Ana-Cristina Halichias[1]

Romanian Anthroponymy Acknowledged in the Mediaeval Latin Documents Issued by the Romanian Chancelleries (13th – 15th century)

Abstract: *This paper analyzes elements of Romanian anthroponymy acknowledged in the mediaeval Latin documents issued by the Romanian Principalities chancelleries in 13th – 15th century. The author discusses the word-formation, the chronology, the etymology and the spelling of these lexemes.*

Key words: *Romanian language, mediaeval Latin, anthroponymy, spelling, chronology, etymology*

The texts written in Mediaeval Latin on Romanian territory are of special interest not only for studying the direct or indirect Latin influence over the Romanian language, but also especially for the information concerning Romanian language before 1521[2]. The influence exerted by the Romanian language on the Latin used in Romanian Principalities chancelleries is directly connected to clerks'[3] linguistic performances, understood in the sense of a multilingual culture to which have contributed the Latin learned in school, the

[1] University of Bucharest, Romania

[2] These sources have been researched especially from the perspective of interpretation of the historical events, with some rare exceptions when the linguistic characteristics were described and analyzed, also including the influence exerted by the Romanian language. In this sense, see Holban 51–86. Felecan 127–131; Halichias (1980): 111–115; Halichias (1989): 21–29; Halichias (1989): 239–246; Paraschiv (2004).

[3] Concerning the ethnic affiliation of clerks from Moldavia, the specialists' opinions are not in agreement: Iorga 122 thought that the official Latin Moldavian documents reflected the characteristics of the Hungarian chancellery; Grămadă 26–27 thought that in the 14th century and in the first half of the 15th century these originated in Poland because the documents they wrote followed the usual diplomatic pattern of the Polish chancellery; Holban 52 claimed that in the Moldavian chancellery there weren't any specialized clerks, but there were used incidental local elements: Catholic priests, Saxon scribes or even Moldavians who knew Latin; Ciurea (1945) 5–6, considered Gămadă's opinions to have a definitive characteristic because they were based exclusively on document research; Jakó, Manolescu 135 favored the affiliation of clerks to the local environment (sons of boyards or townspeople, Catholic clergy settled in Moldavia). See the extended comments in Paraschiv 28–32.

BDD-A3717 © 2011 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:06:17 UTC)

language used in the environment in which the clerks learned Latin, their maternal language, and the language used in the environment in which they lived and wrote. In Transylvanian chancelleries, the clerks were especially Hungarians, Transylvanian Saxons, Italians or Hungarian-speaking Romanians. Since the texts were most probably written under dictation in Hungarian, and perhaps in German in the Saxon areas, the Romanian lexical elements are almost exclusively toponyms (names of places) and anthroponyms. The royal clerks in the two extra-Carpathian countries, Wallachia and Moldavia, were at first foreigners: Polish, Hungarians, Germans, Italians. Still, over the time they were elected from the local population that studied in local schools or at the universities in Cracow and Wien (Ciurea 1940, 1945; Jakó, Manolescu 134–135). Therefore, the influence of the Romanian language on Latin, facilitated by the same procedure of writing the contents of the papers under dictation, is much more apparent - from the vocabulary to the morphology, syntax and regional pronunciation elements.

The inventory analyzed here comprises 70 anthroponyms, from which 8 are also used as toponyms, and 6 as appellatives:

