HYDRONYMS IN THE OLT RIVER BASIN ORIGINATING IN APPELLATIVES RELATING TO FLORA[1]

Abstract: *Hydronyms are considered to be the longer lasting and oldest toponyms, and they form a first layer in toponymy, i.e. the hydronym layer. Semantically, they fall into several categories. In this article are discussed the hydronyms in the Olt river basin, which are formed from appellatives relating to flora.*

Key words: *hydronyms, appellatives, toponymy, entopic*

The Romanian hydronyms make up a microsystem that was formed and evolved over the centuries and millennia within the Romanian toponymical system. Watercourses were among the first place names individualized as such, on account of their stability over time, and their special social and geographic importance. Hydronyms, especially the names of the major watercourses and lakes, are considered the oldest toponymical layer, as the late Iorgu Iordan noticed: *the old age of watercourses and mountains is safer, because settlements change their name more easily, but the nomenclature of watercourses, mountains, etc. proves more resilient* (Iordan, Iorgu, 1963: 3)

Human settlements have borne, ever since ancient times, the names of the rivers near which they were formed, and this is accountable for by the extension of the river names to village and town names. What research has to determine is whether there first existed the name of the river, or the name of the village or town.

Research of the hydronymy of a region requires the thorough analysis not only of the rivers and lakes, but also of the names that refer to the concept of "water" in general.

Hydronyms were classified into the following categories: *micro-hydronyms* (names of springs, streams and small rivers) and *macro-hydronyms* (large watercourses, such as the rivers), and then they were further classified into: *potamonyms* (watercourses, or rivers) and *limnonyms* (standing or stagnant waters) (Conea, Ion, 1960: 63-92) .

In terms of semantics, i.e. the object designated, hydronyms, in this case those in the Olt river basin, can be classified, according to Viorica Florea, as:

- Hydronyms originating in the geographical aspects of the places, regarding the flora, fauna, various aspects of the terrain, the water bed and the banks of the watercourse;
- Hydronyms indicating various attributes of the water courses;
- Hydronyms originating in place names;
- Hydronyms which, by their content, express historical and social realities;
- Hydronyms formed from anthroponyms (Florea, Viorica, 1975: 69-76)

We can say that the vegetation was, and is still, used in naming names of watercourses in a given territory; these names originate in appellatives that point to various aspects of flora, especially names of trees or plants, cultivated or not, by man. These names often refer to names of plants or trees which no longer exist today, but were, in the past, representative of a given area.

The terms either occur in the nominative singular form, coming directly from the appellatives, or are formed by derivation with collective suffixes. In this article the

[1] Geantă Adriana Elena, University of Piteşti, adrianageanta@yahoo.com

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hydronyms originating in appellatives used for various aspects of flora in the Olt river basin were analyzed.

AGREŞ (AGRIŞ) – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 15 km long and is a tributary of the river Cormoş, in Covasna county. Its left side tributary is Brăduţ, and, on the right hand side, Pârâul Pietros. The name is derived from the appellative **agriş** (Eng. *gooseberry* "species of tree, a shrub with edible fruit", with the Hungarian etymology. ***egres***).

ALUNIŞ – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 15 km long and is a tributary of the river Valea Gorganului, in Covasna county. The name comes from the entopic **aluniş** "a spot covered in hazelnuts", made up from ***alun*** "hazeltree" + collective suffix ***-iş***.

ALUNOASA – is located in the lower basin of the Olt; it is 14 km long and is a tributary of the Olt river. The name is made from **alun** "hazel" + suffix *-oasa* (a feminine form), involving agreement with the entopic ***apa*** or ***valea (cu apă)*** "water, or valley (along a waterway)": *the valley where hazel trees grow* – so, **Alunoasa**; or from the adjective **alunos** "hazelnutty", through substantivization.

ANINOASA – 1. a stream in the village Bodeşti, rural commune of Alunu, in Vâlcea county. It is located in the middle basin of the Olt, it is 10 km long and is a tributary of the Olteţ river. 2. is located in the lower basin of the Olt, with a length of 13 km, crossing vill. Aninoasa, c. Amărăşti, in Vâlcea county, and flows, to the left, into Pesceana. The name comes from the adjective **aninos** "of the alders" (<*anin* + suffix *-os*) "an alder-grown place", by substantivization. Iorgu Iordan explains ***anin(os)*** **<** ***arin(os)*** "sandy". This watercourse flows through a mountainous area, and the presence of sand here is in contrast to the usual appearance of the terrain.

