ABSTRACT

Anthroponomy is the branch of onomastics dealing with the linguistic study of personal names; it is becoming more and more prominent in many scientific works and events centred on it. Proper names are the testimony of the development of a community – country, province, settlement –, through the numerous facts elated to history, geography, society, etc. which they incorporate. On the other hand, the circulation of names, especially in the contemporary period, reveals human relations, emotional experiences, in general, psychological, sociolinguistic, cultural and religious aspects of individuals.

Specialised literature, in general, and that dedicated to Năsăud area have strengthened our conviction that there are many facts of language and history stored in the name of a person from this part of the country. Thus, we believe it is important to investigate them.

Taking into account the volume of data and being aware of the time available, we have restricted the area of research to Sălăuța Valley, a geographically, historically and administratively well-defined space. The area currently includes eight villages along the Sălăuța River, one of the more than ten rivers that cross Năsăud Country, all of them with north-south orientation and flowing into Someșul Mare. Although it has a relatively short length, 39 km, Sălăuța runs through six settlements: Ștefănița Hill, Romuli, Fiad, Telciu, Coșbuc and Salva, with two other settlements crossed by two of its tributaries: Bichigiu, on Bichigiu Valley, and Telcișor, on Telcișor Valley. Thus, Sălăuța basin is the most populated of the tributaries in the upper part of Someșul Mare.

Having delimited the research area and knowing the content of the

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

works devoted to this space, we have organised the thesis into the following chapters: 1. *Historical-geographical landmarks in the researched area*, 2. *History of onomastic research in Năsăud*, 3. *Anthroponyms*, with two subchapters: 3.1. *Family names*, 3.2. *First names*, 4. *Language facts*, Conclusions, Bibliography, Appendices.

We also mention the fact that, at the beginning of the paper, we have inserted an *Introduction*, in which we motivated the choice of the topic, the creation of the data base, the working methodology, and a glossary of anthroponymic terms, which were considered useful in understanding the terminology employed.

Chapter 1, *Historical-geographical landmarks in the researched area*, contains data about the establishment of the researched area and an overview of the localities included in this area.

Sălăuța Valley is an integral part of a wider area, called Năsăud Country. According to the current administrative division, Năsăud Country is a part of Bistrița-Năsăud county. It borders Maramureș county to the north, through the the Țibleș and Rodna mountains, and Suceava county to the east, through the Bârgău mountains (Zâmbroaiea plateau). To the south, from east to west, there is the southern administrative borders of Lunca Ilvei, Leșșu, Feldru and Năsăud communes and to the west, the western administrative boundaries of Căianu Mic, Spermezeu and Târlișua (cf. Ilovan 2009: 123).

The importance of Sălăuța also derives from the fact that, to its right, there is the Salva-Vișeu railway line running along the national road DN17C, which connects Moisei and Salva, with subsequent branches to other directions: Năsăud – Bistrița – Vatra Dornei; Beclean – Dej – Cluj-Napoca – Baia Mare.

Etymologically, *Sălăuța* is based on the oikonym *Salva*, "pronounced *Sálu̯ua* by the inhabitants" (Drăganu 1928: 87; Iordan 1963: 459, originally Romanian) + the suffix *-uța*.

As regards the settlements in the basin of this river, we mention that some have developed as a result of the phenomenon of "swarming" of the population, which took place from several directions.

From Telciu, inhabitants migrated north, setting up the villages Strâmba (Romuli) and Ștefănița Hill, south – Hordou (Coșbuc), west

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

– Bichigiu, and east – Telcișor (Ilovan 2009: 188; Mureșianu 2000: 82–83).

As for Romuli and later on Ștefănița Hill, we must also take into account the fact that, as results form onomastic analysis, many of the inhabitants come from Maramureș. According to Mircea Mureșianu (2000: 84, originally Romanian), "The name of this settlement encourages us to ascertain that a relatively large group of inhabitants of the village have their origins in Maramureș, and they arrived here through Șetref Pass".

In determining the outline of the settlement Hordou, other settlements contributed: Telciu from upstream and Salva from downstream, while "people arriving here […] founded their first households in sheltered places on the slopes of the Fântâna Valley and the Stegii Valley, as well as in the plateau areas of Arșița, Zăpadia and Țebeleș Hills, all located on the left banks of the Sălăuța, where the topographic and climatic conditions ('the faces of Hordou') and the water resources were favourable. A few households settled on the plateaus on the right banks of the Salăuța, on Mailat's Valley, where, according to tradition, a clash was recorded between the army of the Transylvanian voivode, Ștefan Mailat, (1534–1540) and an army of the Turks and Tartars" (Mureşianu 2000: 82, originally Romanian).

Salva "originally emerged in the areas called 'Across the Water' and 'This Side of the Water' as two distinct habitation cores ('The Two Salvas'), which, during the expansion of the military border, merged and generated a hearth similar to that existing today, typical to large rural settlements situated at strong hydrographic confluences. From the specific situation of the hearth on the Sălăuța and along the bend in the Someș a Y-shaped hearth resulted" (Mureşianu 2000: 78–79, originally Romanian).

Knowing how the settlements in the Salăuța basin were founded, we present in the following the etymology of the names.

Salva was firstly certified in a document from 1440[207]. The first to

[207] The authors of the area mention the first record dating to 1245 (Tutula 2004: 67–68, Filip, Morariu 2005: 60).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

consider scientifically the etymology of the name of this village and those from the entire Năsăud area was Nicolae Drăganu (1884–1939), originally from Zagra. According to the sources used[208], the village dates back to 1440 by the name of *Zalva*. Subsequently, several forms were mentioned: *Zalwa* 1450, *Zalva* 1519, *Salva* 1547, 1548, 1550, 1577, *Salwa* 1552, *Zalwa* 1576, *Zalowa* 1574, *Zaloa*, *Zalwa* 1601, *Salwa* 1602, *Szalva* 1624, *Zalova* 1717, *Salva dincoace* (literally 'from here'), *Salva dincolo* (literally 'from there') 1723, *Szalva* 1733, 1750, 1760–62, 1764, 1766[209] etc.

