A FEW REMARKS ON THE FOREST TERMINOLOGY IN ROMANIAN

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ABSTRACT

In this article we discuss several important elements related to the forest terminology in Romanian. Firstly, *there is stated the Latin origin of most tree names and of the generic terms designating a forest. Then*, *we introduce several classifications of this exceptionally rich linguistic material: wooded areas* (*in general*), *treeless spaces in the forest*, *trees and forests dominated by certain tree types*; *forests large and small*, *old and young*, *thick and sparse*; *treeless spaces in the forests – natural or done by human intervention* (*either by burning the trees or by cutting them down*). *We underline the richness and variety of the lexical families formed by derivation. We also mention local lexical variants. The more significant terms are associated with numerous related toponyms and anthroponyms which demonstrates the oldness and importance of this popular terminology in the Romanian language.*

Key words: *forest*, *tree*, *terminology*, *word*, *Latin* (*language*)

The analysis of the forest terminology is thematically included in the research of how the Romanian vocabulary was formed and has been growing richer. The importance of a lexical-semantic field results, among other things, from the efficiency of its components, from their capacity to generate new words and to get into phrases, idioms and proverbs.

The forest terminology has an important place in the assembly of the Romanian vocabulary because of its *oldness*, *great geographical dissemination* and *richness.* One shouldn't ignore either the concentration or the systemization of this exemplary lexical assembly.

It is also important from another perspective: *as historical argument.* Where the historical sources are quite scarce, the research of the linguistic material yields precious clues. For example, in Romanian, all the names of the trees *typical for the mountain areas* are either of Latin origin[1] (e.g. *carpen* ["hornbeam"] < Lat. *CARPINUS*, *cer* ["cerris"] < Lat. *CERRUS*, *fag* ["beech"] < Lat. *FAGUS*, *frasin* ["ash-tree"] < Lat. *FRAXINUS*, *jugastru* ["common maple"] < Lat. *JUGASTER*, *-ASTRUM*, *mesteacăn* ["birch-tree"] < Lat. *MASTICHINUS*, *paltin* ["sycamore maple"] < Lat. *PLATANUS*, *pin* ["pine-tree"] < Lat. *PINUS*, *plop* ["poplar-tree"] < Lat. *POPULUS*, *sorb* ["rowan-tree"] < Lat. *SORBUS*, *ulm* ["elm-tree"] < Lat. *ULMUS*, *zadă* ["larch-

[1] See especially: Ioan-Aurel Candrea, Ovid Densusianu, *Dicționarul etimologic al limbii române* (*elementele latine*), Bucureşti & Piteşti, Editura Paralela 45, 2003.

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tree”] < Lat. *DAEDA/TAEDA*) or from the substratum (*brad* [“fir-tree”], *stejar* [“oak-tree”]). There are few tree names of other origins (*gârniță* [“Hungarian oak”] < Bulgarian and Serbian “granica”, *gorun* [“common oak”] < Bulgarian and Serbian “gorun”, *plută* [“Lombardy poplar”] < Serbo-Croatian “plut”, *răchită* [“osier willow”] < Bulgarian “rakita”, *salcâm* [“locust-tree”] < Turkish “salkim”). Is this a clue to something bigger? It might be. This “etymological terracing” of the tree names indicates that the migratory populations came especially in the lower areas (of hills and plains) of our ancestors’ territory.

We distinguish between the “forest terminology” and the “forest management and timber processing terminology”: the former includes popular and regional words and it is double-layered, both *in time* (diachronic) and *in space* (synchronic), whereas the latter is widely modern and consists of specialized technical terms (forestry and timber processing), mainly neologisms taken from neo-Latin languages.

As the forest terminology is a vast and complex field of research, we considered it scientifically productive to distinguish three main lexical-semantic subgroups in the respective lexical mass.

They are structured as follows:

- forest-related words (both generic and specific);
- tree-related words;
- names of treeless places in the woods (done naturally or by human intervention);

The research of this linguistic material requires a combination of methods belonging to several linguistic branches, such as: onomasiology, semantics, linguistic geography, language history. Its bordering on several extra-linguistic domains such as botany, forestry, geography, history, compels us to use information and methods belonging to these scientific areas, too.