1) Anthroponyms: *arbur [tree]*, *bade[uncle - respectful term of address in the country ; term used by women in the country to caress their beloved men]*, *bădică [diminutive of bade]*, *bălan [blonde]*, *bălțat [motley, striped]*, *bărbos [bearded]*, *boar [cowboy]*, *bob [bean]*, *bulgar [Bulgarian]*, *buzdugan [mace]*, *cal [horse]*, *cătană [soldier]*, *cârjă [crutch]*, *cioban [shepherd]*, *ciocan [hammer]*, *cocor [crane]*, *colț [fang ; corner]*, *Crăciun [Christmas ; Santa Claus]*, *creț [curly]*, *danci [gypsy kid]*, *drac [devil]*, *drag [beloved, cherished, dear]*, *făt [foetus, son, boy, child]*, *frate [brother]*, *frunte [forehead]*, *ghindă [acorn]*, *gros [thick, bulky]*, *grozav [terrible, fearful, almighty]*, *grumaz [neck]*, *hoț [thief]*, *lup [wolf]*, *mic [small]*, *mogâldă [hill, heap]*, *mohilă [hill]*, *moldov(e)an [Moldavian]*, *moțoc [hair bun]*, *murg [sorrel]*, *muşat [nice, beautiful]*, *oglindă [mirror]*, *paşmag [slipper]*, *păsat [millet cooked with milk, butter, cheese etc.]*, *sărbătoare [feast]*, *sârb [Serbian]*, *scurt [short]*, *sucă [trouble, bad habit]*, *sulea [devil ;scamp, sneak]*, *svânt [saint]*, *şerb [serf]*, *tăut [Slovak]*, *turc [Turk]*, *țeapă [stake]*, *țigănuş [little gypsy]*, *ungurean [Hungarian]*, *vărzar [vegetable grower]*, *veveriță [squirrel]*, *vrabie [sparrow]*.

2) Anthroponym and toponym: *alb [white]*, *bărbat [man]*, *floare [flower]*, *furcă [pitchfork]*, *negru [black]*, *pădure [forest]*, *plop [poplar tree]*, *prisacă [apiary; terrain recently cleared]*.

3) Anthroponym and common word: *baci [shepherd in charge of a sheepfold]*, *brânză [cheese]*, *călugăr [monk]*, *fecior [son, boy, lad]*, *popă [pope, parson]*, *țigan [gypsy]*.

The lexical material offered by anthroponyms has a great importance in knowing the constitution process of onomastics in the Romanian language. The remark concerning the toponyms made by Iorgu Iordan can be also applied to anthroponyms, respectively that many anthroponyms had or still have an appellative value in everyday language. For only after they began being used with an appellative value, the Romanians were able to extend their usage, employing at the same time both values: as common words and anthroponyms (Iordan 18).

With regard to their source the anthroponyms are in most cases nicknames coming from common nouns, adjectives or diminutives.

BDD-A3717 © 2011 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:06:17 UTC)

1. Anthroponyms coming from common nouns:

a. plant names: *arbore*, *bob*, *floare*, *ghindă*, *pădure*, *plop*.

b. names of animals or birds: *cal*, *cocor*, *lup*, *veveriță*, *vrabie*.

c. object names: *buzdugan*, *cârjă*, *ciocan*, *furcă*, *oglindă*, *paşmag*, *țeapă*.

d. human body: *frunte*, *grumaz*, *moțoc*.

e. occupations: *baci*, *boar*, *călugăr*, *cătană*, *cioban*, *hoț*, *popă*, *vărzar*;

f. food: *brânză*, *păsat*.

g. ethnicity: *danci*, *moldovean*, *sârb*, *tăut*, *turc*, *țigan*, *ungurean*.

h. miscellaneous: *bade*, *bărbat*, *crăciun*, *drac*, *făt*, *frate*, *mogâldă*, *mohilă*, *prisacă*, *sărbătoare*, *soare*, *sucă*, *sulea*.

2. Anthroponyms coming from adjectives: *alb*, *bălan*, *bălțat*, *bărbos*, *creț*, *drag*, *gros*, *grozav*, *mic*, *murg*, *negru*, *scurt*, *svânt*.

3. Anthroponyms coming from diminutives: *bădică*, *țepeluş*, *țigănuş*.

By *origin*, anthroponyms can be grouped as:

1. Words of Latin origin: *alb*, *arbur*, *bălțat*, *bărbat*, *boar*, *cal*, *Crăciun*, *drac*, *făt*, *fecior*, *floare*, *frate*, *frunte*, *furcă*, *ghindă*, *gros*, *lup*, *negru*, *pădure*, *păsat*, *plop*, *scurt*, *şerb*.