Taking into consideration the variants under which the name appears, Nicolae Drăganu believes that "the radical must be Slavic, for the most complete form, *Salova*, contains the Slavic suffix *-ova*. And the radical can only be *salo* (cf. Russian *salo*, *sadlo* etc.) '*adeps*', '*rich soil*'. *Salova* means 'with rich soil', just as *Ilva* means '*clayey* or *with clay*'".

Telciu, a settlement located at the confluence of the Telcișor Valley with Sălăuța River, is documented at the same date as Salva, in the year 1440. Nicolae Drăganu admits that the etymology "is relatively difficult to explain", but not impossible, as shown by the solutions provided by the linguist from Năsăud.

Firstly, "by refuting the opinion of N. Densușianu (*Prehistoric Dacia*, Bucharest 1913: 486), according which it [the name] could derive from the ancient form *Telchini* = melters" (Drăganu 1928: 7, originally Romanian), the professor from Cluj adduced two possible etymologies: < Slavic *telъčъ* (cf. tel. 'vitulus') and Hungarian *telki* (= *telek* 'praedium' + possessive suffix *-i*), "often used in toponymy in this form in connection with personal or family proper names" (Drăganu 1928: 7, originally Romanian).

Subsequently, the author reconsidered his ideas based on more in-depth and wider research[210], and only proposed the Slavic etymology.

[208] For this, see the notes concerning *Salva* in Drăganu 1928: 87.

[209] These data were taken from Suciu 1968 and they are found in the same form in the source in question.

[210] See discussions on p. 7–24 of Drăganu 1928.

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

Hordou (Coșbuc since the year 1925[211], cf. Mureșianu 2000: 82) is a frontier settlement, first mentioned in 1523.

As a name, the village is recorded with the forms: *Salva et Ordo* and then *Ordo*, followed by *Hordou*, which will be established beginning with the eighteenth century (Drăganu 1928: 49–50, Suciu I, 1967: s. V.).

Bichigiu is the village about which Nicolae Drăganu said that "It is first attested in 1523 and in 1533 as *Byrkes*, which is obviously an altered form of *Byckes*" (Drăganu 1928: 43–46, originally Romanian). The form in question results from Hungarian *Bükkös*, the Saxon pronunciation of the official form *Bikis* or even the Romanian form *Bichigiu*, the only form we can find in the older documents written by the Romanians which do not account for the official form.

Strâmba / Romuli is a settlement at the confluence of Strâmba Valley and the Sălăuța river. The name derives from that of the stream: *Strâmba* (< adjective *strâmb* < Vulgar Latin *strambus* < Classical Latin *strabus* "schief, krumm", cf. DER: s.v.).

Ștefănița Hill, a hamlet of Romuli village, is documented in 1956. Originally, the village was named *Frumușica*, after the name of a creek called so (< *frumos* 'beautiful' + suffix *-ica*). The new name consists of the entropic noun *deal* 'hill' + an anthroponymic determinant in the genitive case, *Ștefăniței* (< *Ștefana* (< *Ștefan* + feminine suffix *-a*) + diminutive suffix *-ița*).

Telcișor is a hamlet of Telciu village, certified in 1956. The name appears as a derivative of *Telciu* + the diminutive suffix *-işor*.

Chapter II, *History of Onomastic Research in Năsăud Country*, presents data about the history of onomastics research in the land of Năsăud, in order to establish the steps taken in this direction, from the first investigations until today, and in the attempt to suggest a

[211] Regarding this name change we mention the opinion of N. Drăganu, to whom "the change does not seem particularly felicitous. The name of the village Hordou was known precisely through the biographies of Coșbuc. Now it is uncanny to say, 'G. Coșbuc was born in the village Coșbuc near Năsăud'. It would have been better had the name been Coșbuceni or Coșbucești" (Drăganu 1928: 50, footnote 10, originally Romanian).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

methodology that could be followed to improve anthroponymic studies.

The first monographs of the villages in the area date from the beginning of the twentieth century: *Scurtă monografie a comunei Rebrișoara* [A brief monograph of Rebrișoara commune], 1901, by Macedon Linul[212]; *Monografia comunei Rodna* [Monograph of Rodna commune], Bistrița, 1903, by Pamfile Grapini; *Monografia comunei Poiana* (*Sâniosif*) [Monograph of Poiana (Sâniosif) commune], Bistrița, 1910, signed by Ștefan Buzilă.

They prove the increased interest in the life, situation and development of border villages and cover different aspects, from facts of local history or geography to a mosaic of problems that also affect the documentary value of the works.

The idea of researching into local origins and presenting them to the civilized world, an inheritance from the Transylvanian School, animated the intellectuals of Năsăud and edited the periodical *Arhiva Someșeană* (AS) [Someș Archive], in which, in the first edition from 1924, in the editorial dedicated *Către cetitori* [To the readers], the publication's editors said as follows: "Not personal ambitions, nor the desire to see our name printed, but the wish to make this border land known, as it has such a beautiful historical and cultural past, with schools that fought alongside the other Romanian confessional schools to preserve our most precious treasure: the Romanian order and language" (AS 1: 1), because not many "know about the strenuous struggle with the Hungarians to keep the schools created through the efforts of the soldiers who had died on the plains of Europe" (AS 1: 2).