The homonymy between *anin* / *arin* "alder" (the shrub species), and *arin*(*ă*) "sand" makes it difficult to accurately determine the root that the hydronym was derived from. The absence of the arborescent species, on the one hand, and the sandy aspect of the soil, on the other hand, can explain to some extent the etymology of the name. Actually, the hydronym may reflect a material aspect (with regard to the nature of the soil), or a vegetable one. Emilian Burețea's (Burețea, Emilian, 1994: 118) explanation of **aninoasa** is "a spot where alder trees used to grow".

ARŢĂROASA – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 15 km long and is a tributary of the river Beica, in Olt county. The name comes from **arţar** "maple tree", through derivation with the suffix *-oasa* (feminine form), the agreement being made with the entopic ***apa*** or ***valea (cu apă)*** "the water course or the valley" – so: *the valley where maple trees grow* – **Arţăroasa**.

BRAD(U) – 1. is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 13 km long, crossing the villages Potiond and Armăşeni. It receives Topliţa as its left-side tributary, and the Silaş river on the right side. 2. is located in the middle basin of the Olt, it is 8 km long and is a tributary of the river Jibrea. 3. Bradu creek, located in the lower basin of the Olt, a tributary of the river Priboiasa and flows into Otăsău near vill. Bărbăteşti.

In all the areas of the country, especially in the mountainous regions and in those of pastoral transhumance, there are many names of settlements, watercourses, valleys, mountains and springs containing the appellative *Brad* and its compounds. The wide spreading of the toponym Brad *would be an indication that, in the Dacian era, coniferous forests in our country us were better represented than in later ages* (Brâncuş, Grigore, 1995: 26-27).

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In point of etymology, we can say that those lands were covered with firtrees, hence their name; therefore, we have to do with a name transfer from the water course to another toponym.

BRĂDIŞOR – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 9 km long and is a tributary of Coişca river, in Vâlcea county; it passes through the villages Malaia, Dângeşti and Brădişor. Also known as Valea Mare "Big Valley". It is formed by derivation from **brad** "fir tree"+ the diminutive suffix *-işor*.

BRANIŞTE – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 8 km long, is a tributary of the Cerna river, flows through the villages Bănţeşti, Mărgineni and Valea Mare, in Vâlcea county, and its tributaries are Valea Lungă and Stroiasca.

The name comes from the entopic **branişte** "a place enclosed for a given activity (such as grazing, hunting); a place covered with nut trees; a spot in a forest held off for cutting wood, and trodden (Poruciuc, *Lexicon,* Rotaru, Oprescu, *Lexicon*); a forest reserved for conservation; enclosed or preservation forest, reserve"(DLR, Scriban, DEX) . Hence, the *branişti* were places reserved or enclosed seats, where no one was allowed to come to graze their cattle, to hunt, to catch fish, to collect the fruit in the forest, to cut firewood, to mow hay, without the owner's permission. The word is of Slavic origin: **braniti** "to stop, not to allow".

BUJOREANCA – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 7 km long, passing through vill. Bujoreni, in Vâlcea county, and is a tributary of the Olt. The name comes from the toponym **Bujoreni** + suffix *-eanca*.

CARPEN – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 8 km long and is a tributary of the river Caşin, in Harghita county. The name comes from the entopic **carpen** "a place covered with a forest made up of beech, oak, fir, hornbeam, ashtree, willow, poplar, etc. "(*cf.* Lat. ***carpinus***).

CĂRPENIŞ – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 9 km long and the name comes by derivation from the entopic **carpen** "hornbeam" with the collective suffix *-iş* (<**cărpeniş** "a spot covered with hornbeam forest").

CEAPA – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 11 km long and the name comes from the appellative **ceapă** "onion".

COPĂCIOASA – is located in the middle basin of the Olt, it is 12 km long, passing through the village Copăcel, in Braşov county, and is a tributary of the river Berivoi. The name comes by derivation from **copac** "(big) tree" + suffix *-(i)oasa*, or the substantivized adjective **copăcios** "with trees; wooded".

