

THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD *MOȘ* IN TOPONYMY*

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Abstract

In this article, we intend to present, in what form and to what extent, one of the old words of the Romanian lexicon, *moș* (old man), is preserved in the current toponymy. Furthermore, following the analysis, we will also establish the meanings from which the origin of these place names is claimed. Nonetheless, we started by making a short biography of the character, in order to fully understand his role and importance in our ancient history, his multiple implications in the life of the family and the community, which generated a phenomenon of respect, whose evidence can be seen today not only in archival documents, but also in mythology, folklore and religion.

Keywords: *moș (old man), history, legend, toponymy, meaning*

Résumé

Dans cet article, nous nous proposons de présenter sous quelle forme et dans quelle mesure l'un des anciens mots du lexique roumain, "moș" (ancêtre), est préservé dans la toponymie actuelle. De plus, à la suite de notre analyse, nous établirons les significations à partir desquelles ces noms de lieux revendiquent leur origine. Nous avons toutefois commencé par dresser un bref portrait du personnage, afin de comprendre pleinement son rôle et son importance dans notre histoire ancienne, ainsi que ses multiples implications dans la vie familiale et communautaire, qui ont engendré un phénomène de respect dont les preuves sont visibles aujourd'hui non seulement dans les documents d'archives, mais aussi dans la mythologie, le folklore et la religion.

Mots-clés: *moș (ancêtre), histoire, légende, toponymie, signification*

* The article was compiled based on the information from the plan theme, *Toponymic Dictionary of Romania. Oltenia. Anthroponymic index*, carried out between 2020-2023, within “C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor” I.R.S.S.H. in Craiova.

The word *moș*¹ was included in the list of appellations inherited from the substrate (along with *baltă* - pond, *brânză* - cheese, *brâu* - girdle, *cătun* - hamlet,

¹ Regressive derivative from *moașă*. *Micul dicționar academic* (MDA), Romanian Academy, Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, I-Pr, Bucharest, Univers Enciclopedic, 2003, recorded for *moș* a wide range of meanings (basic, regional, popular): grandfather; more distant ascendant; uncle; godfather; older man; Moș Ajun – Christmas Eve day; Carol that is said in the evening of Moș Ajun; Moș Nicolae/Crăciun (Saint Nicholas/Santa Claus) – imaginary characters after Christianization, who are said to bring gifts to children; Moș Martin or Moș Ursilă – bear; Moș-Apeș – Satyr personifying an old womanizer; Moșul Codrului – a character, usually imagined, with the qualities of the mother-forest; evil spirit; imaginary beings believed to drive away winter; each of the nine days in March following the days of the babe; saint; martyr; masked character representing an old man who appears in certain popular dramatic creations; deceased relatives of an individual or family; first holder, by way of heir to a land; corn cobs from which silk is difficult to detach; dried cherries or sour cherries; lump left after squeezing the nuts; sausage prepared from the large intestine of the pig; the hooked part of a stitch; disc of a stich, which gets stuck in the other disc, etc.

In *Dicționarul limbii românești. Etimologii, înțelesuri, exemple, citații, arhaisme, neologisme, provincialisme* (București, Saeculum I.O Press, 2013, supervised edition and preface by I. Opreșan), Augustin Scriban was noting: “Relative of *moștean*, that is, «old man». From Rom., it derives the word from Alb. *moșă*, *moș* and the Hung. *mósuly*, *moș*. Old man, elder. Respectful epithet given to an elder of the people...”.

Alexandru Ciorănescu, in *Dicționar etimologic al limbii române*, supervised edition and translation from Spanish by Tudora Șandru Mehedinți and Magdalena Popescu, București, Saeculum I.O. Press, 2002, recorded, among other things, the acceptance of “(obsolete) wealth, property, part of an estate proceeding from a single inheritance” (pp. 522-523). As for the origin of the appellation, based on a few clues – “the presence of the word in all dialects, its general usage... and compounding with *stră-* (v. *strămoș*), which appears only in traditional elements”, it becomes clear: “... It is a Latin word” (p. 523).

