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Transylvania – A Toponymic Perspective

1. Theoretical hypothesis

To study Transylvania from the viewpoint of onomastics is a borderline, interdisciplinary scientific enterprise, a theoretical, methodological and practical endeavour that consists of linguistics, geography, history, sociology and psychology among others. For nearly a thousand years, the intra-Carpathian area has proven to be a multi-ethnic, multicultural, plurilingual and multiconfessional space, an aspect that is also salient on the level of onomastics.

2. Delineating the space investigated

Transylvanian space can be construed in two ways. In the narrow sense, it refers to the plateau enclosed by the Eastern Carpathians, the Southern Carpathians and the Apuseni Mountains. In a broad sense, Transylvania could be considered to include the border regions of Banat, Crișana and Maramureș, where the influence of neighbouring languages (Hungarian, Serbian and Ukrainian) is strongly felt, especially in relation to phonetics, regional vocabulary and proper names.

3. Transylvania – historical framework

To grasp the best picture of Transylvanian specificity in matters of toponymy, a diachronic study is needed. This is the only kind of research that can shed light on the successive language strata which contributed to the formation of contemporary onomastic landscape.

In Romania, like in other geographical areas, onomastics offers evidence for the ethnolinguistic particularity that resulted from the cohabitation or passage of several peoples through the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space. Thus, in Transylvania the first linguistic traces date from Thraco-Dacian, which is, like Greek and the Celtic languages, an Indo-European language. The Latin stratum is subsequent, ensuing from the century-long Roman influence and rule.[1] The withdrawal of Roman authorities was expedited by the successive waves of nomads, many of whom did not leave any traces on onomastics. The Slavs are an exception: the remarkable impact they had on the already formed Romanian language constituted its superstratum.

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[1] Due to the fact that there are no accounts from the time before and during the formation of the Romanian language, it was impossible to establish toponyms of Latin origin with certainty.

In the second millennium AD, Transylvania was subject to various constant influences: Hungarian (as a result of vicinity), German (through the colonisation of the Saxons and Swabians in particular) and Modern Slavic (due to the Romanians' abutting several Slavic peoples: Ukrainian, Polish, (Czech-) Slovak, Serbian and Bulgarian).

4. Toponyms

From the viewpoint of methodology, toponyms will be analysed according to the type of place designated. Starting from the socio-geographical categories of toponyms, both macrotoponyms and microtoponyms will be considered. As regards formal structure, "one notices the preference in major toponyms for simple constructions, while minor toponyms mostly consist of derived and compound constructions" (ELR 1989: 309, orig. Romanian, my translation). By preserving words and forms from the languages of the peoples that were in contact with Transylvania, toponyms offer an irrefutable ethnolinguistic image of the multi-ethnic configuration in this part of Romania. To better understand place names, one can draw a comparison with geographical folk terminology found especially in microtoponymy. Thus, toponymic terms "fall into three distinct groups: a) general terms encountered in literary language and in most subdialects of the Romanian language; b) terms used in literary language and in some of the subdialects, but with different meanings; c) terms not employed in literary language, but with a strictly local use" (DELR 2009: 3, orig. Romanian, my translation).

Most of the terms in the first group pertain to scientific geographical terminology, with certain *vs.* debatable/controversial origin, or multiple etymology in

- the autochthonous stratum: *buză* 'peak' cf. Albanian *buzë; mal* 'bank, shore' cf. Albanian *mall* 'mountain'; *măgură* 'hill' cf. Albanian *magullë; strungă* 'peak' cf. Albanian *shtrungë;*

- Latin: *câmp* 'field' < *campus; coastă* '(hill/mountain) side' < *costa; munte* 'mountain' < *montem; râpă* 'ravine' < *ripa; râu* 'river' < *rivus;*

