

Notes on proper names in the 18th century Romanian translations of the *Life of Peter* (by Antonio Catiforo)[†]

Cristian Ungureanu*

Faculty of Letters, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Bd. Carol I 11, 700506 Iași, Romania

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Abstract

Vita di Pietro is a work authored by the Greek Antonio Catiforo in Italian and published in Venice in 1736. A Greek version was published a year later, also in Venice, by Alexandros Kankellarios. The work is comprised of six books and synthesizes information from various sources relating to the age and personality of the Russian tsar. It was translated several times into Romanian in the mid and late eighteenth century, in all three of the Romanian provinces. The large number of copies is evidence for the interest it aroused during that period.

This paper describes several particulars regarding the transfer of the proper names from the source language to the target language. I have analysed four types of proper name: the choronym *Moscovia* and its relating ethnonym, Western choronyms, Russian anthroponyms, and anthroponyms of other origins, noting how the translators employ their source and the ensuing differences among the versions.

1. Introduction

In 1736, in "Novelle della repubblica letteraria" a note was made of the publication of *Vita di Pietro il Grande Imperador della Russia estratta da varie memorie pubblicate in Francia e in Olanda, per opera dell'abate greco Antonio Catiforo*, a six-book account of the life of the Russian tsar, preceded by a short survey of the Russian history before his reign. The author was Antonio Catiforo, a Greek of the island of Zante who had studied first at the "St. Athanasius" Greek college of Rome, then in Venice, where he had been consecrated as deacon in 1710, allegedly holding "undecided" doctrinal views (Falcetta, 2010). He wrote *Vita di Pietro* during the Russo-Turkish conflict. By publishing the book, Antonio Catiforo did not necessarily intend to provide the European sovereigns with a model of enlightened government, but rather to attract the involvement of the Russian government in the process of political emancipation of the Balkan nations. The first edition of 1736 is anonymous, as the dedication text addressed to Duke Michiel Morosini is signed by the typographer Francesco Pitteri; only in 1739 does the work display the name of the author. Peter the Great's biography found, especially in its Greek version (Kankellarios, 1737), an ample circulation in Eastern Europe, as it was translated into Romanian, Croatian and Russian (Falcetta, 2010, note 67).

In the Romanian Principalities, Catiforo's work enjoyed three concurrent translations, all of which are extant in manuscript copies. The first was made in Wallachia by Mihai Fărcașanu, who was a nobleman descending from an old and respected family of boyars. Fărcașanu's translation, made in 1749, as we are informed by one of its copyists, was preserved in three Wallachian copies from the same century: ms. 204 BAR (1749), ms. 2353 BAR (1755), ms. 2668 BAR (1767). Its title is *Viața Marelui Petru, aftocrator a toată Rosia, părintele patriei, adunată din multe pomeniri în Franța și în Olanda, ce s-au dat în doao*

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*Email address: cristiungureanu@libero.it.

tomuri, iară mai pre urmă s-au tălmăcit den limba italienească în limba grecească cu toată nevoița de chir Alexandru Canțelariu, iară după cea grecească s-au tălmăcit acum la înțelegerea rumânească de dumnealui Matei Fărcășanu, biv vel șatrar, la anii de la Hristos 1749 [The Life of Peter the Great, autocrat of all Russia, father of the motherland, composed of many memories from France and Holland, published in two tomes, then translated from the Italian language into the Greek language with the support of Chancellor Alexander, and now translated from the Greek into Romanian by Mr. Matei Fărcășanu in 1749]. The title, reproduced after one of the copies (ms. 2353), reveals the relationship between the Romanian translation and its sources, as it specifies that the source text was the Greek version and not the Italian original; the translator's preface suggests the same thing, underlining the idea of history as a model for the present and encouraging reading as a useful activity for the human spirit. A recent linguistic analysis of a fragment (Dima & Dima, 2013, p. 73) showed that the statements in the title and preface are true, as the original was indeed the Greek version of this work, which the Romanian translator used selectively, choosing to omit some of the interventions of its author.