Vasile Scurtu, in *Termeni de înrudire în limba română* (București, 1966, p. 14), mentioned, in his turn: “*Moș* is also used as a term of addressing (especially to an old man), with various nuances... The meaning of «stepfather» used as a term of address must be related to the age of the person to whom it is addressed, but it can also contain an ironic nuance of children aware that the person is not their real father. As a term of addressing, it also has the meaning of «bade-uncle»... A fairly widespread meaning is that of «grandfather», widely attested in Daco-Romanian (throughout Transylvania, including Banat, Crișana and Maramureș, in Bucovina, Oltenia and northwestern Wallachia)... Another meaning of the term discussed – specific to the Moldovan subdialect – is that of «uncle» (father's or mother's brother; aunt's husband)... Other, less widespread meanings that fall within the scope of our concerns are: «husband of *moașa*-midwife»...; then, rarely, «godfather», which probably needs to be explained in relation to the advanced age of the godfather in relation to the godchildren” (pp. 13-14). Other meanings found in dictionaries: “The male equivalent for *moașă*; round bread as alms for the passed-away” (Dorina Bărbuț, *Dicționar de grai oltenesc*, Craiova, Asociația Independentă Literară, Artistică, Culturală și Editorială “Mileniul III”, 1990, s.v. *moș*); “bird scarecrow” (Dorin Ștef, *Dicționar de regionalisme și arhaisme din Maramureș*, (DRAM), 2nd edition, revised and expanded, Baia Mare, Ethnologica Press, 2015, p. 249).

mal - shore, *mazăre* - pea, *strugure* - grapes, *urdă* - soft cheese, *viezure* - badger etc.), among the lexemes considered certain as having this origin, on the criterion that they have identical or similar correspondents, in form and meaning, in Albanian². For a long time, these words (but also several others where there is only the probability that they come from the native word stock: *burduf* - bellows, *burtă* - belly, *mire* - honey, *negură* - darkness, *păstaie* - pod, *scorbură* - hollow etc.) were counted as loans from Albanian. “Today, however, it can be proved that, in both languages, they come from a third language (in Romanian from Thracian-Dacian, and in Albanian from Thraco-Dacian or Illyrian)”³.

As for the meaning of the Romanian word *moș* the linguist Grigore Brâncuș reported it to the Albanian *moshë* “age”, but “it should be noted that these etymological approaches characterise the ancient phase of the Albanian language, not the late, the medieval phase, when borrowing is supposed to have taken place in Romanian”⁴. Earlier, in 1966, Vasile Scurtu had also remarked that, “in its essence, the word *moș* is part of the main word stock of the Romanian language, in Albanian

The word migrated into various fields, designating, among other things, plants – *Barba moșului*, *Moș*, *Moșuț*, *Moșnegei*, *Salata moșului* etc. (Constantin Drăgulescu, *Dicționar de fitonime românești*, 5th edition, completed, Sibiu, “Lucian Blaga” University Press, 2018), animals – *Moșu-pământului* “hedgehog” (MDA), fish species – *Moș-cu-trei-ghimpi* – small fish of fresh and salty waters, which has on its back, before the dorsal fin, three bony spines (<https://dexonline.ro/definitie/mo%C8%99-cu-trei-ghimpi> - site accessed on 24.03.2022), *Moș-de-Dunăre*, *Moș-de-baltă* “ruffe” (MDA) etc.

The appellation also appears in a number of phrases and proverbs (usually suggesting antiquity): *din* (or *de la*) *moși-strămoși*-since ancient times, *a spune* (or *a înșira*, *a îndruga*) *moși pe groși*-to babble around, *de când cu moșii verzi* (or *roșii*)-of very old age, *până treci podul*, *zi-i măgarului moșule*-call the bear “uncle” until you are safe across the bridge, *de când tata moșu*-since back in the day etc.; sometimes it is accompanied by anthroponyms: *a-i veni cuiva moș Ene pe la gene*-to welcome Sandman, *de la moș Adam*-since Adam (Gh. Bolocan, Tatiana Voronțova, Elena Șodolescu-Silvestru, Iustina Burci, *Dicționar frazeologic român-rus*, volume I – A-M, Craiova, Universitaria Press, 1999).

² Grigore Brâncuș, *Introducere în istoria limbii române*, I, Bucharest, Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2002, p. 48. About the formal-semantic identity of the Romanian word with the Albanian one, I. I. Russu also spoke (in *Elemente autohtone în limba română. Substratul comun româno-albanez*, Bucharest, Socialist Republic of Romania Academy Press, 1970, pp. 181-182), signaling its presence in all four historical dialects: Daco-Romanian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, Istro-Romanian (also see Marius Sala, *101 cuvinte moștenite, împrumutate și create*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2010, p. 167).

³ *Ibidem*, p. 49. Sextil Pușcariu, in *Limba română*, vol. 1, *Privire generală*, Bucharest, 1940, p. 263, noted that the opinions of those who dealt with the analysis of common places, similarities and differences between Romanian and Albanian “differ, according to the position that each of them takes on the issue of substrate, possibilities of transmission by borrowing from one language to another, and spontaneous development of the same innovations in several languages”.