- Old Slavic: *slatină* 'salt-water mineral spring' < *slatina; vârf* 'peak' < *vrŭhŭ; zăvoi* 'grove' < *zavoj,* Slavic: *drum* 'road' < *drumŭ,* cf. Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian *drum; ponor* 'sinkhole' < *ponorŭ; sălişte* 'pasture' < *selište,* + Modern Slavic languages: *lan* 'field' < Ukrainian *lan; laz* 'clearing' < Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian *laz; ogor* 'field' < Bulgarian *ugar,* Serbo-Croatian *ugar,* cf. Polish *ugor* 'fallow'; *stan* 'rock' < Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian *stan; ştiubei* 'well' < Ukrainian *štub; ştioalnă* 'marshy pond' < *štol'na,* German *Stollen;*

– Hungarian: *glod* 'mud' < *gálád* 'mud'; *holdă* 'field' < *hold* 'yoke (unit of measurement)'; *hulă* 'cavity' < *hulla* 'cavity'; *iosag* 'land, estate' < *jószág; imaş* 'grassland' < *nyomás; rât* 'lowland' < *rét; tău* 'pond' < *tó;*

– German: *şură* 'barn' < *Schur; troacă* 'riverbed' < *Trok;*

– modern languages: *scară* 'terraced land' < Latin *scala,* cf. French *échelle,* Italian *scala; terasă* 'terrace' < French *terrasse,* German *Terrasse,* cf. Italian *terrazza; teren* 'land' < French *terrain;*

– internal formations: *ariniş* 'alder grove' < *arin* 'alder' + suffix *-iş; podiş* 'plateau' < *pod* 'bridge' + suffix *-iş; tăietură* 'gully; deforested land' < *tăia* 'to cut' + suffix *-ătură; trecătoare* 'pass' < *trece* 'to pass' + suffix *-ătoare.*

As one can see, most toponymic terms are particularly of Latin origin, but there are some of Slavic origin as well. Put differently, they date from the old period of the formation of the Romanian language and the first subsequent centuries. The input of the other languages to folk geographical terminology is less significant and only refers to terms pertaining to microtoponymy. The historical stratification of toponyms is correlated with that of Romanian common words. The study of toponymic terms is essential because they occur in various categories of place names as determiners or heads of phrases. As GH. BOLOCAN (DELR 2009: 8, orig. Romanian, my translation) pointed out, "the system of toponymic terminology in a language is tightly intertwined with the system of toponyms, and defining them can only be achieved by relating one system to the other".

The sources of toponymisation comprise appellatives, especially general toponymic terms (*Apa* 'the water', *Calea* 'the way/road', *Măgura* 'the hill', *Valea* 'the valley') or regional ones[2] (*Bărcu* 'grove' – Hungarian *Nagyberek, Bobeica* 'round-peak hill', *Cristurile* < Hungarian toponym *Keresztúr* < *kereszt* 'cross' + *úr* 'sir'; *Tinoasa* < *tină* 'mud' + suffix *-oasa*), anthroponyms (given names, nicknames and bynames: *Codlea, Harghita, Haţeg, Zagra*) and toponyms *(Oltişoru, Vatra Dornei).*

As elements specific to multi-ethnic and border areas, one must mention multiple toponyms, which designate the same entity in different regions. Dual names are the most frequent instances of multiple toponyms. They "reveal significant diversity in relation to the historical circumstances that determined their occurrence and the linguistic mechanisms of their formation" (ELR 2001: 582–583, orig. Romanian, my translation). The most common situations are when

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[2] Only words connected with Transylvanian space are mentioned.