[212] Teacher and school principal, Macedon Lin (1869–1946), "was permanently at the forefront of all actions and events that promoted the ideals of the Union, harmoniously combining school work with the political and advocate activity of the achievement of national unity. On December 1, 1918, he took part in the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia alongside 'distinguished individuals in the county', and was elected member of the Grand National State of Sibiu (according to Decree No. 229 of 1919 of the Romanian Congressional Council in Sibiu)". He published the monograph of Rebrișoara in 1901, "in the journal Școala Someșană [Someș school], Gherla, 1934, issues 4–8" (Muti 2007 II: 178–180, originally Romanian).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

The aforementioned magazine was the main publication to disseminate the first onomastics studies, including: Iulian Marțian, *Contribuții la istoricul Rodnei* [Contributions to the history of Rodna] (AS 1: 17); Iulian Marțian, *Fata*, *tradiție și istorie* [Fata, tradition and history], in AS 4, 1926: 12–23; I. Corbu, *Cetățele*, in AS 6, 1926: 90–91; Kriz-Cabicar, *Curiozități topice „valahice*" ["Walachian" topical curiosities], in AS 7, 1927: 84–88; Nicolae Drăganu, *Toponimie și istorie* [Toponymy and history], a "*model of Transylvanian toponymic monograph*" (my italics). Such works are necessary in writing a synthesis about the toponymy of Transylvania[213], which should materialize as soon as possible, as it is in the interest of solving the highly disputed issue of our continuity in Dacia.

The comprehensive, up-to-date information, the care for every detail, the passion of the researcher, and the love for the author's native places, make the work a model of research, demonstrating "respectful old age of the Romanian element", according to historian I. Lupaș, the author of the "Foreword" of the work.

The most substantial articles from the viewpoint of anthroponomy are published by Sabin Mureșanu, *Originea familiei Mureșenilor* [The

[213] Unfortunately, today we do not have a complete dictionary of Transylvanian toponymy. There are only two books edited by "Sextil Pușcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History in Cluj-Napoca (the former Museum of the Romanian Language): *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Transilvania* (TTRT). *Județul Sălaj* [Toponymic thesaurus of Romania. Transylvania (TTRT). Sălaj county], by Eugen Pavel, Augustin Pop, Ion Roșianu, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2006; *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Transilvania* (TTRT). *Valea Hășdății* [Toponymic thesaurus of Romania. Transylvania (TTRT). Valea Hășdății], by Dumitru Loșonți and Sabin Vlad, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2006; *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Transilvania* (TTRT). *Valea Ierii* [Toponymic thesaurus of Romania. Transylvania (TTRT). Ierii Valley], by Dumitru Loșonți and Sabin Vlad, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2010; as well as several other single-author books: Ștefan Vișovan, *Monografia toponimică a Văii Izei* [Toponymic monograph of Iza Valley], Cluj-Napoca, Mega Publishing House, 2005; Ștefan Vișovan, *Toponimia Țării Lăpușului* [Toponymy of the Land of Lăpuș], Baia Mare, North University Publishing House, 2008; Adelina Emilia Mihali, *Toponimie Maramureșeană. Valea superioară a Vișeului* [Maramureș toponymy. The Upper Valley of Vișeu], Cluj-Napoca, Mega Publishing House, 2015.

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

origin of the Mureșeni family], in AS 4, 1926: 81–85[214], and Virgil Șotropa, *Obârșia familiei Coșbuc* [The origin of the Coșbuc family], in AS 5, 1926: 58–76.

Unfortunately, unfavourable historical conditions for the Romanian people lead to the interruption of the activity[215] of the publication *Arhiva Someșană* in 1940 for a long time[216].

The lack of earlier writings in the Nasăud region, especially between 1940 and 1970, was also noted by Gavril Istrate, a teacher from Iași, originally from Nepos, who in 2005, in the *Preface* to Mircea Prahase's book, *Porecle și supranume din bazinul superior al Someșului Mare* [Nicknames and bynames in the upper basin of Someșul Mare river], stated: "Unfavourable circumstances made it impossible for us to have any kind of cultural achievements in this border land, so beautifully represented in the past by numerous scholars and educators. It was as if the goddess Minerva, our former protector, had completely forgotten us. Our only comfort was the memory of those who, before us, brought to light a series of achievements, first in literature and subsequently in mass culture. From time to time, we open *Istoria rezbelului orientale* [History of the Oriental war], written by two teachers of the Năsăud Gymnasium and published in Gratz, Austria, in 1878. It was the greatest *history* of our war of independence. We read the two monographs of the communes Șanț (1903) and Poiana Ilvei

[214] An encouragement for completing the data regarding the Mureșan family is also found in issue 19/1936: 73–77: Aurel A. Mureșianu, În chestia familiei Mureșenilor [Concerning the Mureșan family].

[215] The reasons for the interruption of the publication's activity are presented by Ștefan Pascu, member of the Romanian Academy: "The publication of the Năsăud periodical was suddenly discontinued by tragic events ensuing the Second Vienna Award of August 1940, when Năsăud and northwest Transylvania were torn from the Romanian territory and temporarily occupied by Horthy's Hungary. The intellectuals around the magazine *Arhiva Someșană* were forced to emigrate due to persecution, and took with them the studies and articles to be included in issue 28 of the journal in view of preparing its publication, but this never happened" (AS 28: 6, originally Romanian).

[216] Since 1972, the Năsăud Museum has published several volumes of studies and papers under the same title: *Arhiva Someșană* (AS 28: 1994: 6).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

(1910), the former written by the priest Pamfil Grapini and the latter by Ștefan Buzilă, former vicar of Năsăud" (Prahase 2005: 10, originally Romanian).