⁴ Grigore Brâncuș, *op. cit.*

being *motsh* (*mosh*) *mot* = time, year (...), age”⁵. Other authors acknowledge its connection as certain *moș* and *moașă* with the Albanian *moshë* “age”, concluding that the “simple terms show us traces of the long coexistence of the Romanians and the Albanians, in the vicinity of the Balkan Slavs”⁶. Mihai Vinereanu (who considers the word of Thracian-Dacian origin) refers not only to the Albanian *moshë* “age”, but also to the Lithuanian *moša*, “sister-in-law”: “The Lithuanian meaning defines a kinship relationship, as the Romanian *moș*, «grandfather, uncle» or *moașă* «aunt», next to Lithuanian *mote*, meaning «wife, mother», and *moteris* «woman» in general, or *motina*, «mother»... In Albanian, there is also the form *mot* «time, weather, storm»... and the Lithuanian, *metas*, «year, time»”⁷.

With such a long “life” history, in complementarity with the semantics that includes the idea of primordial time, of the “golden age”, the character in question generated, in our mythology, a cult of “ancestors and estates as protective mythical creatures; as apotropaic geniuses of the hearth, house, and household of a family, as well as of the lineage and the inheritance of a nation. At this stage, the ancestors and estates play an important role in the spiritual life of their family and family community”⁸. In a distant time, we can even talk about gods-*moși*⁹ and demigods-*moși*¹⁰ which have gradually evolved to signify, in our times, “semi-divinities of the *sacred time*, of the *popular meteorology* and of the *cult of the dead*”¹¹. In connection with the latter, the Romanian Orthodox Church has chosen special days of the year to remind believers of their duty to their ancestors, naming them *moși-wise elders*¹². Thus, *moșii* is also a term designating a customary celebration of the Church, which is done in order to remember the departed. It is the day known as the Saturday of the Dead (All Saints’ Day), and the ritual stipulates that in each church the Holy Liturgy and the Para Service are officiated. On this day, prayers are offered by the living for the eternal rest

⁵ Vasile Scurtu, *op. cit.*, p. 14. “For the Macedonians”, he continues, “the word *moș* derives from *moașe*, and in Daco-Romanians and Megleno-Romanians a new masculine *moș* was restored, for in these dialects *aus* and *papu* had disappeared. The forming of the masculine *moș* might have happened after the breaking of the Aromanian dialect, from the other dialects”.

⁶ Dan Alexe, *Dacopatia și alte rătăciri românești*, Ediție revăzută și adăugită, București, Humanitas, 2021, pp. 237-238.

⁷ Mihai Vinereanu, *Dicționar etimologic al limbii române pe baza cercetărilor de indo-europenistică*, Bucharest, Alcor Edimpex SRL, 2008, p. 549.

⁸ Romulus Vulcănescu, *Mitologie română*, Bucharest, Socialist Republic of Romania Academy Press, 1987, p. 210.

⁹ *Fărtați*, conceived as divine ancestors of the humanity (*Ibidem*, p. 215).

¹⁰ *Moș Ajun, Moș Crăciun, Moșul Pădurii, Moșii meteorologiei populare* (*Ibidem*).

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² <https://www.libertatea.ro/lifestyle/mosii-de-iarna-2022-sambata-mortilor-3966460-site> accessed on 24.03.2023.

of the departed and for the forgiveness of their sins. *Moșii de iarnă* (in the winter) holiday is celebrated on the Saturday before the Sunday of Advent. *Moșii de primăvară* (in the spring) is celebrated on the Saturday (in the autumn) around the Martyrs; *moșii de vară* (in the summer) – the Saturday before the Pentecost, and *moșii de toamnă* – the first Saturday of November. On the occasion of these holidays, in the past, the community organized fairs; hence the expression: *mă duc la moși*-I'll attend the *moși* celebration¹³. In addition to these holidays, there are other days consecrated for remembrance and sacrifice, which “are called, in all countries inhabited by Romanians, *Moși*”¹⁴. Simion Fl. Marian identified and analysed them¹⁵ all. Thus, there are *moșii* celebrated: at Christmas, in the winter, during the Lent, on Palm Sunday, on Maundy Thursday, at Easter, Sânt-George (Saint George), at the Feast of the Ascension of Jesus Christ, at Pentecost, Rusitori (traditional holiday, on the sixth day after Palm Sunday, and the fifth, the seventh, or the ninth day after the Pentecost), Sânziene (Midsummer Night), Sânt-Petru (St. Peter), Sânt-Ilie (St. Elijah), the Transfiguration of Jesus, St. Mary, the Feast of the Cross, Transfiguration, St. Mary, Day of the Cross, Sânt-Medru (St. Demeter), at Mărțișor (1st of March), on the day of *corastră* (the day of first milk for the women and kine).

