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This document contains the comments of the Hungarian Standards Institution (Hungarian National Body) on the Rovas-related statements in the recent individual contribution N4197 (2012-01-30). Please send any response regarding to this document to Gábor Hosszú (email: [hosszu@eet.bme.hu](mailto:hosszu@eet.bme.hu)).

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## 1. The names of the Rovas scripts

In Central and Eastern Europe (in the Carpathian Basin and in the Pontic-Caspian Steppe), there are plenty of archaeological relics with inscriptions. A significant part of these inscriptions were named as “East-European Rovas Scripts” in the Hungarian paleography based on their obvious topological similarities. Oppositely to N4197, the term “East-European scripts” refers to the genealogical relationship of these inscriptions: Assoc. Prof. Sándor stated that there are several “rovásírásos emlék” [relics with Rovas inscription] found in Eastern part of Europe and the Carpathian Basin, which can be assumed to be closely related to the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas script (Sándor 1996, p. 83).

Archaeologists and historians, who did not know the meaning of these inscriptions, grouped them by the geographical names of their archeological sites (Kyzlasov, 1994). Therefore, these frequently overlapping script names are considered *temporary*.

In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several new Rovas archaeological relics were found, e.g. the Szarvas Bone Needle Case, the Jánoshida Bone Needle Case, the Bodrog-Clay Twyer, the Vargyas Stone Inscription, and the Silver Vessel of Ozora. Most of them contain long inscriptions. Based on the increasing number of relics with inscriptions, the deciphering of the early Rovas scripts has gradually become possible. The first scientist deciphering these inscriptions was the archaeologist-historian Gábor Vékony (Associate Professor at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest). The transcriptions of Vékony were verified and improved by leading linguists: Turkologist Prof. I. Vásáry, Hungarian linguist-dialectologist Assoc. Prof. E. Zelliger and Hungarian linguist Assoc. Prof. K. Korompay. Vékony passed away in 2004; however, the Rovas expert Prof. I. Erdélyi, Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences reviewed and supported the publishing of the manuscript of

Vékony. Moreover, most of the results of Vékony were published in several earlier books, e.g. Vékony 1995, 1986, 1987, 1992, 1997 (see Section Bibliography).

Vékony identified and named two scripts, the Carpathian Basin Rovas and the Khazarian Rovas scripts in his scientific works: see the following citations of his most comprehensive book (Vékony, 2004):

Page	Part of the book of Vékony	Translation to English
p. 203	lyi I. ír róla újra röviden. A Kárpát-medencei rovásírás emlékein dolgozva – 1983-ban – magam is foglalkoztam a környei felirattal, akkori eredményemet	<i>“Working on the relics of the Carpathian Basin Rovas...”</i>
p. 245	Hasonló okok zárják ki a többi (esetleg számításba jövő) finnugor nyelvet is. Ščerbak szerint a kazáriai rovásfeliratok elterjedési területén a kazárok, alánok, cserkeszok, bolgárok, magyarok és a „kazár bese-	<i>“According to Ščerbak, in the usage area of the Khazarian Rovas inscriptions...”</i>
p. 258	<i>j</i> ϕ – a <i>č</i> mintájaul szolgáló betű <i>ϕ</i> , <i>ϕ</i> alakú lehetett, ez pedig pontosan egyezik a székely rovásírás <i>cs</i> jelével. A „glagolita dísz”-nélküli glagolita <i>č</i> azonos a székely <i>cs</i> -vel! A székely rovásírásnak közismert glagolita kapcsolatai vannak. E kapcsolatokra Šafařík, P. J. figyelt fel, az őt követő Hódoly L.	<i>(second citation) “The Szekely Rovas script has well known Glagolitic relations...”</i>
p. 259	A kazárok szerepelnek is a Konstantin-legendában azok között a népek között, akiknek írásuk van <sup>5</sup> . Konstantinosnak megvolt a lehetősége, hogy felhasználja a kazáriai rovásjeleket a glagolica megalkotásánál, s ezt bizonyára meg is tette, mint ennek valószínűségére már H. Löwe rámutatott <sup>6</sup> .	<i>“Constantine had the possibility to use the Khazarian Rovas symbols in creation of the Glagolitic script, and he certainly did so, as H. Löwe pointed out this probability.”</i>
p. 280	Ugyanakkor feliratunk szögletes jele a székely rovásírás egyik <i>k</i> jelével (ϕ) azonosítható. Hasonló jel előfordul más kazáriai rovásfeliratokon is. A székely rovásírás alapján e jel valamilyen <i>k</i> -szerű hang jelével lehet azonos, feliratunk tanúságának figyelembevétel-	<i>“A similar symbol occurred in other Khazarian Rovas inscriptions. Based on the Szekely Rovas script, this symbol could be identical to the symbol of a k-like sound, ...”</i>

According to international scientific traditions, the naming system of the first person discovering or - in this case - deciphering a script becomes the acknowledged terminology.