– Romanian names are phonetically transposed into other languages: Romanian *Căprioara* > Hungarian *Kaprevár;* Romanian *Crăciunel* > Hungarian *Karácsonyfalva;* Romanian *Culăuţi* > German *Kallowtze;* Romanian *Rogoz* > Ukrainian *Rogozna;*

– names in other languages are phonetically transposed into Romanian: Hungarian *Kápolna* > Romanian *Căpâlna;* Serbo-Croatian *Râşava* > Romanian *Râşaua;* German *Rotbach* > Romanian *Rotbav;* Hungarian *Vargyas* > Romanian *Vărghiş;* German *Weisskirch* > Romanian *Viscri;*

– correspondence exists between derivative or compounding elements in Romanian and other languages: Romanian *Albeşti* ~ Hungarian *Feriháza/ Fehéregyháza* ~ German *Weisskirch;* Romanian *Bucureni* ~ Hungarian *Bokorfalva;* Romanian *Feldioara* ~ Hungarian *Földvár;* Romanian *Râşnov* ~ Saxon *Rosenau;*

– there are translated names: Slavic *Bălgrad* ~ Romanian *Alba Iulia* ~ Hungarian *Gyulafehérvár* ~ German *Weisenburg Stuhl;* Romanian *Râu Bărbat* ('the man river') ~ Hungarian *Borbátvíz;* Romanian *Valea Seacă* ('the dry valley') ~ Slavic *Sohodol* (Hungarian *Aranyosszohodol*).

As Ion Toma (ELR 2001: 583) underlined, multiple toponyms may also result from the different evolution of an initially unique name in two languages (Romanian *Dunăre* ~ Slavic *Dunav* ~ Hungarian *Duna;* Romanian *Mureş* ~ Hungarian *Maros*) or from the independent formation of names that are semantically unrelated: Romanian *Braşov* ~ German *Kronstadt;* Romanian *Pişchia* ~ Hungarian *Hidasliget* ~ German *Bruckenau;* German *Rotbach* ~ Hungarian *Szászveresmart;* Romanian *Teliu* ~ German *Kreuzburg.* One may also include in this category dialectal dual names with folk variants, such as *Petroşeni* ~ *Petroşani* and *Zalău* ~ *Zălau.* A special case consists of instances of folk etymology, in which certain toponyms were translated inaccurately: Hungarian *Apahida* 'the father's bridge' ~ Romanian *Apa Hâdă* 'the ugly water'; Hungarian *Csíkszereda* 'the centre of Ciuc' ~ Romanian *Miercurea Ciuc;*[3] Romanian *Sebeşel* (< *Sebeş* + suffix *-el*) ~ Hungarian *Sebeshely* (< *Sebeş* + *hely* 'area, place').

4.1. Oronyms

Due to their physical prominence and stability through time, mountains have been named ever since the prehistoric era, but the names passed down from Antiquity are scarce. Of these, one can include in the Thraco-Dacian stratum only the oronym *Carpaţi,* perhaps alongside *Bucegi* and *Parâng,* while the

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[3] The meaning 'middle, centre', appropriate in this context, was replaced with an unsuitable meaning of the Hungarian word for 'Wednesday'.

Latin stratum did not leave any traces[4] except for some generic toponymic terms regarding, for instance, relief and colour. The Slavic superstratum is salient in Romanian oronymy, just like the Germanic influence is in Western Romance languages. Several examples derived from appellatives are *Bregul* < Slavic *bregŭ* 'precipice, knoll', *Glava* < Slavic *glava* 'head' and *Camena* < Slavic *camenĭ* 'rock'. At the same time, the Slavic suffix *-na* indicates the geographical characteristic of a place and occurs in a long series of toponyms in Transylvania: *Crasna* (< Slavic *kras* 'beauty'), *Radna* (Hungarian variant for *Rodna*), *Rodna* (< Slavic *rud(a)* 'metal', 'red earth', with *u* > *o* in Hungarian),[5] *Zlatna* (< Slavic *zlatĭ* 'gold'). Some examples of oronyms based on Slavic anthroponyms are *Brătila, Budislavul* and *Leaota*.