In folklore, *moșul* embodies a masked character who accompanies a *brezaie* (approx., Marry Andrew), or appears in various popular dramatic creations, or represents imaginary beings believed to ward off winter (each of the nine days in March following the days of the *babe*-nine old ladies corresponding to nine bad-weather days in March)¹⁶. Here is how *moșuțul* is described, a dramatic New Year's

¹³ See also August Scriban, *Dicționarul limbii românești*, Institutu de Arte Grafice “Presa Bună”, 1939. That is where the name *Calea Moșilor* from Bucharest comes from, street so named because of a road that once led to a fair organized on the occasion of the popular holiday *Moșii de Vară*, which took place on June 29 in Obor (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calea_Moșilor – site accessed on 29.03.2023).

¹⁴ Simion Fl. Marian, *Înmormântarea la români*, București, 1892, p. 380.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 380-395.

¹⁶ <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/moș>-site accessed on 24.03.2023. In the popular calendar, we also find *Moș Alexie*, Saint Alexius, celebrated on March 17, patron saint of all living things that hibernated underground (reptiles, especially) or hid under the bark of trees (insects) (<https://www.crestinortodox.ro/datini-obiceiuri-superstitii/obiceiuri-alexii-68793.html> - site accessed on 04.08.2023). “According to the traditional Romanian mentality, Alexie has at his waist two keys with which he opens and closes the earth at well-defined intervals – March 17 and 14 Rapture, respectively. Disobeying the divine command, *Moș Alexie* loses his status as a human and becomes an avimorphic symbol - heron” (Delia-Anamaria Răchișan, *Numele sfinților și denumirea sărbătorilor în diverse zone etnografice românești și spații culturale*), in “Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Onomastics “Name and Naming”. Multiculturalism in Onomastics”, Baia Mare, September 3-5, 2019, Edited by Oliviu Felecan, Alina Bugheșiu, Cluj-Napoca, Mega Press, 2022, p. 855.

game, specific to Țara Codrului: “The dramatic games, masked people, very numerous in other regions are limited to one in Codrului area: *moșuți*. In the old times, grown-up people would dress up as *moșuț*-an old man, later followed by lads and young boys. The masks represent old men and women, brides and grooms, godparents and godchildren, etc., later adding «young girls» and especially «gypsies»... The masked crowd would enter the house carolling and dancing randomly, so that the performers would not be recognized. They were served cakes, pork and drinks, but they ate and drank them outside, not to be discovered. The old masks that were used were made of sheepskins, wool and hemp etc. and were preserved from one year to the next... From *moș* + suff. *-uț*”¹⁷.

In the popular conception, *moșul* had a real aura of holiness. Respect for elders (and their life experience¹⁸) was so great that sometimes God himself is identified with “*Moșul*”¹⁹; and in Romanian fairy tales, where the anthroponymic appears as a rule, non-individualized, *moșul* is common: he has as traits kindness, generosity and a certain naivety compared to *baba*²⁰, situated, from a characterological point of view, at the opposite pole.

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¹⁷ DRAM, p. 250.

¹⁸ In the organization and the management of the old village communes, there was a council of good and old people, which had jurisdictional attributions (regarding cases related to the patrimony of the community, participation in joint work or resolution of conflicts between its members, transfer of goods and conclusion of various conventions, verification of church maintenance and organization of religious worship, etc.) and whose decisions were respected by the entire community. Good and old people are very often found in archival documents.

¹⁹ Al. Stănciulescu-Bârda, *Povestea vorbelor de duh*, Bârda, “Cuget Românesc” Press, 2003, p. 109 apud Idem, *Justiția și proverbul românesc*, Bârda, “Cuget Românesc” Press, 2005, p. 21.