Oppositely to the N4197, the Hungarian term “rovás” generally means the Rovas script, and the secondary meaning related to the Rovas numerals (“tally”) is peripheral. The Székely-Hungarian Rovas had several names during history. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the following terms became dominant: “Szekely Rovas”, “Hungarian Rovas”, and their combination: “Szekely-Hungarian Rovas”. The followings are just few examples for the use of the term “rovás” in Hungarian as the name of the script in titles of scientific publications: Erdélyi & Ráduly 2010; Róna-Tas 1994; Sándor 1991a, 1992b, 1992, 1996; Sebestyén 1909, 1915; Vásáry 1974, 1981; Vékony 1987 (see the Section Bibliography).

In several non-Hungarian languages, the term Rovas as the name of a script is accepted, e.g. Písmo **rováš** in Slovakian (Salgó 2008), **Rovaško** pismo in Serb Croatian ([http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rovaško\\_pismo](http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rovaško_pismo)), **Ровашко** писмо in Serbian ([http://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ровашко\\_писмо](http://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ровашко_писмо)), and **Rowasz** in Polish (Dzięciołowska 2004).

## 2. The close relation of the Rovas scripts

I fully agree with Róna-Tas stating that the Carpathian Basin Rovas might be related but not identical to the Khazarian Rovas (Róna-Tas 1988 p. 502). Róna-Tas used relic-based geographical names in this publication in 1988 (e.g. Szarvas-Nagyszentmiklós inscription), since that time the Carpathian Basin Rovas script was yet undeciphered.

The following simplified cross-reference table lists some examples of the closely related Rovas characters. The historical sound values are denoted with IPA (International Phonetic Association) symbols.

Szekely-Hungarian Rovas	Carpathian Basin Rovas	Khazarian Rovas
AA /a:/, <i>historically also /e/</i>	FORKED E /a/ε/e/	FORKED E /a/ε/
B /b/	B /b/	B /b/
CS /tʃ/		TRIPLE CS /tʃ/s/
T /t/, <i>historically also /d/</i>	SHARP D /d/	SHARP D /d/
E /ε/		DIAGONAL E /ε/
CLOSE E /e/		CLOSE E /e/
	SHARP CH /x/	SHARP CH /h/
J /j/, <i>historically also /i/</i>	ANGLED I /i/	ANGLED I /i/
	ARCHED I /i/i/	ARCHED I /i/i/
	CLOSE J /j/i/	CLOSE J /j/
K /k/		CLOSE Q /q/
OPEN K /k/	OPEN K /k/	
M /m/	OPEN M /m/	OPEN M /m/
N /n/, <i>historically also /ŋ/</i>	N /n/ŋ/	N /n/
O /o/, <i>historically also /u/</i>	OPEN O /o/u/	
NGH /ɣ/	NGH /ɣ/g/	NGH /ɣ/g/
	ARCHED Q /q/	ARCHED Q /q/
CH /x/		ANGLED Q /q/
	CLOSE R /r/	CLOSE R /r/
R /r/		R /r/
US /ʃ/	CLOSE S /ʃ/	
S /s/		CIRCLE ENDED S /ʃ/
SZ /s/	SZ /s/	SZ /s/
	CLOSE T /t/	CLOSE T /t/
	OPEN T /t/	OPEN T /t/
TY /c/, <i>historically /t/</i>		CENTRAL T /t/
V /v/, <i>historically also /y/</i>		SHARP UE /ø/y/
OPEN V /β/	OPEN V /β/v/	OPEN V /β/b/v/
Z /z/	OPEN Z /z/	
ZS /z/, <i>historically /ʃ/</i>		ZS /ʃ/

### 3. The hypothesis of the Old Turkic origin

After 1799, when the Nagyszentmiklós Golden Treasure, a significant Carpathian Basin Rovas relic was found, more and more inscribed archaeological relics were discovered. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the famous Danish scientist, V. Thomsen deciphered the Old Turkic inscriptions of the Orkhon Valley (North to Mongolia, South Siberia). Since his successful deciphering, the majority of the attempts to decipher unknown inscriptions in the Eurasian Steppe used the Old Turkic alphabet. Thus, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas was also assumed to be close relative to the Old Turkic script, e.g. Sebestyén 1909, 1915; Németh 1934. Moreover, the influence of these early works can be still detected in already outdated views mostly in the popular literature up to the late 1990's. The N4097 basically sticks to this outdated approach.