Among post–1970 publications, the first to deal with a theoretical problem in the field of anthroponymy, i.e., the *nickname*, is *Zagra. O monografie posibilă* [Zagra. A potential monograph] by Mircea Prahase and Gavrilă Rus.

More detailed aspects related to personal names are found in a book by Leon Muti, *Rebrișoara – Mărturii pentru eternitate* [Rebrișoara – Testimonies for eternity], volume II (2007).

Chapter 3, *Anthroponyms*, is divided into two subchapters, 3.1. *Family names* and 3.2. *First names*, since each category of names displays specific peculiarities that must be taken into account.

In 1965, Al. Graur noted that "Only baptismal existed in our space in the past. Someone was called *Ion* or *Mary*, and if a slightly better accuracy was required, the name of one's father or husband, sometimes of one's mother or wife, was added in genitive case: *Ion al lui Gheorghe* ('Ion of Gheorghe'), *Niculaie al Saftei* ('Niculaie of Safta'), *Maria lui Vasile* ('Maria of Vasile')" (Graur 1965: 89, originally Romanian).

Similarly, upon dealing with these issues, Iorgu Iordan pointed out that "the tripartite system (of the Romans) did not become established in any of the provinces of the former Roman Empire. The vast majority of the names in question conform to the Roman system, but only partially, in the sense that they are bipartite, not tripartite. It is easy to understand why this is so. Firstly, life conditions in Dacia were quite different from those in Rome and Italy, in general. Moreover, the Romans – in the broad sense of the term – who came to Dacia were not, could not have been patricians (except for certain cases). They were all soldiers, officers, craftsmen, merchants, etc., whose names consisted of a *praenomen* and *nomen* (the latter was also mostly a *praenomen*, in my opinion corresponding to what we call *family name*)" (originally Romanian). In this context, I. Iordan states that this system "we also find […] with the Geto-Dacians, our ethnic ancestors. The fact was confirmed with the help of all kinds of inscriptions, especially funerary ones, discovered over time in Dacia" (Iordan 1983: 9, originally Romanian).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

The subchapter *Family names* discusses these names according to the centuries in which they were recorded, beginning with the eighteenth century, when we first found the greatest amount of information, and ending with the twenty-first century, the last names analysed being recorded in 2015.

The first aspect explored refers to the successive stages that ultimately led to the establishment of the family name.

The first step is to use the father's name in the genitive case (the name of the mother or another family member is seldom employed):

(a) *First name + father's family name* (with the preposed article *lui* 'of')[217]: Cira *lui Andrieș*, Doce *lui Avram*, Iuon *lui Cifor (Tsifor)*, Iuon *lui George*, Vasele *lui George*, Ursul *lui George*, Petre *lui Iacobu*, Flore *lui Iuon*, Todor *lui Iuon*, Petre *lui Iosipu*, Ioan *lui Simionu*, Todor *lui Ștefan*, Miron *lui Todor*, Toma *lui Vasele* (Hordou, 1750).

(b) *First name + father's first name* (with the preposed genitive article *a / al* 'of')[218]: Todor *a Alexi*, Istrate *a Cifor*, Flore *a Ciri*, Giorgie *a Ciri*, Gieorgie *a Cozmi*, Todor *a Petri*, Cirilă *a Petri*, Petre *a Popi(i)* (Hordou, 1750); Șofrona *a Alexandru*, George *a Cifor* (*Tyiffor*), Simion *a Cozmi*, Iuoan *a Doce*, Natul *a Filip* (*Cilip*), Ștefan *a Iacob*, Grigore *a Matei*, Ștefan *a Niculai*, Nastasia *a Ștefan*, Login *a Timoge* (Telciu, 1755); Nichita *al Achim* (*Atyim*), Pinte *al Danilă*, Nicu *al Ilie*, Iuon *al Matei*, Toider *al Nicolai* etc. (Telciu, 1755).

(c) *First name + father's first name in the genitive case*: Ursul *Cozmi* (= "Ursul of Cozma"; *urs* literally means 'bear'), Iuoan *Nechiti* (= "Iuoan of Nechita"), Ursula *Petri* (= "Ursul of Petre") (Hordou, 1750); Iuon *Floiri*, Gavrila *Cozmi*, Grigore *Mitrului*, Nichita *Moisi*, Toader *Irini*, Grigore *Thodori* (Telciu, 1755).

(d) *First name + father's first name in the nominative case*.

It appears that this is the last variant to have occurred the first period: Onul *Mironu*, Pinteli *Andresiu*, Vasele *Lazaru*, Iuon *Bulz*, Alexandru *Demianu*, Simionu *Demianu*, Precop *Matei*, Iuon *Andrieșu*,

[217] In English, the constructions are roughly translated as [first name] + [of] + [father's family name].

[218] In English, the constructions are roughly translated as [first name] + [of] + [father's first name].

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

Nicolai *Greasinu*, Gavrilă *Cihăreanu*, Simion *Grigore*, Timofte *Grigore*, Partenie *Mironu*, Grigoire *Iacobu*, Todor *Simion*, Andrieș *Maftei*, Grigoire *Ilie*, Maria *Grigorașiu*, Vasele *Iuon*, Vasele *Todoru*, Mironu *Cifor*, Paraschiva *Misăilă*, Persina *Vasele*, Maria *Gavrila,* Androne *Iuon,* Maria *Cira* (Hordou, 1750); Chirilă *Simion*, Gavrilă *Doce*, Grigore *Nicolai*, Iuon *Thoma*, Iugan *Andrei*, Simion *Vasile* (Telciu, 1755).