The forest terminology is a valuable field of research yet from another point of view – due to its power of dissemination, *toponymy*, *anthroponymy*, *phraseology* and *paroemiology* are the best examples.

The criteria required to include a word in the lexical complex we studied were: firstly, the reference to *an extended group of trees*, *structured in a biological*, *economic and social complex* and, secondly, *the predomination of large woody species*. From the very beginning, we decided to study both the forest as a whole and as sections of forests.

We supposed and the subsequent analysis confirmed that the words included in the forest terminology compose a *socio-terminology*[2], in the sense that *systemization is not rigorous and standardized*, *but reflects the “order” of natural language facts*, where oppositions, analogies, identities – either in form or in meaning – are sometimes symmetrical, at other times

[2] Angela Bidu-Vrănceanu, “Terminologie şi lingvistică”, în *Studii lingvistice. Omagiu profesoarei Gabriela Pană Dindelegan*, *la aniversare*, Bucureşti, Editura Universității din Bucureşti, 2007: 231.

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asymmetrical, sometimes extended, at other times limited, sometimes explicit, at other times implicit.

Analysis is the dominant method of our study and its starting point is the *onomasiological vision*. The material is selected from various lexicographic sources:

A) words naming wooded areas, in general;

B) words naming treeless spaces in the forest;

C) words naming tree species and forest places made up *exclusively* or *mostly* by certain tree species.

Besides the generic terms "*arbore – copac – lemn – pom*"[3], essential for the superordination of the entire tree-name series, there are also the *denominative syntagms* in which various tree-names are followed by adjectives (e.g. *castan sălbatic* "wild chestnut-tree", *pin moale* "soft pine-tree", *plop tremurător* "trembling poplar", *răchită verde* "green willow", *salce aurită* "golden willow", *stejar brumăriu* "greyish oak-tree", *tei bun* "good lime-tree") or by nouns in various cases (e.g. *paltin de munte* "mountain sycamore maple", *pin de piatră* "stone pine", *plop de pădure* "forest pine", *tei de toamnă* "autumn lime-tree"; *castanul calului* "the horse's chestnut-tree", *răchita plângerii* "the weeping willow").

The first category (**A**), referring to words designating wooden areas in general, includes the (**a1**) subcategory: <u>generic terms properly</u>, known and used in all diachronic, diatopic and diastratic language varieties, making up the *functional nucleus* of this terminological field (e.g. *PĂDURE* "forest", *CODRU* "woods", *CRÂNG* "grove", *DUMBRAVĂ* "coppice", *LUNCĂ* "water meadow", *ZĂVOI* "riverside coppice").

The second (**a2**) subcategory includes <u>generic terms with a limited functional scope</u> from the geographical, historical and stylistic point-of-view (e.g. *apărătură*, *bunget*, *crivină*, *pâlc*, *plavie*, *vlăsie*). Their enumeration illustrates *the richness of this terminological corpus*, which may have an extralinguistic cause: the intensity of the presence of this reality in Romanians' life along the centuries.

Particularly interesting are (**b**) the terms <u>semantically marked</u> as far as (**b1**) *size*, (**b2**) *age*, (**b3**) *density* is concerned, but still preserving the idea of "wooded area, in general". We think they perfectly illustrate a deeper observation horizon, as they particularize the forest as well as the parts of forest. For instance, <u>size</u> is underlined in: [+][4] *codru*, *pădure*, *tamină*; [-][5] *chichiriş*, *tufăreag*; <u>age</u> is highlighted in: [+] *bunget*, *branişte*; [-]

[3] "tree – fruit tree". The reader is warned that, because this paper deals with the forest terminology in Romanian, many popular terms cannot be translated into English or in any other language, for that matter. Whenever the translation was possible, we provided it. On the other hand, it is remarkable that all these four words are *inherited* (either from Latin or from the substratum).

[4] The words following the [+] sign designate a **large/old/thick** forest.

[5] The words following the [-] sign designate a **small/young/sparse** forest.