Also from mid eighteenth century, the Moldavian translation was preserved in four copies: ms. 49 BAR (1756), ms. 122 BAR (1756), ms. 2581 BAR (1799), ms. no. 1 of the Romanian fund of the "Saltykov-Shchedrin" Library of Sankt-Petersburg (1799) (Dima & Dima, 2013, p. 113). This time, neither the source, nor the translator are indicated. The textual analysis showed that its source was also the Greek version (Greek phonetisms, ad hoc loans, places where the Greek edition differs from the Italian version and the Romanian translation follows the Greek one). Ursu (2002, p. 55) posited that the author of the Moldavian version was Cozma the Vlach, a cleric at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Iași, who was the author of several translations from the Greek language.

The third Romanian edition is extant in two copies from the second half of the eighteenth century: ms. 3161 BAR (1788, p. 1–186: *Istoria rușilor și viața Marelui Petru, monarbul rușilor, și vitejiele lor. Cartea politiei rusești și vitejiile rușilor, a monarbului Petru și altor împărați și stăpînitori. Istoriile acestea sînt scoase de pe limba muscăcească pe limba rumânească de domnia lui, chirio, chir Rodion Popovici, dascalul orașului cetății Coronii* [The History of the Russians and the Life of Peter the Great, the monarch of the Russians, and their Heroisms. The Book of the Russian State and the heroisms of the Russians, of the monarch Peter and of other emperors and sovereigns. These histories were translated from the Russian language into the Romanian language by the Honourable Mr. Rodion Popovici, professor in the city of Corona]), ms. 2476 BAR (1783); it was the work of an otherwise unknown translator from Brașov. The title pages of the copies indicate that a Russian edition acted as an intermediary; the textual comparison showed, however, that this Romanian version too was made from the Greek version (as indicated by the contextual loans) (Dima & Dima, 2013, p. 152).

The attempts to reveal the direct source text of the translations required occasionally that attention be paid to proper names too. In what follows, I shall examine comparatively the manner in which several proper names were conveyed in the three concurrent translations (I have opted, from the numerous copies, for: ms. 2353, Wallachia; ms. 49, Moldavia; ms. 3161, Transylvania – Brașov). Additionally, the comparative study of the three concurrent translations with the same source may offer not only new data for historical dialectology and the history of the Romanian language, but also interesting information concerning the approach to translation or the weight of the cultural tradition in transmitting the proper names into the target language.

2. On the treatment of proper names

2.1. General issues

The following considerations employ the data obtained within the framework of the research project "Proper Names in the Romanian Pre-modern Writing (1780–1830): Translation Practices", at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași. As the first stage, the compiling of the bibliography and the constitution of the corpus of proper names from texts relevant to the period is still undergoing, our analysis is based

only on an incomplete corpus of the proper names from the Romanian translations of Peter the Great's biography. An examination of the entire corpus may reveal further methods of transmission. In fact, this translation provides a seminal body of work since we deal with parallel renditions (as the comparison of the versions showed) from various regions of the Daco-Romanian area. All the translations are made from the Greek version (despite the information on the title page of the Transylvanian edition—*These histories are rendered from the Russian language into the Romanian language*—the textual comparison showed that also in this case we have a translation made from the Greek, and this conclusion is supported, as we shall see, also by the investigation of the proper names).

With regard to the transfer of the proper names from one language to the other, during the act of translation, there have been identified, in the scholarly literature, several methods, the most frequent of which, for the opaque proper names¹, are the transliteration, the transcription, and the phonetic / graphic assimilation, to lesser and higher degrees (Ballard, 2011, p. 23–67). It is obvious that each age or culture has its preferences as to the transfer of proper names. Things become complicated when, in the process of transmission, other factors occur, such as the lack of standardization (more evident, for the Romanian case, the farther in the past we go) or problems specific to certain cultures. For the rendering of the Russian names, for instance, Sakhno (2006), referring strictly to the contemporary situation and to an Internet-based corpus, noted the fluctuations in their transcription and even in their transliteration in the French language, showing that, on the one hand, the transcription does not always render the Russian pronunciation (especially when it is not known to the employer), nor is, on the other hand, transliteration consistently exact (beyond the possible issues on the semantic level).