As far as we can see, all the names are calendar names – theonyms and names of saints in the calendar. However, we cannot yet speak of a definitive/completed anthroponymic system. Some of the words used for identification along with a first name cannot be treated as surnames yet. For example, let us look at the word *popă* 'priest'. It was often used, especially to refer to a priest, before the first name, *Popa Grigore* ('priest Grigore'), or, for descendants, after their first names: *Petre a Popii* ('Petre of the priest', Hordou, 1750), as the fellow villagers knew exactly the person to whom the name referred. In the former case, the name identifies father Grigore Coșbuc[219], and in the latter, Petre, the son of father Grigore, about whom we find out from a *Conscription* dating from 1763–1764 that he was *morbos* ('ill') (Catalano n.d.: 83). In the following *Conscriptions* we find other such examples: Alexandru *Popi*, Iuoan *a Popi*, Petre *a Popii*[220] ('of the father/priest'), etc., in which *Popi* functions as a byname indicating the profession. *Alexandru*, *Ioan* and *Petre*, respectively, are the children of the one who is a *priest* in the village, and where there are several *priests*, the first name of the priest in question is also included: Anuța *a Popi Iuon* ('of father/priest Iuon'), Maftei *a Popi George* ('of father/priest George'), Petre *a Popi Vasile* ('of father/priest Vasile')[221] (Telciu, 1755).

In other cases, the identification was also made with the help of a

[219] Cf. Catalano: 80.

[220] One can also see here the spelling difference between the two genitive forms of *popă*: *Popi* and *Popii*.

[221] In all the situations in which the form *Popi* appears, the word does not become a surname, it is just a byname that refers to an appellative designating the father's occupation/profession. The term becomes a surname when it occupies, in the nominative form, the second place in the anthroponymic formula, first name + family name.

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

toponym, Andreica *dupe Vale* ('on the valley', Telciu 1755), a phrase that became *Andreica Văleanu* over time.

In time other names with this status appear: foreign names, craft names, toponyms, appellations, etc. Al. Graur talks about names of professions and social situations. "At a time when surnames were not fully entrenched and craftsmen were rather rare, names of professions were often added to first names, so as to be able to identify the person bearing a certain name. Although a profession is not generally inherited, in many cases the name of a profession is inherited as a surname in time" (Graur 1965: 94, originally Romanian). We recorded situations such as: Ursul *Morarul* (Hordou, 1750), Onul *Blidaru* (Telciu, 1755), then *Bugnar*(*u*), Lăcătuș, *Olaru*, *Suciu* (Telciu, 1869); *Linguraru* (Hordou, 1870).

Another aspect we analyse on this occasion concerns name change. This is not only specific to Năsăud, but it is more or less recorded throughout the country. Al. Graur (1965: 96) mentioned that "many people in the past centuries and in the countryside nowadays as well were able to change their surname when they wanted, as long as their fellows tacitly accepted this change" (originally Romanian). In other situations the change was made by some individuals, teachers, army representatives, etc., to show the descent of the persons in questions, their local, Greek or Latin origins. In Năsăud, as we have shown, the situation refers to the need for better identification. It is worth noting that the authors of the "census" marked the change of a name by means of a Latin adverb, *recte*, *alias* 'otherwise [known as], that is' or by means of *ori*, but there are also situations in which such a term is absent: Maftei *Iacobu recte Runcanu*, which means 'Maftei *Iacob* ('of Iacob'), otherwise known as *Runcanu*', because 'he came from Runc'; Iuon *Todoranu Runcanu*; Gavrilă *Petri recte Filipu*, Ilisie *Damianu recte Iacobu*; Iftinie *Turda recte Miron*[222] (Hordou, 1750, 1763, 1870).

The study of family names in these periods of time highlights, in the most eloquent manner, their evolution, the process of inventory

[222] This example strengthens the option of believing that *Turda* was originally a first name, as I. Petruț claimed, perhaps from Maramureș, where there are many families with this name.

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

renewal and, at the same time, the existing contact of the area with other nearby or remote areas. Some names are found in villages from Maramureș, Lăpuș or Bistrița, while others occur in much more distant places: *Moldovanu*, *Topliţanu*, *Vrânceanu*, etc.

At the end of the subchapter, on the basis of the names registered, we even talked about the existence of smaller areas within the existing area of research.

Several tables inserted in this part of the paper prove both the unity of the area and the affinities between localities, but more importantly, they prove the preservation of ancient, ancestral names.

The subchapter *First names* analyses the inventory of given names following the same working method, but separately according to the two genders, men and women.

In the beginning, I made a few comments on the terms used: *baptismal name*, *first name*, *given name*, *individual name*, and I showed that the anthroponymic system on Sălăuța Valley does not differ from the general Romanian system of anthroponymy. "Traditional Romanian baptismal names, be they masculine or feminine, had the status of a brand of ethnic identity, being ethnolinguistically relevant. […] The fidelity of keeping old names such as *Ana*, *Ion*, *Gheorghe*, *Maria* or *Vasile* is a factor of community cohesion. The specificity of anthroponymic patterns must be related to the unifying function, which brings together the bearers of standard, traditional first names in the rural environment or within a family" (Felecan, O. 2011: 397, originally Romanian).

The sources used to record baptismal names are the same we used to discuss family names. Moreover, these two segments cannot be separated because they pertain to the same anthroponymic formula. Our diachronic analysis highlights aspects about the importance of each element.

The separation of *baptismal names* according to gender into masculine and feminine first names also differentiates the two categories formally, by means of morphological characteristics. However, especially in the last period of time under investigation, there are situations in which certain names can be used to designate both men and

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

women, as pointed out by many foreign researchers. In Romanian specialised literature, the first to deal with this problem was Oliviu Felecan[223], who stated as follows: "The category of unisex (first) names has not been the topic of previous approaches in Romanian specialised bibliography, while in other linguistic spaces, in the past, several studies have been devoted to them […]. Until now, the Romanian language did not record the phrase *unisex (first) name*, as shown by the definition provided in dictionaries to the invariable adjective *unisex*: '(about clothing, hair style, etc.) intended for women and men'" (2015: 149, originally Romanian) .