2. Thraco-Dacian words: *brânză* (probably), *grumaz*, *murg*.

3. Words of unknown or questionable origin: *baci*, *bade*, *cocor*, *creț*, *hoț*, *mogâldă*.

4. Slavonic[4] loan words: *bob*, *bulgar*, *călugăr*, *cârjă*, *ciocan*, *colț*, *drag*, *mohilă*, *popă*, *prisacă*, *svânt*, *țigan*, *veveriță*, *vrabie*.

5. Hungarian loan words: *cătană*, *sucă*, *tăut*.

6. Turkish loan words: *cioban*, *paşmag*, *turc*.

7. Serbian loan words: *sârb*.

8. Bulgarian loan words: *grozav*.

9. Tatar loan words: *buzdugan*.

10. Romany (gypsy language) loan words: *danci*.

11. Words formed by derivation in the Romanian language: *albot*ă, *bădică*, *bălan*, *bărbos*, *bobuş*, *calotă*, *moldovean*, *moțoc*, *muşat*, *oglindă*, *sărbătoare*, *sulea*, *țepeluş*, *țigănuş*, *ungurean*, *vărzar*.

[4] We include in this category words in both literary and vernacular language.

BDD-A3717 © 2011 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:06:17 UTC)

Chronology of acknowledgements

The comparison with the dates included in DERSR shows the fact that generally there are no significant differences between the oldest acknowledgments of the Romanian terms present in the Slavonic–Romanian and Latin documents; however there are a number of terms whose first usage in Middle-Latin sources is older:

Baci:	1319	– DERSR: 1488
Bărbat:	1285	– DERSR: 1471
Boar:	1404	– DERSR: 1519
Brânză:	1477	– DERSR: 1490
Bulgar:	1476	– DERSR: 1546
Cal:	1511	– DERSR: 1543
Cătană:	1534	– DERSR: <1596–1600>
Ciocan:	1433	– DERSR: 1505
Creț:	1260	– DERSR: 1425
Drac:	1452	– DERSR: <1459>
Drag:	1334	– DERSR: 1414
Ghindă:	1468	– DERSR: 1495
Gros:	1476	– DERSR: 1486
Hoț:	1538	– DERSR: 1594
Mic:	1227	– DERSR: 1399
Oglindă:	1477	– DERSR: 1591
Șerb:	1383	– DERSR: 1407
Țigănuș:	1453	– DERSR: 1526

Toponyms' spelling

Spelling reveals the clerks' efforts to reproduce Romanian pronunciation, making an appeal to the spelling rules familiar to them from the maternal language or from the language spoken in the environment in which they grew or studied (usually Hungarian, German or Polish). These are the graphic equivalents most common in documents:

a = ă, o: *Albota* (Albotă), *Badyka* (Bădică), *Balczad* (Bălțat), *Barbat* (Bărbat), *Kalota* (Calotă), *Chakan* (Ciocan)

e = ă, ea: *Dionisius Caluger* (Dionisie Călugăr), *Kolcza* (Colțea), *Flore* (Florea), *Tewtwl logoffet* (Tăutul logofăt)

i = â: *Nicolaus Brinsa* (Nicolae Brânză), *Luca Kirsza* (Luca Cârjă)

BDD-A3717 © 2011 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:06:17 UTC)

o = ă, u: *Dobra Bolan* (Dobra Bălan), *Barbossol* (Bărbosul), *Coman Bolgar* (Coman Bulgar), *Kathana Bolgaro* (Cătană Bulgaru), *Iwan Bwzdogan* (Ioan Buzdugan)

oy = oa: *Floyre* (Floare)

y = i: *Badyka* (Bădică), *Fychywr* (Ficior)

c = č, ț: *Dancwlo* (Danciului), *Fracilla* (Frățilă)

ch = č, ț: *Bach* (Baci), *Chakan* (Ciocan), *Crechul* (Crețul), *Danchul* (Danciul)

cz = č, ț, z : Iohannes *Grumacz* (Ioan Grumaz), *Balczad* (Bălțat), *Czoban* (Cioban), *Kolcza* (Colțea)