As far as the Romanian translations of the Petrine biography are concerned, the examination of the rendering of the proper names has to take into consideration the interference of three different alphabets: the Latin alphabet (the original version, in the Italian language), the Greek alphabet (the intermediary version) and the Cyrillic alphabet (the graphic system of the Romanian language at the time). Furthermore, the rendition of the proper names reveal complex interlinguistic relationships, as a result of the topic of the work, on the one hand, and of the original-translation relationships, on the other hand. Thus, in certain cases, the linguistic route of the proper name is: Russian (the language of origin of the proper name, as it is the language of the book's characters and context) → Italian → Greek → Romanian (e.g., Иван Васильевич → Giovanni Basilovitz → Ἰωάννην τον Βασιλειοβίτζ → Ioan Vasilovici / Ioan Vasilievici) or Greek (names of characters of Greek origin) → Italian → Greek → Romanian (Κεδρηγός → Cedrino → Κεδρηγός → Kedrinos / Kedrin). Some of the steps of this route may be eluded, on account of the extratextual knowledge of the translator or of the copyist (Russian → Romanian, for certain proper names of Russian origin, adopted directly from the language of origin by a translator who has a command of it or at least to whom this language sounds familiar, such as in the case of the name of Tsar Ioan Vasilievici, noted above, where the Romanian form is not justified by the form in the Greek original, but by the translator's or the copyist's familiarity with the Russian proper names).

2.2. Applications

We shall examine below the methods of rendering certain opaque proper names in our texts, noting the reference culture to which the Romanian translation is tributary, what methods of transmission of the proper names are employed, the preference for certain techniques of the Romanian versions or their reliance on certain cultural models. We have decided to examine four groups of proper names the (oiko-)choronym

¹The "opaque" ("pure", "non-descriptive", "prototypical") proper names are monolexical nominal forms (it should be noted that not all the monolexical names are opaque) that are specialized as proper names, easily recognizable as such, and lacking lexical content. In contrast, the descriptive proper names are not fully desemantized, as their appellative is identifiable (see, on the typology of proper names, Ginsac, 2013, p. 51–57). In translation, the further the text from its primary source, the more "opaque" its significance; it is what is commonly happening with the biblical names, anthroponyms or toponyms, which, when translated into modern languages, for instance, lose the descriptive character they had in Hebrew. On this issue and in general on the difficulties with the biblical proper names, see Gafton (2005, p. 167–172).

Moscova [Moscow] and the relating ethnonyms; Western choronyms; Russian anthroponyms; Western anthroponyms.

2.2.1. *Moscova* [Moscow], *muscal*, *moscovit* [of *Muscovy* / *Moscow*]

The proper name *Moscovia* designated, in the Italian original, the region that had been in the past part of the Russian Great Duchy (the Grand Principality of Moscow until 1547) and in which it was situated, at the time of the writing, the capital of the Russian Empire: “Moscovia è propriamente una sola delle molte Provincie, che compongono l’Imperio Russo” (Catiforo, 1736, p. 19). The Greek version adopts this choronym by transliteration: *Μοσχοβία* (Kankellarios, 1737, p. 3). The three Romanian versions use different methods: while ms. 2353 and ms. 3161 use the transliteration (“Moscovia este una dintre acele eparhii” [Moscow is one of those provinces], ms. 2353, 140^r; “Moscoviia iaste una dintre multe Eparhii întru împărăția rusească” [Moscow is one of the many provinces of the Russian Empire], ms. 3161, 2^r), the Moldavian version renders it by means of a Slavonic-inspired syntagma, made of a common noun and an adjective derived from the choronym, traditionally used in the old Romanian writings to designate names of countries: *Țara Moschicească* [The Muscovite Land] (ms. 49, 2^r). In a different place, in order to refer to the same Moscow region, while the two sources use the same choronyms, the Transylvanian translation employs a different form, also customary for the old Romanian script: *Mosc* (“Aerul Moscului iaste atât de rece” [The Moscow air is so chilly]; “zic așa că să fie Moscul în Olandia” [they say as if Moscow were in Holland], ms. 3161, 2^v).

The fact that the form *Moscovia* is not commonly used in Romanian requires that it be replaced by other more usual forms, reflecting translators’ own sphere of knowledge. Thus, in ms. 2353 we read *Moscova* (“supt numele Moscovei” [under the name of Moscow], 140^r), while in ms. 3161, *Moscvia* (“supt numele Moscviei”, 2^r).