The eighteenth century records few names, especially for women. The explanation can be found in the fact that the data come from a *Conscription* which only inludes the landowners in the Hordou[224] area, due to the fact that "the Bistrița magistrate was interested in agricultural produce (*Provente*) to appreciate the economic power of a settlement and, according to this, taxes were set for the Principality of Transylvania and for the Bistrița magistrate" (Catalano n.d.: 81, originally Romanian).

Most first names are also used as *surnames*, as it became salient in the previous subchapter. From the viewpoint of origin, most of them are religious, for men and women alike: *Alexa*, *Alexandru*, *Avram*, *Axente*, *Cozma*, *Dosoftei*, *Gavrilă*, *Gheorghe* (*George*), *Grigore*, *Iacob*, *Ilie*, *Ioan*, *Istrate*, *Matei* (*Maftei*), *Mihăilă*, *Miron*, *Nechita*, *Nicolae*, *Petru*, *Precup*, *Simion*, *Ștefan*, *Teodor* (*Todor*), *Toma*, *Vasile*; *Ana*, *Anuța*, *Antimia*, *Doce*, *Elena*, *Ioana*, *Maria*, *Nastasia*, *Paraschiva*, *Saveta*, *Thodora*, *Varvara* and others.

Profane first names are derived from various other names:

– appellatives: *Albu*, *Albuța* (< *alb* 'white');

– names of animals and birds: *Albina* ('bee'), *Lupul* ('wolf'), *Ursul* ('bear');

[223] *Can one talk about unisex (first) names in Romanian?* in *"Name and Naming" Conventional /Unconventional in Onomastics*, edited by Oliviu Felecan, Cluj-Napoca, Mega, Argonaut, 2015: 149–162.

[224] We did not include the names of those who own land but they have their domicile in other localities (see Catalano n.d.: 80).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

– derivatives and hypocoristics: *Domnica*, *Lucica*, *Tinica*, *Valerica*, *Viorica*, *Arsinica*, *Domnica*, *Lucica*, *Maricica*, *Nazarica*, *Nuțica*, *Todorica*, *Valerica*; *Ionică*, *Romică*, *Costan*, *Iancu*, *Natul*, *Nica*, *Nicu*; *Anișca*, *Aristina*, *Chiva*, *Doce*, *Firona*/*Firoana*, *Frăsina*, *Gafta* etc.;

– names of plants: *Crina* ('lily'), Lăcrămioara ('lily of the valley'), *Margareta* ('daisy') etc.;

– nicknames and bynames: *Pribagul* ('the wanderer');

– foreign names of various origins: *Chifor*, *Cristina*, *Elisa*, etc.

In every historical age, first names also mirror the degree of innovation ensured in this area by various factors, the contribution of the Transylvanian School, the contact with foreign persons present in the area due to the Border Regiment, which came with new names, and in the following periods the cultural contacts with other nations: *Angelina*, *Anisia*, *Aristina*, *Catarina*, *Elena*, *Elisabeta*, *Eugenia*, *Irina*, *Iuvila*, *Luise*, *Minodora*, *Raveca*, *Saveta*, *Sofia*, *Sânziana*, *Tavifta*, *Tecla*, *Zenovia*.

Double given names were recorded in the area for the first time in the nineteenth century: *Cirilă Varvari*, *Dumitru Ion*, *Gavrilă Dumitru*, *Gavrilă Grigore*, *Gavrilă Lazăr*, etc.

It should be noted that both elements in the above-mentioned examples belong to traditional first names. Their relatively large number shows the parents' desire to add to their preferred baptismal name a second name, which refers to their ancestors, father, grandfather or another kin. "The fidelity of keeping old names […] is a factor of community cohesion. The specificity of anthroponymic patterns must be related to the unifying function, which brings together the bearers of standard, traditional first names in the rural environment or within a family. Any refusal of indigenous first names could be tantamount to betrayal, to an 'imbalance' in the linguistic behaviour of the age, more precisely in the assignment of names to newborns" (Felecan, O. 2011: 397, originally Romanian).

A phenomenon still present in the nineteenth century is that of changing a child's first name in cases of illnesses. Given the fact that health was endangered, the care for newborns was great. However, if a child became ill, "the sick child was placed in the oven on a shovel to

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

purify it or an item of clothing (its shirt) was thrown over the house in view of dismissing the disease". In more serious cases, "there was also the ritual of selling the child out the window when children did not live in a family. Along with the trade, the child received another name, usually a beast's name (*Lupu* 'wolf', *Ursu* 'bear', etc.)" (Lechinţan 2013: 560, originally Romanian).

The facts recorded in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries differ greatly from the situation of the previous centuries, materialising in a number of features, such as: the number of religious first names is markedly diminished; secular/profane first names are on the increase; there are now records of names derived on Romanian land from inherited words or from other words: *Cătălina*, *Doina*, *Floarea*, Lăcrimioara, *Violeta*, *Viorica* (Coşbuc); *Albina*, Călina, *Constanţa*, *Creţa*, *Crina*, *Doina*, *Dora*, *Hermina*, *Narcisa*, *Violeta*, *Viorica*; Călin, Cătălin, *Cornel*, *Doru*, *Florin*, *Gelu*, *Viorel* (Telciu).