As Turkologist K. Sándor stated, the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas script cannot be derived from the Old Turkic script; however, they might be distant relatives (Sándor 1996, p. 83). The author of this document fully agrees with this statement.

## 4. The book *Heritage of Scribes*

The results of the scientific research in the field of the Rovas scripts has been published almost exclusively in Hungarian and unfortunately, very limited information is available in English. Consequently, the English databases are obsolete in most cases. Especially, the scientific results of the last 2–3 decades are missing from western literature. To improve this situation was one of the main motivations to publish the latest Rovas paleographical results in English in the book “*Heritage of Scribes*”.

The “*Heritage of Scribes*” was reviewed by Associate Professor Erzsébet Zelliger at the Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Hungarian Historical Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and Dialectology, and Professor Ferenc Kovács at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Faculty of Information Technology. The book is fully available from Google Books at <http://books.google.hu/books?id=TyK8azCqC34C&pg=PA1>.

## 5. The scientific background of the author

The N4197 stated deficient information about the background of the author of the N4183. First of all the author of the N4183 is the official representative of the Hungarian National Body. He works as Associate Professor in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics. His scientific degree is “Candidate of Sciences” at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the field of modeling and simulation (1992). He is holder of a PhD of the Budapest University of Technology (1995). He also graduated as lawyer at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University (2011). His diploma thesis was the authentication of the significant Szekely-Hungarian Rovas relic, a two-page long Rovas document about a Szekely inheritance law from the 18<sup>th</sup> century found in the so-called Patakfalvi Bible (Hosszú 2010b).

In order to enhance the interdisciplinary communication in the comprehensive Rovas research activities, in the recent years, he accomplished graduate courses in Hungarian language history in the Faculty of Humanities at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University and in the Faculty of Humanities at the Eötvös Loránd University.

One of his recent fields of research is computerized paleography. He published conference papers in a peer-reviewed conference on computer science (Hosszú 2010, pp. 5–21 & Tóth et al. 2010, pp. 296–307) and two students created Rovas related Diploma Thesis under his supervising (Dian 2009 & Tóth 2011).

Based on his novel analysis method, the author of this document has several scientific improvements in the Rovas paleography detailed in the book “*Heritage of Scribes*”. E.g.:

- He found that the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas  $\nabla$ AA originated from the Carpathian Basin Rovas  $\nabla$ FORKED E.
- He proved that the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas  $\text{X}$ CLOSE UE was originally created by the duplication of the  $\text{X}$ E similarly to the Latin-based Old Hungarian orthography. Moreover, the original form the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas  $\text{X}$ GY was  $\text{X}$ GY, which is the duplication of the Carpathian Basin Rovas  $\text{X}$ SHORT G.
- He described the applied glyph-forming method “*Line insertion*” in the first stage of the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas. Some Szekely-Hungarian Rovas letters were developed by the modification of the certain Carpathian Basin Rovas glyphs, e.g.  $\nabla$ AA (cf.  $\nabla$ FORKED E),  $\text{X}$ M (cf.  $\text{X}$ OPEN M), and  $\text{X}$ Z (cf.  $\text{X}$ OPEN Z).
- He observed that the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas  $\text{X}$ T is a descendant of the Carpathian Basin Rovas  $\text{X}$ SHARP D, the  $\text{X}$ CH was derived from the Khazarian Rovas  $\text{X}$ ANGLED Q, and  $\text{X}$ TY is a derivative of the Khazarian Rovas  $\text{X}$ CENTRAL T.
- He developed a paleographic analysis method based on the phonemic/phonetic values of each glyph (graphemic symbol), their topological comparisons, moreover the geographical and historical circumstances of the finds.
- Based on the discovered relations, he proposed a systematic description of the Rovas glyphs named *Rovas Atlas*. Using the genealogy of each Rovas character, a *Layered Model* of the evolution of the Rovas scripts was elaborated.
- He improved the transcription of the earliest Szekely-Hungarian Rovas relic, the Bodrog-Alsóbü inscription. Assoc. Prof. Zelliger acknowledged the improved transcription both semantically and linguistically. In such

a way, the author proved the existence of the ǂ OPEN V, which represented the voiced bilabial fricative in the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas.

## 6. Acknowledgement

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