Certain names travelled through several languages, a fact that has raised etymological debates. For instance, *Bihor* experienced a linguistic-historical journey through Romanian, Slavic and Hungarian, presented *in extenso* by Ion Toma (2015: 128–129): the word has been documented since the tenth century, and the most likely scientific hypothesis rests on the Old Romanian word *buăr* (< Latin *bubalus*), "heard by the Slavs as **buhăr* and transformed into *bihor.* The toponym *Bihor,* phoneticised by the Slavs, 'returned' to the Romanians. The Hungarians borrowed it from them as *Bihor*" (orig. Romanian, my translation), which turned into *Bihar,* a variant that also resulted in the derivative *Biharia.*

Names of mountains and peaks of Hungarian origin are *Ciucaș, Hășmaș* (in the Eastern Carpathians), *Meseș* (the Apuseni Mountains), *Oaș* (< Hungarian *avas* 'deforested land'),[6] although Onufrie Vințeler underpins an Indo-European etymon with the root *oș-, aș-, uș-* (2010: 173–178).[7]

4.2. Hydronyms

Like mountains, waters have been among the first natural bodies individualised by means of names, due to their socio-geographical importance and endurance through time. The aspect and constitutive elements of hydronyms prove the existence of several levels: autochthonous, inherited, Slavic, other origins and

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[4] The reason lies in the lack of sources, due to the deterioration of education and culture in Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space in the age of migrations after the fourth century AD.

[5] In Saxon the counterpart is *Rodnă.* "The Slavic name *Ruda* appears as a simple, compound or derivative form in the toponymy of neighbouring countries: Slovenian *Rudna Gora, Rudnik;* Serbian *Rudna, Rudno;* Ukrainian *Rudno, Porudno;* Slovak *Rudina, Rudna;* Croatian *Rudenice, Rudničko [...];* Polish *Rudnik*" (Toma 2015: 232, orig. Romanian, my translation).

[6] For details see Felecan, N.–Felecan, D. 2010: 260.

[7] In Hungarian specialised literature, the following explanation exists: the names *Ciucaș, Hășmaș, Meseș* and *Oaș* are formed in Hungarian – *Csukás, Hagymás, Meszes* and *Avas,* respectively – with the suffix *-s,* meaning '[about a place] rich in' (*csuka* 'a pike,' *mész* 'lime,' *hagyma* 'onion,' *ó* 'old' + *-s* suffix). The Hungarian word *avas* means 'old, aged forest'.

internal formations. Studies carried out so far show that names of watercourses are closely linked to the length of the rivers. The longer the river, the likelier it is that the etymon of its name refers to an older root (see FELECAN, O.–FELECAN, N. 2015: 252–269). As regards Transylvania, rivers that are more than 500 km long have names with Indo-European or Thraco-Dacian roots, which makes it more difficult to decode their meaning: *Mureş (< Maris(os)* < Indo-European root **mar-* 'water'), *Olt (< Alutus* < Indo-European root **el-/*ol-* 'to flow'), *Tisa (< Tisia* < Dacian etymon **Tibisio,* from the Indo-European root **thib-* 'muddy' *< *ti* 'to soak, to flow'[8]).[9] Some of the Transylvanian rivers whose length ranges between 200 and 500 km bear Thraco-Dacian names transmitted via Latin *(Buzău < Mouseos, Criş < Crisia, Someş < Samus),* while others have Slavic names *(Bistriţa < bistrŭ* 'clear, fast stream', *Târnava < *Trŭnava < trŭnŭ* 'thorn (bush)' + suf. *-ava).*[10] Names of watercourses that do not reach 200 km in length have various origins in the substratum – *Bârzava* < Thracian *berzava,* related to Slavic *brŭzŭ* 'fast' (see FRĂŢILĂ 2011: 29); *Mara* < radical *mar-* 'water', cf. Sanskrit *mara,* Celtic *mor,* Latin *mare,* Slavic *mare; Săsar* < Indo-European **sar, *ser-* 'water, flow' (FELECAN, N. 2011: 11–14) –, with Latin mediation. Other such names originate in borrowings from the peoples with whom the Romanians have established contacts in Transylvania, e.g. the Slavs: *Bistra* (see above), *Cerna < črŭnŭ* 'black'; the Hungarians: *Lăpuş (< lápos* 'marshy'), *Măgheruş (< mogyorós* 'covered with hazelnut trees'), *Şieu (< sajó* 'fast/salty river'); and the Germans: *Vaser (< Wasser* 'water'), *Fischer* (also as the Romanianised form *Fişer).* The most recent hydronyms designate smaller water courses. In this category one can also mention Romanian creations, which are numerous in the case of watercourses whose length is less than 100 km. Most names conform to the structure of Romanian hydronyms: they are based on specific appellatives (*izvor* 'spring', *pârâu* 'rivulet', *vale* 'valley'), which may or may not be accompanied by a determiner (*Izvorul Rece* 'the cold spring'). Some result from nominalised adjectives (*Repedea,* from *repede* 'fast'), whereas others are derived with the help of suffixes *(Olteţ)* or based on