A substantial increase can be pointed out for double names: *Aurica Saveta*, *Cristina Lucreţia*, *Domnica Raveca*, *Domniţa Oniţa*, *Dorina Ioana*, *Emilia Letiţia*, *Floarea lorentina*, *Floarea Maria*, *Floarea Lucia*, *Ioana Aurica*, *Lucica Domniţa*, *Lucreţia Oniţa*, *Maria Elena*, *Maria Florentina*, *Maria Veturia*, *Oniţa Lucreţia*, *Rodica Veturia*, *Violeta Carmela*; *Adrian Onisim*, *Aurel Cornel*, *Constantin Roco*, *Dumitru Marin*, *George Samson*, *Grigore Dănuţ*, *Grigore Adrian*, *Horaţiu Roco*, *Ilie Ioan*, *Ioan Dan*, *Ioan Florin*, *Ioan Mircea*, *Ioan Niţă*, *Ioan Aurel*, *Nicolaie Tudor*, *Pavel Aurelian*, *Radu Gheorghe*, *Radu Marius*, Ştefan Marian, *Tănase Toader*, *Toader Ilie*, *Valeriu Gheorghe*, *Viorel Vasile*, etc.

The twenty-first century brings major changes in Romanian anthroponymy, in general, and regional anthroponymy, in particular. The desire for novelty of a population familiar only with obscurity, "identified with the opposition to a past marked by socio-economic underdevelopment and political oppression, denotes an aspiration towards superior, positively valued standards" (Felecan, O. 2011: 407, originally Romanian). The extent of the opening of borders and the media institutions facilitated the perspective of different forms of contact with the outside world even as regards anthroponymy. The

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

process intensified as more and more people have left Romania since 1990, in search of work in other countries. From this period, there have begun to appear names that were not adapted to Romanian phonetic norms and were sometimes also incorrect from the viewpoint of the source language.

Nevertheless, the anthroponymic system of the researched area is not discordant, nor is it so in other areas. This is accounted for, first and foremostl, by the early nineteenth-century contact with the Romance world.

"Against the social background of the Romanians' dissatisfaction with the official systematical Magyarization of personal and place names as a result of the Bánffy law or the law of the archives of the end of the century (1895–1899), the choice of Roman names reflects the desire of the Romanians in Transylvania to preserve their national specificity in the field of onomastics as well" (Iorga, *ap.* Tomescu 2011: 474, originally Romanian). The first names we recorded in Sălăuța Valley show that the introduction of Roman names was made by the scholarship on the spur of the Transylvanian School, which had leading representatives in the area of Năsăud, renowned for their noteworthy translations from Latin and Greek and even for their everyday use of Latin in relation to the German and Hungarian administration.

Against this background, the tendency to give first names inspired by famous figures and characters is understandable, and many of these names are borrowed from beloved bearers in famous writings in world literature. With the increase of sources of inspiration (musical works, films, historical, cultural, sports figures, etc.), the anthroponymic system has consolidated, so that at the moment the tide of foreign first names does not cause unsettling disturbances. Arabic names, totally different from European ones, are eventually described as exotic and that is all.

Based on this influx of first names, we identify two important phenomena. The first phenomenon is related to the fact that there has been a large gap between first names with the largest number of records, which still belong to the old nucleus, and the extremely large number of other first names with a single occurrence or very

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

few occurrences. The second aspect refers to the increase of the use of double first names. Triple first names are also few; of the total number of registered names, simple first names were in all settlements less than 25 per cent (that is, less than a quarter) or even below.

A synoptic look at a table of the first 10 names of men and women from all the settlements investigated indicates some noteworthy facts. First of all, the presence of the first name *Maria* in all the settlements undoubtedly shows the homogeneity of the area. Secondly, the use of two first names as second names, *Ana* in four neighbouring settlements, with the centre in Coșbuc and Telciu, and *Floarea* in other four settlements forming the side areas, Salva to the south, Bichigiu to the west, Romuli and Ștefăniței Hill to north, confirms what has been said before, namely that subareas can be distinguished within the area in question. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the same first names, with very few exceptions, also occur in the other positions with differences due to the number of documented records.

Most of the first names with the highest frequency are significantly old and belong to the religious name stock, while others are part of the Romanian stock, also established early on: *Domnița*, *Floarea*, *Florina*, *Ileana*, *Ionela*, *Lenuța*, *Nicoleta*, *Onița*, *Viorica*.

An interesting problem that we have noticed with double names, which comprise almost the entire inventory, is *anthroponymic tautology*. It consists of the reiteration of the first element under different forms: *Eugenia Jenica*, *Floare Florentina*, *Florina Margareta*, *Mariana Măriuca*, *Măriuca Mărioara* (Coșbuc), *Lăcrămioara Crina*, *Floarea Margareta* (Romuli), *Viorica Sânziana* (Salva).

The following chapter, 4. *Language facts*, is necessary for several reasons, among which the most important is given by the set of variants under which some names appear. We found the motivation formulated almost a century ago by Ștefan Pașca in *Nume de persoane și nume de animale în Țara Oltului* [Names of individuals and animals in the Land of Olt]. The author pointed out that proper names are subject to the rules of evolution of the constituent elements of the language stock. But the transformations encountered in certain areas deviate from the usual rules of transformation of spoken language elements,

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

illustrating artificial, unusual developments in the historical evolution of language. The variants encountered "are not always the result of current phonological developments in the common language, but reiterate in speech arbitrary graphic forms from documents, which had occurred due to foreign notaries who were unaccustomed to certain sounds in our language and less skillful in rendering by means of foreign orthographic characters the exact phonetic body of Romanian names" (Pașca 1936: 109, originally Romanian).

The recorded examples are largely explained by the incorrect rendition in writing of the sounds *ă* and *î* and the subsequent reiteration of these forms in speech. The lack of diacritical marks is a significant drawback. From this point of view, our observations will shed light on all the compartments of language, but especially in relation to phonetics/phonology, morphology, word formation and less about syntax, because the analysis refers to words that fall into the category of proper names.