CURPĂN - is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it has a length of 10 km, crosses vill. Câineni, in Vâlcea county, and is a tributary of the Olt. The name comes from **curpăn** (*cf.* **curpen** "tendril, wild vine, runner or creeper").

DEBRĂDET – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 9 km long and is a tributary of the Olt river. It is probably a word composed of a noun + preposition **de** + **brădet** "firtree forest or clump", where the first noun was lost, and only the two components have remained, which later merged. (the entopic **brădet** means "pine of firtree forest, a place covered with trees" < **brad** + collective suffix *-et*).

FAGUL MARE – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 9 km long and is a tributary of the Olt. The name is formed by composition from the entopic **fag** "beech" + adjectival determiner.

FRĂSINET – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 24 km long, is a tributary of the Teslui river, going through vill. Cezieni, and receiving as right side tributary Râul Lungenilor. Its name comes from the appellative **frasin** "ashtree" + collective suffix *–et > frăsinet*. The analyses performed by geographers (Conea, Ion*, op.*

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cit.: 69), for phytotoponym **Frasin** "ashtree" and its collective derivatives **frăsinet, frăsiniş**, confirmed Iorgu Iordan's assumption, namely that the form ***frăsinet*** is more common than ***frăsiniş*** (Nicolae, Ion, 2006: 84).

LUNCA – 1.is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 12 km long and is a tributary of Rața river, 2. is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 7 km long and is a tributary of the river Bortofălău, in Harghita county. The name comes from the entopic **luncă** ("meadow"), meaning "a clearing with pastureland lying at the edge of a watercourse; a narrow glen, grazing land, a strip of land along a river, etc." (*cf.* Sl. ***lonka***).

LUNCA MARE – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 16 km long, is a tributary of the Olt, in Harghita county, and its right tributary is Sadocuț. It is formed by composition from the entopic **luncă** "meadow" + adjectival determiner.

LUNCAVIȚA – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 60 km long, rising from the Căpățânii mountains, and flows into the Olt on the left, crossing the following places: Vaideeni, Horezu, Oteşani, Popeşti, Dăieşti, Ciorăşti, Şirineasa, Prodăneşti. Its tributaries on the left are Balota, Urşani, Râmeşti, Horezu, Pârâul Blajului, and on the right, Curpen and Mănăstirea. It is probably formed with the Slavic suffix *-ovăț* (*cf.* Bucovăț, Dunavăț, Racovăț).

PLOPOASA – is located in the middle basin of the Olt, it is 5 km long and is a tributary of the river Şercaia, in Braşov county. Its name comes from the appellative **plop** "poplar" + suffix *-oasa* (feminine) < ***plopoasa*** "a land covered with forest of poplars".

RĂCHITA – is located in the lower basin of the Olt, it is 8 km long and is a tributary of the river Horezu, in Olt county. The name comes from the entopic **răchită** "wicker; a place covered with wicker forest, floating platform made of reed, rushes" (*cf.* Bulg. ***rakita***).

RĂCHITIŞ – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 6 km long and is a tributary of the Olt river. The name comes from the entopic **răchitiş** "a place covered with wicker forest" (< ***răchită*** + collective suffix *-iş*).

STEJEREL – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 7 km long and is a tributary of the Olt river. Its name comes from the appellative **stejar** "oak tree" + the diminutive suffix *-el*.

TRESTIA – is located in the upper basin of the Olt, it is 55 km long and is a tributary of the Bogata river, in Braşov county. The name comes from the appellative **trestie** "reed".

ZĂVOI – is located in the middle basin of the Olt, it is18 km long and is a tributary of the river Sibiel, in Braşov county; it goes across the village Fântânele. Its name comes from the entopic **zăvoi** "a small alder forest, a place covered with woods of oak, beech, fir, alder, wicker, etc., the place where a river floods, a boggy meadow" (*cf.* Old Sl. ***zavoj***).

In conclusion, we can say that the hydronyms in the Old river basin, whether they are simple or compound, are mostly Romanian; though some appellatives or anthroponyms they come from are of foreign origin, they are formed in the Romanian language. Thus, the old age and the special role of hydronyms in people's lives, along the country's history, are once again proved.

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