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[8] Mentioning several etymologies advanced over the years, ION TOMA (2015: 259–260) considers that both Romanian *Tisa* and Hungarian *Tisza* have a common Slavic etymon: *tisŭ, tisa* 'yew tree'.

[9] The river Mureș is a tributary of the Tisa with a length of 756 km, of which 718.5 km flow through Transylvania. The Olt, a left-side tributary of the Danube, springs like the Mureș from the Hăşmaşul Mare Mountain and is 670 km long. The Tisa has a length of 960 km, of which 62 km make up the border between Romania and Ukraine in Maramureș.

[10] There are several homonymous rivers in Romania (*Bistriţa Albă*, *Bistriţa Aurie*, *Bistriţa Neagră* etc.), but this paper refers to the longest, whose source is in the Rodna Mountains. As a hydronym, *Bistriţa* appears under various forms (five in Romanian) in all the Slavic areas in Central Europe and in Greece (see TOMA 2015: 128). As regards *Târnava,* there are, in fact, two rivers: *Târnava Mare* ('the large Târnava', 230 km) and *Târnava Mică* ('the small Târnava', 183 km) (see FRĂŢILĂ 2002: 158–159).

anthroponyms (*Bâlea Lac* 'lake Bâlea'). Moreover, there are rare instances of compound structures (*Valea lui Mihai* 'Michael's valley').

As Gʜ. Bᴏʟᴏᴄᴀɴ (1975: 583, orig. Romanian, my translation) noted, "about 3000 names of bodies of water are at the same time names of settlements. To the greatest extent, this overlapping can be accounted for through the extension of the name from bodies of water to settlements", but the reverse process is also recorded.

4.3. Oikonyms

As opposed to oronyms and hydronyms, oikonyms appeared later, but received more attention in historical sources, due to their social and economic significance. Despite this aspect, no settlement name has been preserved since Antiquity, be it Dacian *(Cumidava, Germisara, Sarmizegetusa)* or Roman *(Apulum, Porolissum, Potaissa),* although contemporary oikonymy contains direct traces of the Dacian substratum *(Turda)*[11] or elements imposed by the administration in the 1970s: *Drobeta, Napoca.*[12] The disappearance of Dacian oikonyms, with the specific formants *dava* 'citadel, stronghold' and *sara* 'water', and Roman oikonyms can be explained through the decay of urban civilisation, as a result of the imperial authorities' leaving Dacia and the successive invasions of migrating peoples. The settlements that appeared instead of the former localities received new names, originating in the language of the inhabitants (Romanians, Slavs and Hungarians among others): Latin *Alburnus Maior* ~ Romanian *Roşia Montană* ~ Hungarian *Verespatak,* Latin *Apulum* ~ Slavic *Bălgrad* ~ Romanian *Alba Iulia* ~ Hungarian *Gyulafehérvár.*