The collected language facts are grouped into subchapters about phonetics, morphology and word formation. It should be noted that multiple spelling variants, mostly emerged under foreign influence (German, Greek, Italian, Hungarian or Slavic), are the result of the attempt to render local pronunciation: *Achim/Atyim*, *Andresiu/Andreș*, *Besutiu/Besuțiu*, *Cifor/Csifor/Tsifor/Tscifor/Tyiffor*, *Covaci/Covacs/Kovacs*, *Danci/Dancs*, *Filip/Philip*, *Ignat/ Ignath*, *Iosef/Ioseph*, *Vasile/Vasele*, *Wasele/Waselle*. In some cases, they indicate the preservation of local pronunciation: *Arman* for *Armean*, *Axănte* for *Axente*, *Berăș* for *Bereș*, *Cîmpan* for *Câmpean*, *Giorgie* for *George*, *Grigore* for *Grigorie*, *Irimie* for *Ieremie*, *Iuon/Iuoan* for *Ion*, *Iuoan*, *Mihășten* for *Miheștean*, *Mniron* for *Miron*, *Teodor/Theodor/ Toader/Todor/Tudor*[225]*/Thoider/Toider* (Hordou, 1750).

The lack of diacritical marks creates problems even nowadays, as for the same name we come across variants, many of which are accepted by the authorities: *Danila/Dănilă*, *Gavrila/Găvrila/Găvrilă*,

[225] The form *Tudor* is explained by the fact that "since Antiquity *eo* became *u* […], but nowadays the *eo* variant occurs as well" (Graur 1965: 50, originally Romanian).

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

Itoc/Iţoc, *Lacatuş/Lăcătuş/Lacătuş/Lacatîş/Lăcătîş*, *Mihailă/Mihăilă/Mihaila/Mihăila*, *Andries/Andrieş*, *Ştefănuţ/Ştefanuţ/Ştefănuţi*.

We have also identified transformations of consonants or consonant groups:

– *chi* > *ci*: *Chifor* > *Cifor*, *Chirilă* > *Cirilă*, *Nichita/Nechita* > *Nicita/Necita*, *Paraschiva/Parasciva*;

– *ghi* > *gi*: *Aghistina* > *Agistina*;

– *ghe* > *ge: Anghel* > *Angel*;

– *f* > ĉ: *Filimon* > *Cilimon*, *Filip* > *Cilip*[226];

– *m* > *n*, "by means of palatalization, under the influence of the subsequent *i* sound" (Iordan 1983: 255, *s*.v. *Ifteni*, originally Romanian)[227]: *Iftimie* > *Iftinie*;

– *v* > *f: Avrigean/Afrigean*;

– *t* > *č: Condrate/Condrace*;

– *j* > *ş: Cojbuc* > *Coşbuc*, *Hrijman* >*Hrişman*;

– *k* > *ť* > *ĉ*: *Dochia*[228] > *Dotia* > *Docea*, *Condrate* > *Condrace*.

Interesting aspects also appear as regards vocals:

– *a* > *ă* (în derivatives with the suffix *-an* and *-ean*): *Zagrean* > *Zăgrean*;

– *a* > *e*: *Damian/Demian*, *Matrona/Metrona*, *Patraşcu/Petraşcu/Patrascu*;

– *ă* > *e*: *Pupăză* > *Pupeză*;

– *ē* > *i*: *Daniel – Daniil*, *Elie – Ilie*, *Gabriel – Gavril*, *Rafael – Rafail*[229], *Samuel – Samoil* (in these pairs the former name element is popular, of Greek or Slavic origin, while the latter is erudite, of Western origin; cf. Graur 1965: 49);

---

[226] There are also situations in which "the voiceless affricate alveolo-palatal *ĉ* evolves into the fricative alveolo-palatal *ŝ*: *ŝer*, ŝęrŝel, (am) *ŝerut*" (cf. Botoşineanu 2007: 117, originally Romanian). On the fricativisation of the voiceless affricate *ĉ* see also R. Todoran 1965: 85- 95; Iordan 1968: 95.

[227] For the palatalization of *m* to *mń*, ń, see also Gheţie 1994: 86.

[228] *Dokia* is a hypocoristic from *Evdokia*, which became *Vdokia* and then *Dokia* (Graur 1965: 51).

[229] For some of these words there are variants of Slavic origin ending in *ă* (Graur 1965: 49): *Dănilă*, *Gavrilă*, *Mihăilă*, *Rafailă*.

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)

– *o*/*oa*: *Firona*/*Firoana*, *Matrona*/*Matroana*;

– *ea*/*ia*: *Florean*/*Florian*, *Furcea*/*Furcia*;

– *e*/*i*: *Elie*/*Ilie*, *Gregoriu*/*Grigore*, *Ieremia*/*Irimie*, *Iozef*/*Iosif*, *Irena*/*Irina*, *Leonte*/*Lionte*, *Nechita*/*Nichita*/*Necita*/*Nicita*, *Nicodem*/*Nicodim*.

The last chapter, 5. *Conclusions*, presents the most representative facts from the anthroponymic analysis regarding Sălăuța Valley, insisting on the renewal of the system, but with the preservation of the ancestral stock of names.

The *Bibliography* contains older titles, including the sources and facts analysed by renowned Romanian linguists, as well as recent references, even from 2018, for newly emerged issues.

The last chapter, *Appendices*, includes maps, tables and lists with the inhabitants' names (family name and first name). The sources of information are mentioned as well.

We emphasize that our research is just a beginning, and further studies will certainly find other interesting and useful aspects. New data can enrich the anthroponymic material, but also provide a different research perspective.

BDD-B859-08 © 2020 Editura Mega
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.188 (2026-11-07 07:03:51 UTC)