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ciret, *huceag*, *mladă*, *nivă*, *târşet*; density is emphasized in: [+] *buhac*, *frunzăriş*, *hăţiş*, *hişteag*, *smidă*, *tufă*; [-] *zarişte*, *zăbran.*

A certain lack of balance between the terms expressing the positive side of the three charateristics and those expressing the negative side is the result of the *subjective perspective of the average speaker.* Thus, "small" forests are more numerous than the "large" ones, "young" forests are more than the "old" ones, and "thick" forests are more than the "sparse" ones. This subjective horizon seems to be rooted in the evolution of the reality named "forest" in the course of time: the age-old forests are less and less numerous, the huge tree groups no longer survive the "progress of civilization".

The (**B**) barren places in the forest actually designate the total or partial lack of trees. These names are based on the "relative negativity"[6] principle. By the degree of barrenness, they fall into three classes: wooded places where the barenness is *minimal* (e.g. *rarişte*, *alesătură*, *dumbrăveală*, *ierişte*, *răret*, *răriş*, *răritură*, *tufăriş*), treeless places surrounded by forest; the barrenness is *medium* (e.g. *poiană*, *colnic*, *cureac*, *golişte*, *golitură*, *limpeziş*, *luminiş*, *ocheţ*, *ochi*, *prelucă*, *silvană*, *târsă*, *târsătură*, *târselişte*, *târşeală*, *târşitură*, *toporâşte*, *zarişte*, *zănoagă*, *zăpodie*) and deforested places – where, in the past, there used to be a forest; the barrenness is *maximal* (e.g. *curătură*, *arsură*, *brăştineală*, *ciotărie*, *curăţitură*, *dărăcuitură*, *jarişte*, *laz*, *leş*, *oaş*, *pârjol*, *pârjolişte*, *pârlitură*, *runc*, *scoţătură*, *secătură*, *seci*, *sihlă*, *tăietură*, *trăsnitură*).

Interestingly, in most of these words the reference to the forest is the result of a *change*, *opposition* and even *transfer of meaning* (through metaphor, metonymy or synecdoche).

In this lexical-semantic subgroup, the "seed" terms are *poiană* "clearing", *rarişte* "glade", *curătură*, *tăietură*, *laz*.

Another classification of the barren places in the forest takes into account *the human intervention.* Two terminological classes follow: natural barren places (e.g. *poiană*, *alan*, *alesătură*, *bărc*, *bârc*, *câmpăşel*, *câmpuţ*, *cerdăcel*, *colnic*, *dumbrăveală*, *goleşitură*, *goliş*, *golişte*, *golitură*, *ierişte*, *limpeziş*, *luminiş*, *ocheţ*, *ochi*, *peringi*, *poieniş*, *prelucă*, *pripor*, *pustă*, *rarişte*, *răret*, *răriş*, *răriştiş*, *răritură*, *trăsnitură*, *tufăriş*, *zarişt*,) and barren spaces due to human intervention (either by burning the trees: *arsură*, *ardişte*, *arsătură*, *arsişte*, *arşiţă*, *jar*, *jarişte*, *jaroste*, *jerişte*, *pârjol*, *pârjolişte*, *pârlitură*, *pârliţă*, *pojeritură* – or by cutting them down: *tăietură*, *belitură*, *brăniştească*, *ciotărie*, *corăţitură*, *curăţătură*, *defrişare*, *degajare*, *despădurire*, *exploatare*, *gărână*, *gărincă*, *hopşnet*, *laz*, *leş*, *pârlog*, *prisacă*, *scoţătură*, *secătură*, *seci*, *târsă*, *târsătură*, *târselişte*, *târşeală*, *târşitură*, *turşar*, *ţelină*).

Finally, the third main class of forest-related words includes those terms which highlight *the tree species* in their semantic formula: (**C**) trees

[6] Ion Nicolae, *Toponimie geografică*, Bucureşti, Editura Meronia, 2006: 29-32.

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and parts of forests made up *exclusively* or *mostly* by certain tree species.