As regards the origin of oikonyms in Transylvania, a linguistic hodgepodge can be noticed, referring to the peoples that crossed these lands or lived together in the area. Whether one considers names of towns or villages, the Slavic influence consists of derivatives with specific suffixes *(Bucovăţ, Lipova, Ruscova).* The Hungarian stratum is omnipresent in the Ardeal due to the century-long cohabitation and rule in this region: *Aiud* ~ *Nagyenyed*, *Beiuş* ~ *Belényes*, *Fărcaşa* ~ *Farkasaszó*, *Ieud* ~ *Jód*, *Sighet* ~ *Máramarossziget*. As identifying elements of Hungarian oikonyms, one can mention the local suffix *-d (Arad, Oradea* ~ *Nagyvárad)* and the pseudo-suffix *vár* 'town'

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[11] Iᴏɴ Tᴏᴍᴀ (2015: 260–261) reviews several etymological assumptions, such as the Hungarian, Slavic, Latin and autochthonous origins.

[12] For details see Fᴇʟᴇᴄᴀɴ, O. (2017: 83): "Influenced by Thracian-Dacian ideological and historical movements, Ceauşescu encouraged and elaborated the cultural and historical discourse, claiming the superiority of autochthonous culture over any foreign influence. Under the national-communist ideology, the secretary general of the Romanian Communist Party became directly involved in the shaping of national history along the lines of expressing the Romanians' pride of having Latin origins".

(Hunedoara ~ Hunyadvár, Sighişoara ~ Segesvár, Timişoara ~ Temesvár).
"Germanic settlement names result from the influence of Saxon subdialects
(Agnita ~ Agnetheln, Ghimbav ~ Weidenbach, Lancrăm ~ German Langendorf,
Saxon *Lankenderf)* or Swabian ones *(Berthausen, Lenauheim, Liebling)*" (ELR
2001: 394, orig. Romanian, my translation). In the past century, due to the
reconfiguration of borders and the shifts of political regimes, several changes
appeared in Transylvanian oikonymy. The reasons were political, ethnic,
religious, social, economic, ethical and aesthetic, and they were presented at
length by FELECAN, O. (2016: 439–453).

4.4. Hodonyms

Among place names, hodonyms are the newest and the most exposed to changes
brought about by the administrative authorities as a result of their political
orientation and majority ethnic configuration. In what follows only the past
century will be reviewed, as it is onomastically eloquent for Transylvanian space.
In general, the picturesque and expressive traditional urbanonymy was preserved
in medieval settlements. "For instance, the streets *Bastionului* [< *bastion*
'rampart'], *Cositorarilor* [< *cositor* 'haymaker'], *Mănăstirii* [< *mănăstire*
'monastery'], *Scării* [< *scară* 'ladder; stairway'], *Şcolii* [< *şcoală* 'school'] and
Zidul Cetăţii ['city wall'] in Sighişoara are reminiscent of the medieval past of
the Saxon town, and their preservation in contemporary street nomenclature is
a means of touristic promotion for the Transylvanian settlement" (FELECAN,
O. 2013: 327, orig. Romanian, my translation). In most localities, street names
mirrored the ethnicity of the majority that at one point held the administrative
reins. Until World War I names of streets in Transylvania were entirely Hungarian.
After 1918 the Romanian state imposed names that were especially given "after
key figures or symbols of the Romanians' struggle for unity (*Calea Regele
Ferdinand* 'King Ferdinand Road', *Piaţa Unirii* 'Union Square') and historical
figures from the Dacian-Roman period: *Calea Traian* ('Traian Road'), *Dacia,
Decebal, Romulus, Remus*" (FELECAN, O. 2015: 231). The 1940s marked the
return to Hungarian names in a part of Transylvania as a result of the Second
Vienna Award, whereas after World War II hodonymy was subject to extreme
politicisation, a common practice of communist authorities. After freedom was
regained in 1989, ideologically corrupted names were mostly eliminated and
democratic criteria were adopted in the act of naming thoroughfares, which
would include Romanian, Hungarian, German and international names, as well
as means of indicating roads with the help of bilingual signs whenever ethnic
minorities made up 20 percent of the population.[13]

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[13] For an overview of hodonymy in Transylvania, see FELECAN, O. 2013: 318–328, 2015: 229–
244.