²⁰ Quite often associated, especially in the village world, with the unclean: “When the Romanian is upset, he calls his woman: *muiere*-wife, *muierușcă*-wifey “*calu dracului, dracumpieliat, vulpe-n patru labe, scorpie, iasmă, pui de lele, teleleică, talpa iadului, ... tartoriță*... -approx., a shrewd” (Gr. M. Jipescu, *Opincarul. Cum este și cum trebuie să fie săteanul*, Bucharest, 1881, p. 56; the emphases in this quotation and in the following are ours). But such appellations are “reserved” especially for the elderly, for “the woman, as she grows old, becomes angry, evil, and envious of the young, whose contentment she seeks, by slander, to poison. That is why people blame them for having connections with the unclean, and the nicknames they give him often apply to old women with evil habits.” (I. A. Candrea, *Poreclele la români*, București, 1895, p. 24): “The mistress of this maid was the wasp that whitened the devil, the caretaker at Prince Charming's palace, a fierce, water-curdling witch who knew all the devils in the world. But only one thing did not know the harsh: the man's thought. *The devil's servant*, as soon as she hears of this marvel, she sends the maid to summon the foreign woman to the palace, and, as she comes, she asks her...” (Ion Creangă, *Povestea Porcului*, In “Povești. Amintiri. Povestiri”, Preface and chronological table by Al. Piru, Bucharest, Minerva Press, 1989, p. 52). See also the legend about *Baba Dochia* “an evil fairy, the personification of winter who struggles to prolong her agony”.

In the history of the Romanian society, the “institution” of the *moș* has a long existence. In the Middle Ages, “the structuring of the village and its inhabitants was done as if they were the descendants of the same ancestor, called *moș*, as master of the whole village. The children of this *moș*, many with the right of dominion divided their village, and the share assigned to each of them took the name of *bătrân*-approx., *the wise elder*. If the old men had heirs, and they, in turn, several descendants, grandchildren of the elderly, received their parts from the village, that is, *moși/bătrâni*, accompanied by the determination: *de sus* - upper, *de jos* - lower or *de mijloc* - middle. Each part of this *moș* or *bătrân* had a corresponding part of a specific precinct, land, forest of the village. Then, each elder had a corresponding number of houses belonging to the villagers with their plots of the cultivated land”²¹. Here is an example where a portion of the estate is sold in *moșul de sus*, another in *moșul de jos*: “That is, I, Vasilca and my son, Stoica and Dragomira, of the Rock, and my son, Ioana, wrote our document, and confess that it may be of great faith for Stanciu and his brothers, so that it may be known that we sold him our part of the estate with mills, but from the village, from Ro<a>ta, from *moșul de sus*, other 110 fathoms. The part of the elder Țibrei, as long as it lasts, was sold to the Stanciu. ... And, in *moșul de jos*, they are given a part from Toma’s plot”²².

In the past, a person's belonging to a family group was done by establishing parentage, i.e., by relating them to his predecessors²³; Without this connection, no one “could establish their customary rights and duties in time and space”²⁴. We

²¹ R. Rosetti, *Pământul, sătenii și stăpânii în Moldova*, vol. I, Bucharest, Socec Press, 1907, p. 196. Iorgu Iordan also spoke about the importance of the founder in *Toponimia românească* (București, Editura Academiei Române, 1963, p. 155): “A village derives its name, in most cases, either from the master of the village ... or from its founder, who, very often (in the first centuries of Romanian political-social organization), was confused with the former: whoever founded a village became somewhat of a right... his master. Often their place is taken by the owner of the estate on which the village is located, ..., when the legal notion of land ownership begins to undergo essential changes...”.

²² *Documenta Romaniae Historica B. Țara Românească*, (DRH), vol. XXXVII, doc. no. 75, 4 March 1652.

²³ The great mass of documents records male persons as *moș* (first owner of a land). But there are exceptions. We point out, in the following lines, the situation in which women occupy this position: “... And I asked the traders from the village, both young and old, and priests. This is what they confessed, how there were 2 old sisters, who also had a brother. And that brother, as all the traders testified, that the brother was ill, and he died, and only the 2 sisters remained. This is what all the villagers confessed” (DRH, B, vol. XXXVIII, doc. no. 235, December 15, 1653).

²⁴ Romulus Vulcănescu, *Etnologie juridică*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970, p. 73.

present below a document in which Matei Basarab “legalized” the right to an estate²⁵ for the sons of Ivan, the seneschal: “By the mercy of God, I, Matei Basarab voivode and lord, give, by my lordship command, to Paraschiva and Stanca, heirs of Ivan postelnic ot Rumcéni ot sudstvo Săcui to be free, with this act issued under my reign, to keep their estate of *moș* Gheorghe, and *his father*, to seneschal Ivan, ... whatever he chooses, throughout the entire boundary, because he is of Paraschiva and Stanca, the grandsons of Ghierghe, the sons of Ivan the seneschal, their rightful due estate, even from some long time ago, and still kept their parents' estate with good [peace] ... Therefore, I gave to Paraschiva and Stanca, Ivan Postelnic's heirs, with the title of inherited land and estate and to their sons forever”²⁶. Thus, it results the significance of blood kinship in transmitting the patrimony to the descendants.