The etymology of the name of the city is explained in the Italian original thus: “quella appunto, che vien bagnata dal fiume Mosca, da cui prende il suo nome la Città, Capitale di quella Provincia, e di totta la Monarchia” (Catiforo, 1736, p. 19), revealing the homonymy between the hydronym and the oikochoronym (in contrast, in modern Italian the name of the capital of Russia is *Mosca*, while the hydronym is *Moscova*). The homonymy is maintained in the Greek version: *ἀπὸ τὸν Ποταμὸν Μόσκαν – ἡ πόλις Μόσκα* (Kankellarios, 1737, p. 3), as well as in the Romanian editions: “apa Moscâi” [the river of Moscow] – “cetatea Mosca” [Moscow City] (ms. 2353, 140^r); “apa Moscviei” – “Moscvia” (the city) (ms. 49, 2^r); “rîul sau valea Moscvia” [Moscow River or Valley] (in the Transylvanian version – ms. 3161, where the name of the city is not provided). We may note the oscillating forms resulting from rendering this oikonym: whereas the Wallachian text conserves the proper name through transliteration, the Moldavian and the Transylvanian translators employ, as in the case of the choronym, forms reflecting their own sphere of knowledge.

Hesitations can be observed in the Romanian translations also in the case of the ethnonym ensuing from the name of the city of Moscow. Thus, the inhabitants of the region are named, in the Italian original, *Moscoviti*, and in the Greek one, *Μοσχοβῖται*; only once we encounter the form *Moschi* (in the Greek version: *τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Μωσκῶν*). The only Romanian text that renders both names is the one from Transylvania: “numele moscon, sau al moscalilor” [the name Moscon or of the Moscals] (ms. 3161, 3^v), while the other two have, in this place, a single proper name: “numele muscalilor” (ms. 2353, 141^v), “numele moscovilor” (ms. 49, 3^v). Let us note that the Transylvanian transliteration includes the Greek genitive plural termination (*moscon*). Next to the ethnonym *muscal* (*moscal*), a derivative of *Mosc* and commonly used in the Romanian language at the time, the texts provide us with other renditions as well: *moscovi* (a derivative from *Moscova*, ms. 49, 3^v), *moscovitii* (a transfer from the original, without the phonetic alternation *t – ț*, in ms. 3161, 3^v, but also *moscoviți*, on the same page). In other places, the translators make the same choice in that they use the ethnonym frequent in the Romanian lands: *i Moscoviti* (Catiforo, 1736, p. 25), *εἰς τοὺς Μοσχοβῖτας* (Kankellarios, 1737, p. 11), but *la muscali* (ms. 2353, 144^f), *întru moscali* (ms. 49, 5^r), *muscalilor* (ms. 3161, 6^r).

The synthesis of the observations on the renditions of this ethnonym, as seen in the following table, indicate a surprising uniformity in the Wallachian and Moldavian texts, while the Transylvanian version is characterized by a fluctuation of customary forms and contextual innovations:

Italian	Greek	ms. 2353	ms. 49	ms. 3161
il nome di Moschi o Moscoviti (p. 22)	τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Μωσκῶν, ἢ Μοσκοβιτῶν (p. 7)	numele muscalilor (141 ^v)	numele moscovilor (3 ^v)	numele moscon, sau al muscalilor (3 ^v)
I Moscoviti (p. 22)	οἱ Μοσκοβίται (p. 7)	muscalii (142 ^r)	moscovii (3 ^v)	moscovitii (3 ^v)
Moscoviti (p. 22)	εἰς τοὺς Μοσκοβίτας (p. 8)	muscali (142 ^r)	moscovi (3 ^v)	Moscoviți (3 ^v)
Moscoviti (p. 22)	οἱ Μοσκοβίται (p. 8)	muscalii (142 ^r)	(not translated)	Moscoviții (3 ^v)

Another equally interesting case is the ethnonym *rosilor* (ms. 49, 3^v; in the two other Romanian translations: *rușilor*). The Italian original and the Greek version offer, in this place too, two forms for the ethnonym: “Rossi o Russi” (Catiforo, 1736, p. 22), and τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Ρώσων, ἢ ρούσων (Kankellaros, 1737, p. 7), respectively. Neither of the Romanian editions offer here two forms. While the Wallachian and Transylvanian versions employ the usual ethnonym, the Moldavian translation keeps closer to the original, by avoiding the *s* – *ș* phonetic alternation.