Thus, we compiled many word families, truly impressive in proportions and in diversity (e.g. from „arin“ – “alder-tree”: arin**ar** – arin**ărie** – arin**et** – arin**iş** – arin**işte**[7]; from „paltin“ – “sycamore maple”: păltin**ărie** – păltinăr**işte** – păltin**et** – păltin**iş** – păltin**işte**[8]; from „pin“ – “pine-tree”: pin**el** – pin**işor** – pin**uț**[9]; from „ulm“ – “elm-tree”: ulm**ărie** – ulm**iş** – ulm**işte**[10]).

The most important tree-related words are *brad* “fir-tree”, *brădet* “fir wood”, *stejar* “oak-tree”, *stejăriş* “oak grove”, *plop* “poplar”, *salcie* “willow”, *salcie pletoasă* “weeping-willow”, *tei* “lime-tree”, *salcâm* “acacia”.

The cause of this extraordinary extension and variety of tree-names and forest-names might be of an objective[11] or a subjective[12] nature.

The most relevant linguistic aspects resulted from the analysis of the words and classes of words included in the forest terminology are the following:

1. The etymological stratification and the words created in Romanian (neither inherited, nor borrowed);
2. Semantic relations: synonymy, polysemy, antonymy;
3. Functional extensions.

As to the etymological stratification of the words included in the forest terminology, one should notice *the functional representativeness of those inherited from Latin* (e.g., *pădure* “forest”, *codru* “woods”, *alun* “hazelnut-tree”, *carpen* “hornbeam”, *fag* “beech-tree”, *frasin* “ash-tree”, *jugastru* “common-maple”, *mesteacăn* “birch-tree”, *pin* “pine-tree”, *plop* “poplar”, *salcie* “willow”, *tei* “lime-tree”), some of which are part-and-parcel of the *basic Romanian vocabulary* (e.g. *fag* “beech-tree”, *pădure* “forest”, *codru* “woods”, *salcie* “willow”, *tei* “lime-tree”), with a certain emphasis on the elements inherited from the substratum (*copac* “tree”, *brad* “fir-tree”, *stejar* “oak-tree”), whose existence and importance demonstrates the role of the forest in our ancestors’ life, the Dacians.

The lexical elements inherited from Latin and the substratum are a decisive argument to back up the idea of the local romanized population’s continuity in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic territory.

Like other major lexical-semantic fields[13] (the agricultural and pastoral terminology, family and kinship terminology; body parts; human-related activities, processes and states; living and food; nature; time), **the forest terminology in Romanian is fundamentally Latin.**

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[7] “alder-tree grove”
[8] “sycamore-maple grove”
[9] “little pine-tree”
[10] “elm-tree grove”
[11] E.g. size, appearance, shape.
[12] E.g. impact on the average speaker.
[13] Cf. Grigore Brâncuş, *Introducere în istoria limbii române*, Bucureşti, Editura Fundației *România de Mâine*, 2004: 30-39.

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The lexical elements of Slavic origin are numerous indeed, but in most cases they have a limited, especially local circulation (e.g. *gârniță*, *plută*, *berezină*, *crivină*, *dubovină*, *gai*, *leasă*, *mladă*, *plavie*, *tamină*, etc.). No lexical families, no idioms and proverbs. Most Slavic elements[14] are known and used only by few people, while for the rest of the speakers they remain totally unfamiliar.

By contrast, the words formed in Romanian at a later stage illustrate not only the importance of the forest along the centuries, but also the impact of this concept in the "collective unconscious" of the Romanians. As one might expect, the most productive words are derived from Latin bases (*pădur**ică** – pădur**ice** – pădur**iță**[15]*; *des**et** – des**ime** – des**iş** – des**işte**[16]*; *mestecăn**et** – mestecăn**iş** – mestecăn**işte**[17]*; *păltin**ărie** – păltinăr**işte** – păltin**et** – păltin**iş** – păltin**işte**[18]*; *rar**işte** – răr**et** – răr**iş**[19]*; *sălc**ime** – sălc**iniş** – sălc**iş**[20]*; *tufăr**ime** – tufăr**iş** – tufăr**işte** – tuf**et** – tuf**iş** – tuf**işte** – tuf**ştină**[21]).