“The old people, the elders, the ancestors became founders of villages, ... of estates, «givers of laws and customs». He, who did not have a family tree was not respected by the community: «This is not humanity, no elderly, no estate»”²⁷.

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Starting from the basic meaning of the word – old man, elder, uncle – and knowing the character's status – of old founder of the village, but also of an important landmark, for a long period, in establishing family descent, with direct repercussions on the non-participation of descendants in the division of patrimonial inventory –, we have set ourselves as an objective, in the pages of this paper, to follow in what form and to what extent the appellation *moș* is found in the current toponymy. In doing so, we relied on the material provided by DTRO²⁸, DTRM²⁹ and *Indexul antroponimic* that we are working on.

First, a few words about the meaning of this word in the system of place names, the microtoponymy in particular. In the work *Nume de locuri din Banat*³⁰, Vasile Ioniță showed that “some of the place names, derived from the appellation *moș* may have historical-social significance, *moșul* being «strămoșul-the ancestor», the eponymous character, the first master of the place, the founder of the village. Such an interpretation is very likely, especially for places in the countryside or on the mountain plains”.

²⁵ The appellation *moșie* is, from the point of view of origin, directly related to *moșul*. MDA, vol. III, Letters I-Pr, establishes the following etymology: *moș* (land inherited from a *moș/strămoș*) derivative with the suffix *-ie*.

²⁶ DRH, B, vol. XXX, doc. no. 17, 15 January 1645, Târgoviște.

²⁷ Al. Stănciulescu-Bârda, *Povestea vorbelor de duh*, p. 109 in *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁸ *Dicționarul toponimic al României. Oltenia* (DTRO), editorship of Prof. Gh. Bolocan, PhD, vol. 1 (A-B), Craiova, Universitaria Press, 1993 and the following.

²⁹ *Dicționarul toponimic al României. Muntenia* (DTRM), coord. Prof. Gh. Saramandu PhD, vol. 1 (A-B), Bucucurești, Editura Academiei Române, 2005 and the following.

³⁰ Timișoara, Editura Facla, 1982, p. 85.

Another point of view belongs to the authors of mythical toponymy studies, who consider “often as belonging to this category place names of the type *Babele* and *Moșii*, isolated or seconding each other”³¹. Such a legend, that of Baba and Dragomir, is also the basis of the names of two nearby rocks – *Baba* and *Moșu* – from Mehedinți County³². It seems that the two characters went to the mountain in search of sheep. Baba got higher, because she was wearing twelve sheep skin coats, and Dragomir, who put on fewer, remained lower on the hill. Hence the position of the rocks.

Even if they would not all have been named based on legendary characters, the truth is that toponyms of this kind are quite widespread throughout the country. Romulus Vulcănescu concluded that “... On the territory inhabited by Romanians, most mythical oronyms refer to slang simulacra, called *babe* and *moși*, according to their anthropomorphic silhouettes”³³. We cannot say that all such names are the result of mythical representations, but it is also true that they do not all have an anthroponymic explanation: ... *Moșu*, *Cracu Moșului*, *Cioaca Moșului*, *Dealul Moșului*, *Dosu Moșului*, *Poiana Moșului*, *Tău Moșului*, *Valea Moșului*³⁴ etc.

Nicolae Constantinescu³⁵, similarly to other researchers, pointed out another meaning, which can underlie some toponyms – that of “property, part of an estate”. Here is the excerpt: “A philological analysis of terms leads to the conclusion that «*moș* is neither a regressive derivative of *moașă*, nor an Albanian loan», but an inherited, substrate element. A decisive argument in this matter is the special significance that *Santa* has in Romanian, ..., namely that of «inherited property»”.

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The typology of place names in which the appellation *moș* appears, found in Oltenia and Muntenia, is different. In both regions, however, according to the etymology established in the two dictionaries that provided us with the material, the meaning of the word is mainly that of “first holder, with title of heir, of a land”, but also of “wealth, property, part of an estate”. In a few other cases, we deal with personal names. We will present them one by one.

Therefore, from a structural point of view, the following situations were recorded in Muntenia:

a) The appellation (singular or plural) forms the toponym alone: *Moșu* [sheepfold v. Lupșanu-II], *Moșii* [arable land v.c. Morteni-DB];

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² Ion M. Ungureanu, *Elemente toponimice din Mehedinți*, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Centrul județean al Creației Populare Mehedinți, 2000, p. 125.