Whereas the original texts show a clear delimitation of the choronyms *Rusia* and *Moscovia* (the first, referring to the Russian Empire and the latter, to the Moscow region), the Wallachian translation does not maintain this semantic differentiation, as indicated by the rendering of the succession “gli Annali della Russia” (Catiforo, 1736, p. 22), and τὰ χρονικά τῆς Ρουσίας (Kankellaros, 1737, p. 8), respectively, by “Ietopisișile cele muschicești” [the Muscovite Annals] (ms. 2353, 142^r); “Ietopisișile Rosiii” [the Annals of Russia] (ms. 49, 3^v); and “hronografurile rusești” [the Russian Chronicles] (ms. 3161, 3^v).

2.2.2. Western Choronyms

The text refers to a number of states and regions of Western Europe, named as follows:

Italian (Catiforo, 1736, p. 20)	Greek (Kankellaros, 1737, p. 4)	ms. 2353, 140 ^v	ms. 49, 2 ^r	ms. 3161, 2 ^v
che tutta la Francia	ἀπὸ τὰς Γαλλίας	Franța	Galia	Galia
la Spagna	Ἰσπανίαν	Ișpania	Ispania	Ișpania
l'Italia	καὶ Γερμανίαν	Ghermania	Ghermania	Ghermania
Olanda	εἰς τὴν Ὀλλανδίαν	Olanda	Olanda	Olandiia
la Sicilia	ἢ Νῆσος τῆς Σικελίας	ostrovul Sichilei	ostrovul Sicheliei	ostrovul Secheliei

We can see that the Greek model is dominant. In some cases, however, forms of Western inspiration are used (*Franța*, *Olanda*). As it is unlikely that the translators had access to the Italian edition, we may posit that forms of such type were part of their cultural experience.

For the city of Constantinople, the Romanian versions employ the traditional name *Țarigrad* (where both source texts have, of course, Constantinople). Only once, in the Transylvanian version, we encounter the form *Constandinopol*.

2.2.3. Russian Anthroponyms

When presenting the Rurik dynasty, the first rulers of Moscow, Antonio Catiforo refers to the wife of Prince Igor the Elder, Olga (903–969), as *Olla* (Catiforo, 1736, p. 23), *Ἐλβα* in the Greek version (Kankellaros, 1737, p. 8). The Romanian versions of this name, i.e. the forms used in Wallachia and Transylvania,

use the Greek source (*Elva*), while the Moldavian texts constantly preserve the Russian form of *Olga*, with *Olva* version. It is more likely that a translator uses a name's equivalent familiar to him (due to Moldavia's close relationship with Russia, compared to the other two Romanian principalities, which might explain the absence of this Russian anthroponym in these territories) rather than potential Russian sources. It is noticed that once the Transylvanian text transcribed this anthroponym by preserving the accusative case suffix from the source language, followed by its integration into the Romanian female anthroponyms with the suffix *-a*: gr. τὴν Ἐλβαν (*Kankellarios*, 1737, p. 8) – “ș-au luat muiare pre Elvana” [and they chose Elvana to be the wife] (*ms. 3161*, 4^r). Such notes contradict the idea that the translation of this text relies on a Russian source (as mentioned on the title page), and prove its Greek source, as in the other two Romanian versions.

The name of Ivan IV Vasilievich (Ivan the Terrible, Ivan the Fearsome) has the form *Giovanni Basilovitz* in the Italian text (*Catiforo*, 1736, p. 25). The transfer of this anthroponym is based on the method called “phonetic assimilation” by *Ballard* (2011, p. 42–46), meaning that the proper name in the source language is transposed by using a name already existing in the target language, adapted to the phonetic system of the latter. Regarding the patronym, the Italian text uses a regional form containing the vowel *o*, while the form containing *e* seems to be of Russian origin. It is also noticeable that, although the Italian consonant system includes the affricate *č* (which is to be found in the above-mentioned patronym), this consonant is replaced by *t* (= *tz*): *Giovanni Basilovitz* (*Catiforo*, 1736, p. 25); this can be explained by the Greek origin of the author (see also the form of the patronym in the Greek version: Ἰωάννην τὸν Βασιλειοβίτζην, *Kankellarios*, 1737, p. 12). In all three Romanian translations, the first name is transferred by the same method of phonetic assimilation (*Ioan*)², whilst the patronym's forms contain, on the one hand, the Russian affricate (*Vasilovici*, *ms. 2353*, 144^r; *Vasiliievici*, *ms. 49*, 5^r; *Vasilievici*, *ms. 3161*, 6^r), but on the other hand they oscillate regarding the vowel *o* / the diphthong *ie*. It is another case where the proper name is not taken as such from the source language, but the translators use for its transfer their own knowledge of Russian language and culture, a knowledge that precedes the act of translation.