d = t: *Balczad* (Bălțat)

g = g': *Thoma Ginda* (Toma Ghindă)

gh = g: *Dragh* (Drag)

gy = g': *Bagya* (Badea)

h = γ': *Mohilă*

k = c: *Badyka* (Bădică), *Kalota* (Calotă), *Kokorra* (Cocora)

s = ş: *Cipellus* (Țepeluș)

sch = ş, č: *Bobusch* (Bobuş), *Craschun* (Crăciun), *Danschwl* (Danciul)

ss = s: *Barbossol* (Bărbosul)

sz = j: *Luca Kirsza* (Luca Cârjă)

th = t: *Barbath* (Bărbat), *Kathana* (Cătană), *Thurk Iwon* (Turcu Ion)

tz = ț: *Kretzul* (Crețul)

w = u, v, o: *Bobwl* (Bobul), *Bwzdogan* (Ioan Buzdugan), *Danchwl* (Danciul), *Fychywr* (Ficior), *Fwrka* (Furcă), *Petrus Grozaw* (Petru Grozav)

Elements of morphology

Enclitic article:

a. masculin: *Albul* [1428]; *Barbol* [1507]; *Barbossol* [1476]; *Bobwl* [1447]; *Crechul* [1447]; *Danchul* [1374]; *Drakwl* [1452] etc.

b. feminine: *mulierem Alba vocatam* [1550].

***

We tried to present some features of the Romanian anthroponymy just as they are shown in the research of the Romanian lexis conducted on a sample of Latin diplomatic documents issued by the three Romanian Principalities chancelleries and published in well-known collections of historical sources. Setting the year 1600 as *terminus ad quem* is justified by the fact that after this date the texts written in Romanian are growing in numbers. Of course, in the future it will be necessary the research of a more vastly corpus of sources issued both by Romanian and foreign chancelleries. This way, the number of anthroponyms and other elements of Romanian language will grow most certainly, contributing to the enrichment of our knowledge concerning Romanian language.

University of Bucharest, Romania

BDD-A3717 © 2011 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:06:17 UTC)

References

Bolocan, Gheorghe (coord). *Dicționarul elementelor românești din documentele slavo române, 1374-1600*. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei, 1981 (DERSR) .

Felecan, Nicolae. „Observații asupra lexicului latin în documentele medievale maramureşene". *Buletinul ştiințific al Institutului Pedagogic Baia Mare*, Seria A II, Separatum (1970): 127–131.

Grămadă, Nicolae. „Cancelaria domnească în Moldova până la domnia lui Constantin Mavrocordat". *Codrul Cosminului* IX (1935): 129-190.

Halichias, Ana-Cristina. „Obsevații pe marginea latinei medievale de redacție românească a documentelor din secolul al XVI-lea". *Revista Arhivelor* 1 (1980): 111–115.

Halichias, Ana-Cristina. „Note privind lexicul latinei de cancelarie din țările române". *Studii şi cercetări lingvistice* 1 (1989): 21–29.

Halichias, Ana-Cristina. „Mărturii privind limba română înainte de primele atestări scrise". *Studii şi cercetări lingvistice* 3 (1989): 239–246

Holban, Maria. „Accente personale şi influențe locale în unele scrisori latineşti ale domnilor români" . *Revista istorică*, XXIX, n^{o}. 1–6 (1943): 51–86.

Iordan, Iorgu. *Toponimia românească* Bucureşti: Editura Academiei,1963. Iorga, Nicolae. „Notes de diplomatique roumaine". *Académie Roumaine – Bulletin de la Section Historique* XVII (1930):114-141

Jakó, Sigismund, Manolescu, Radu. *Scrierea latină în evul mediu.* Bucureşti: Editura ştiințifică, 1971 Paraschiv, Mihaela. *Documentele latine de cancelarie din Moldova (secolele XIV–XVIII). Studiu lingvistic şi stilistic.* Iaşi: Editura Junimea, 2004.

BDD-A3717 © 2011 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:06:17 UTC)