³³ R. Vulcănescu, *Mitologie...*, pp. 188-189.

³⁴ Vasile Ioniță, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

³⁵ Nicolae Constantinescu, *Relațiile de rudenie în societățile tradiționale. Reflexe în folclorul românesc*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1987, p. 93.

b) The appellation accompanies a unique personal name (first name/patronymic), forming together a toponymic construction in the nominative case: *Moșu Bunea* (estate-BZ; p. *Bunea*), *Moșu Calotă* (estate-PH; p. (predicative) *Calotă*), *Moșu Cârștian* (estate- BZ; p. *Cârștian*), *Moșu Coman* (valley-IL; p. *Coman*), *Moșu Cotoiu* (estate-PH; p. *Cotoiu*) *Moșu Crivăț* (estate-BZ; p. *Crivăț*), *Moșu Dan* (estate-BZ; p. *Dan*), *Moșu Dinu* (hillock-BZ; p. *Dinu*), *Moșu Drăgoiu* (estate-PH; p. *Drăgoiu*); *Moșu Dumitrașco* (estate-VR; p. *Dumitrașco*), *Moșu Filip* (estate-BZ; p. *Filip*), *Moșu Giura* (estate-BZ; p. *Giura*), *Moșu Godeanu* (estate-PH; p. *Godeanu*), *Moșu Gorăscu* (estate-BZ; p. *Gorăscu*), *Moșu Hrancea* (estate-BZ; p. *Hrancea*), *Moșu Hrăntescu* (estate-BZ; p. *Hrăntescu*), *Moșu Mănoescu* (estate-GR; p. *Mănoescu*), *Moșu Mihai* (estate-CL, sheepfold-IL; p. *Mihai*), *Moșu Mucosu* (estate-PH; p. *Mucosu*), *Moșu Popescu* (estate-BZ; p. *Popescu*), *Moșu Tomescu* (estate-BZ; p. *Tomescu*), *Moșu Slav* (estate-PH; p. *Slav*), *Moșu Ștefan* (shepfold-IL; p. *Ștefan*), *Moșu Șuchiescu* (estate-BZ; p. *Șuchiescu*), *Moșu Tanda* (estate-BZ; p. *Tanda*), *Moșu Țivian* (estate-PH; p. *Țivian*), *Moșu Țușescu* (estate-BZ; p. *Țușescu*), *Moșu Vlăiculescu* (estate-VR; p. *Vlăiculescu*).

c) The appellation accompanies a double name, in the nominative: *Moșu Neagu Caraimele* (estate-BZ; p. *Neagu Caraimele*);

d) The appellation accompanies a person's name³⁶, single or double, in the genitive case:

– enclitic: *Moșu Bercii* (village-GR; p. *Berca*), *Moșu Dragomirului Bobe* (estate-PH; p. *Dragomir Bobe*; archaic expression of the genitive), *Moșu Dumei* (estate-PH; p. *Duma*), *Moșu Fercăi* (estate-BZ; p. *Ferca*), *Moșu Manei* (estate-BZ; p. *Manea*), *Moșu Mătorescului* (estate-BZ; p. *Mătorescu*), *Moșu Popeștilor* (estate-BZ; p. *Popescu*), *Moșu Robului* (estate-BZ; p. *Robu*), *Moșu Roșcăi* (estate-VR; p. *Roșca*), *Moșu Simii* (estate-VR; p. *Sima*), *Moșu Tihului* (estate-BZ; p. *Tihu*);

– proclitic: *Moșu lui Căliviscu* (estate-VR; p. *Căliviscu*), *Moșu lui Drăgan* (estate-PH; p. *Drăgan*), *Moșu lui Stan Grecea* (part of village v. Dumitrești-VR; p. *Stan Grecea*), *Moșu lui Ursache* (estate-PH; p. *Ursache*).

e) The appellation accompanies an adjective which, in the alternative, has anthroponymic origin. Possessive adjectives or “adjectives of belonging”³⁷ represent the second major group of elements by means of which there was established, in the past, the affiliation³⁸ of a good. In our case they are even more numerous than those

³⁶ In the toponym *Moșu Logofeșilor* (moșie-PH), the determinant is, originally, an appellation.

³⁷ On these, see *Dicționarul elementelor românești din documentele slavo-române. 1374-1600*, DERS, resp. editor Gh. Bolocan, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1981, p. XXIX.

