis of which is the word *gradъ* ‘castle’ (cf. FNESz., TÓTH 2001: 61). A similar settlement name > hydronym shift may be supposed in the case of other toponyms of a Slavic origin as well, as for example, in the Polish *Istebna* and Slovakian *Istebné* toponyms (cf. Slovakian *istebna* ‘small chamber’) > Hungarian *Isztebne* settlement name (1316: possessio *Iztebna*) > *Isztebne* hydronym (1316: fluvius *Iztebna*, KMHsz. 1., cf. GYÖRFFY 2011: 66); or Slovakian *Okoličné* settlement name (cf. Polish *okolica* ‘pen, noble village’) > *Okolicsna* settlement name (+1248/+1276: villa *Okolychna*) > *Okolicsna* hydronym (1295: rivulus *Ocolisna*, Gy. 4: 81–82, cf. GYÖRFFY 2011: 66). ERZSÉBET GYÖRFFY calls attention to the fact that this type of transformation can clearly only refer to the process taking place in the transferring language; the settlement name and hydronym of an identical form could enter the Hungarian toponymic system simultaneously as well (2011: 66). The homonymy of the *Garadna* settlement



name and hydronym was terminated with the complementation of the hydronym with the secondary geographical common name (1326/1375: patak *Garadnapatak*: hydronym *Garadna* + *patak* ‘brook’, fluvius *Garadnapataka*, Gy. 1: 150).

4. In my paper I have attempted to collect the points of orientation and criteria which may be used successfully for the determination of the etymological direction of hydronyms and settlement names. I have also tried to highlight that the hydronym > settlement name metonymy cannot be generalized and that each case has to be examined separately in terms of the direction of change and the name formation process, while in many cases we do not get clear answers even after these steps. In terms of the assessment of unique cases, different factors (e.g., etymological, name typological arguments) may provide us additional assistance.

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Abstract

The Hungarian elements (toponyms and anthroponyms) in Latin-language medieval documents are the most important source for the early history of the Hungarian language. At the same time, the earliest linguistic records also provide essential information for other disciplines with a historical focus. In this paper I discuss the relationship between settlement names and hydronyms recorded in an identical form in 11th–13th-century sources. After an overview of the most important research results, in the second part of the paper I scrutinize the relationship between some hydronyms and settlement names from early sources with the help of the toponym reconstruction method. This is because in this analysis the identification of the object denoted by the name is a significant factor. The main question in these cases is whether the settlement is named after the body of water or vice versa, i.e. whether the body of water received its name from the settlement. We have to be very careful with the hydronym > settlement name metonymy, however, because the other direction is also possible (as there is no taxonomical obstacle to this). Each case has to be examined separately in terms of the direction of change and the name formation process, while in many cases we do not get clear answers even after these steps. In terms of the assessment of unique cases, different factors (e.g., etymological, name typological arguments) may provide us additional assistance.

Keywords: medieval charters, toponym reconstruction, settlement names, hydronyms, metonymy