The richness and diversity of the lexical families is doubled by many *series of synonyms* (e.g. *buciumiş – bucov – jirişte – făget*; *anină – crină – arinet – arinişte*; *runc – curătură – laz*; *arsură – ardişte – jarişte – pojeritură*; *colnic – limpeziş – luminiş – ochi – ponor – pustă – răzbunealăă*), and *of antonyms* (e.g. *bărc* 1 – "a type of forest" şi *bărc* 2 – "a treeless place in the forest"; *răriş* "glade" – *desiş* "thicket"), as well as the polysemic plethora of many forest-related words (e.g., *branişte*, *bunget*, *codru*, *crâng*, *crivină*, *dumbravă*, *gărină*). One should not ignore the numerous semantic enrichments as a result of metonymy, synecdoche or metaphor (e.g. *alesătură*[22], *apărătură*[23], *câmpăşel*[24], *câmpuț*[25], *curățitură*[26], *jar*[27], *limpeziş*[28], *luminiş*[29], *ochi*[30], *trăsnitură*[31]).

In this lexical-semantic field, dominated by *popular geographical terms*, synonymy appears in the shape of "*imperfect synonyms*". Besides

[14] With the notable exception of a few words borrowed from the Old Slavic at an early stage (*poiană*, *crâng*, *luncă* etc.)
[15] "small wood"
[16] "thicket"
[17] "birch grove"
[18] "sicamore-maple grove"
[19] "glade"
[20] "willow grove"
[21] "underwood"
[22] related to the Romanian word for "to choose"
[23] related to the Romanian word for "to defend"
[24] related to the Romanian word for "plain"
[25] See footnote 24.
[26] related to the Romanian word for "to clear"
[27] a homonym of the Romanian word for "ember"
[28] related to the Romanian word for "clear"
[29] related to the Romanian word for "light"
[30] a homonym of the Romanian word for "eye"
[31] a homonym of the Romanian word for "thunderbolt"

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these, there are *local variants*, *both phonetic and derivative* (e.g. carp**e**n – carp**i**n[32], cer**e**t – cer**ă**t[33], curăț**ă**tură – curăț**i**tură[34], de**s**ime – de**ş**ime[35], palti**n** – palti**r**[36], r**ă**chită – r**e**chită – r**i**chită[37], run**c** – run**g**[38], salcâ**m** – salcâ**n**[39]), created and preserved at this level – a kind of detailed particularization of the words with wider circulation.

The huge number of toponyms and anthroponyms[40] derived from forest-related words demonstrate its *critical role* in the existence and history of the Romanians.

The *Conclusions* round up the analysis, giving a synthetic perspective on the researched field: **the forest terminology is among the oldest and richest popular terminologies in Romanian.** Therefore, we can draw a historical conclusion: **the forest used to play an essential role in our history**, **culture and civilization**, **being a landmark in the "spiritual make" of traditional Romania.**

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[32] "hornbeam"
[33] "cerris grove"
[34] "deforested place"
[35] "thicket"
[36] "sicamore-maple"
[37] "osier willow"
[38] See footnote 37.
[39] "acacia"
[40] E.g. *Crâng*, *Crângan*, *Crângu*, *Crângaru*, *Crângaşu*, *Crângău*, *Crângeanu*, *Crânghea*, *Crânghia*, *Crângoiu*, *Crânguleanu*, *Crângulescu*, *Crângureanu*, *Crânguş*, *Crânguşi*, *Crângotă*; *Poenar*, *Poenaru*, *Poeana*, *Poeană*, *Poiana*, *Poiană*, *Poienar*, *Poienaru*, *Poienariu*, *Poienaş*, *Poienaşu*, *Poienea*, *Poienoaia*, *Poinescu*; *Brad*, *Bradu*, *Bradul*, *Bradea*, *Brădeanu*, *Brădescu*, *Brădeț*, *Brădiş*, *Brădişor*, *Brăduleț*, *Brăduțan*; *Plop*, *Plopa*, *Plopea*, *Plopceanu*, *Plopeanu*, *Plopeş*, *Plopşa*, *Plopşor*, *Plopşoreanu*, *Plopşereanu*, a.s.o. (see Bibliography).

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