2.2.4. Anthroponyms of other origins

It is specific to the Italian language to transfer foreign names by phonetic adaptation (see also, *Monaco* for *München*, *Colonia* for *Köln*, etc.). Thus, the name (Philipp) Clüver, a German historian and geographer (1580–1622), is phonetically adapted by replacing the close front rounded vowel [y] (noted *ü*), absent in the Italian phonetic system, with *u*, whereas the suffix *-io* is derived from *-ius*, the suffix of the Latin form of the name (Philippus Cluverius)³. In Greek, the suffix turns into *-ios*. The name is transferred into Romanian by adapting the suffix according to the Slavonic model: “But Cluverie [...] considers this conversion of the Russians a miracle” (*ms. 2353*, 143^v), “Nevertheless Cluverie [...] presents this conversion as a great miracle” (*ms. 49*, 4^v), “Yet Cluverie [...] considers a miracle this conversion” (*ms. 3161*, 5^v).

The name of the Byzantine chronicler (Georgios) Kedrenos, adapted in Italian by the replacing of the occlusive consonant *k*' with the affricate *č*, is adopted into the Romanian texts under its Greek form (τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Κεδρηνοῦ, *Kankellarios*, 1737, p. 11), where the vowel *η* has the Modern Greek pronunciation: *Kedrin* (*ms. 49*, 4^v; *ms. 3161*, 5^v), *Kedrinos* (transliteration, *ms. 2353*, 143^v).

²This transfer method was frequently used in that epoch for the well-known proper names; thus, in the Romanian version of *Histoire des différents peuples du monde* by Constant d'Orville (translated by Archimandrite Gherasim and preserved in a manuscript copy from 1800), the name of King Juan I of Portugal (Jean I in the French text) is transferred as *Ioan întâiu* [John the First] (3^v). Often, the translator does not follow the model of the source language, but the Greek one (as this language was familiar to the Romanian translators during this period), which leads to renderings such as the toponym *Neapolis* for *Neaples*, the anthroponym *Iraclie* for *Héraclide*, etc. The Greek model is also obvious in transliterations as *Cfîto* (Fr. *Quito*), *Hili* (Fr. *Chili*), etc. (but *țârmurile Ghinei*, cf. Fr. *les côtes de Guinée*; *Seres*, cf. Fr. *Cérès*; *Asorile*, cf. Fr. *les Açores*).

³The Latinized name may actually also explain the posterior vowel.

3. Conclusions

The analysis of a sample of proper names used in the three Romanian versions of Antonio Catiforo's work, *Vita di Pietro*, highlights several ways of transferring proper names into Romanian during the 18th century. The transfer methods vary within the same text, depending on the translator's knowledge of the reality designated by proper names, as well as on whether that name had been used or not in the Romanian texts until then. Therefore, some proper names have been transferred through transliteration, while others show that the translator used the forms already known by him. Sometimes, the translation of proper names or ethnonyms preserved the genitive or the accusative suffix from the source language (e.g. *moscon*, *Elvana*, in the Transylvanian version preserved in ms. 3161). With regard to ethnonyms, the translators chose the ones already in use in the Romanian territories; thus, some versions show a higher degree of consistency, while others oscillate between several equivalent terms.

The corpus reviewed here is a small part of that excerpted from the Romanian translations of historical and geographical works of the 18th century, under the project entitled *Proper Names in the Romanian Pre-modern Writing (1780–1830): Translation Practices*. The specific starting point of this project was the inconsistent translation of proper names, including the contemporary works, in parallel with the overall acknowledgement of the lack of standards on translating proper names in the current language, and it aimed at finding the status of this category in the early modern literary period in order to identify or not, by comparison with the following periods, the grounds for standardization. Therefore, the proper names studied herein highlight the trend of that time, i.e. of adapting less common proper names to the Romanian onomastics, in contrast with the current one.

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