5. Concluding remarks

Diachronically, although names transmitted from Antiquity are scarce, therefore a minority among toponyms, they become representative due to their socio-geographical importance (*Carpați, Dunăre,* etc.).

Research into onomastics in multi-ethnic and multicultural regions like Transylvania implies a complex endeavour, which could lead to certain errors. An example in this respect is the undifferentiated interpretation of toponymy that may be of various origins (Slavic, Hungarian, German and others), without discriminating between the toponyms created by the people speaking a certain language and those created by another people (e.g. the Romanians) with foreign elements. Another example refers to pseudo-Slavic and pseudo-Hungarian toponyms and anthroponyms, noticeable as a result of their being recorded in documents written in Slavic and Hungarian during the Middle Ages. The lack of Romanian writings due to the political administration in office at a certain point cannot be associated with the absence of Romanian onomastics.

Another feature of Transylvanian space is the phenomenon of dual and even triple names. Diachronically, depending on state power and official language, one comes across Romanian, Hungarian and German names for the same entity. Synchronically, current laws allow for the use of minority languages at all levels, including in official documents or on signposts indicating multi-ethnic settlements. Thus, the parallel employment of names according to speakers' ethnicity has become a defining characteristic of Transylvanian space.

Also noteworthy is the case of toponymic homonymy, that is, identical names designating different places. Against a limited spatial horizon, homonyms originated in toponymic transfer (e.g. from place name to oikonym). On a broad toponymic level (in Transylvania), "homonyms usually resulted from the coincidence of the structural model that brought about toponymisation and the formants included in this pattern" (Toma 2015: 43, orig. Romanian, my translation).

Specific to Transylvania and any other multi-ethnic space are toponymic polyonyms, or multiple toponyms: different names (in Romanian, Hungarian, German, etc.) are successively or simultaneously borne by the same entity according to the speakers or administration in a certain age.

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Abstract

As a part of Central European space, Transylvania displays a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multireligious and plurilingual configuration, developed across centuries through the coexistence of several ethnic groups.

This particularity is also salient in onomastics, increasing research complexity regardless of the category of proper names considered. My study approaches the general features of this onomastic *mixtum compositum* diachronically and synchronically. For every onomastic category (anthroponyms, toponyms, chrematonyms, etc.) Transylvania provides evidence for the coexistence of names of different origins, with distinctive uses throughout history, e.g. toponyms: Romanian *Chişardău* < Hungarian *Kiserdő* 'grove' < *kis* 'small' + *erdő* 'forest'; oikonyms: Slavic *Bălgrad* ~ Romanian *Alba Iulia* ~ Hungarian *Gyulafehérvár* ~ German *Weissburg Stuhl;* hodonyms: *Strada Gării* ~ *Állomás utca* ('Train Station Street').

Different names borne successively/simultaneously by the same place/person are due to the administration in office during a certain age, the preference of a community/person for a specific variant, the majority ethnic configuration and other reasons. The investigated material includes names phonetically transcribed into other languages (Romanian *Crăciunel* > Hungarian *Karácsonyfalva*), names with equivalents of derivational/compounding elements (Romanian *Albeşti* ~ Hungarian *Fehérháza* ~ German *Weisskirch*), independent names (Romanian *Pişchia* ~ Hungarian *Hidasliget* ~ German *Bruckenau*) and names that seem to be incorrect translations (Hungarian *Csíkszereda* "the centre of Ciuc" > Romanian *Miercurea Ciuc*).

Keywords: toponymy, Transylvania, oronyms, hydronyms, oikonyms, hodonyms