³⁸ In archives, such expressions are common. Here's an example: “That is, I, Vasilie and I, Danciul and I, Danciul, and I, Dan, wrote this document of ours at the hand of the deacon of

in which the proper anthroponyms appear. Here are the examples: *Moșu Albescu* (estate-VR; adj. *albesc* < p. *Albu*), *Moșu Bărcănesc* (estate-IL; adj. *bărcănesc* < p. *Bărcan*), *Moșu Bâscesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *bâscesc* < p. *Bâscă*), *Moșu Boierescu* (estate-PH; adj. *boieresc* < p. *Boieru*), *Moșu Boziesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *boziesc* < p. *Bozie*), *Moșu Brăilesc* (estate-IL, VR; adj. *brăilesc* < p. *Brăilă*), *Moșu Brăscăresc* (estate-PH; adj. *brăscăresc* < p. *Broscaru*), *Moșu Brâncăresc* (estate-PH; adj. *brâncăresc* < p. *Brâncărea*), *Moșu Burducesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *burducesc* < p. *Burducea*), *Moșu Burlăcesc* (estate-PH; adj. *burlăcesc* < p. *Burluc*), *Moșu Călinesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *călinesc* < p. *Călin*), *Moșu Căliviesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *căliviesc* < p. *Călivă*), *Moșu Cărăbesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *cărăbesc* < p. *Cărăbă*), *Moșu Ciobănesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *ciobănesc* < p. *Ciobanu*), *Moșu Ciopăcesc* (estate-BR; adj. *ciopăcesc* < p. *Ciopac*), *Moșu Ciopănesc* (estate-GR; adj. *ciopănesc* < p. *Ciop*), *Moșu Drăgotesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *drăgotesc* < p. *Dragotă*), *Moșu Găojesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *găojesc* < p. *Găoază*), *Moșu Ghighinicesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *ghighinicesc* < p. *Ghigină*), *Moșu Groșănesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *groșănesc* < p. *Groșan*), *Moșu Măgulesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *măgulesc* < p. *Magu*), *Moșu Mănăilesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *mănăilesc* < p. *Mănăilă*), *Moșu Mănulesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *mănulesc* < p. *Manu*), *Moșu Măturesc* (estate-BZ, GR; adj. *măturesc* < p. *Matur*), *Moșu Micocesc* (estate-PH; adj. *micocesc* < p. *Micoci*), *Moșu Miricesc* (estate-PH; adj. *miricesc* < p. *Mirică*), *Moșu Negoiesc* (estate-VR; adj. *negoiesc* < p. *Neagoie*), *Moșu Nenulesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *nenulesc* < p. *Nenu*), *Moșu Sfârâiesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *sfârâiesc* < p. *Sfârâie*), *Moșu Stăneșeresc* (estate-BR; adj. *stăneșeresc* < p. *Stănășiră*), *Moșu Stănișoresc* (estate-BZ; adj. *stănișoresc* < p. *Stănișoară*), *Moșu Stoiennesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *stoiennesc* < p. *Stoian*), *Moșu Șoimesc* (estate-PH; adj. *șoimesc* < p. *Șoimu*), *Moșu Tândesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *tândesc* < p. *Tanda*), *Moșu Telesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *telesc* < p. *Talea*), *Moșu Tibilicesc* (estate-IL; adj. *tibilicesc* < p. *Tibilic*), *Moșu Velesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *velesc* < p. *Velea*), *Moșu Velinesc* (estate-BZ; adj. *velinesc* < p. *Velin*), *Moșu Vlădesc* (estate-Bz; adj. *vlădesc* < p. *Vlad*), *Moșu Vrâncesc* (estate -BZ; adj. *vrâncesc* < p. *Vrâncu*).

f) The meaning of “estate” appears in several compound toponyms, accompanied by adverbial determiners: *Moșu de Jos* – estate v.c. Brazi (IL), *Moșu de Sus* – part of village (IF), *Moșu din Mijloc* – estate v.c. Brazi (IL). The same acceptance appears in *Moșu Ciomăgeștilor* (estate-BZ; *moșu* + p. *Ciomag*).

Regarding the nature of the named object, it can be noted that the toponyms cited represent, with few exceptions, the names of some estates.

In Oltenia, the typology of names is different.

Id and his brothers, namely: the priest Stanciul and Gligorie and Barbul and David, to be known that we made this act to be of great faith, because we were accused for the estate of Hurezi, in *funea voinească*-Voinea’s part of land” (adj. *voinească* originating from p. *Voinea*) (DRH, B, vol. XXX, doc. no. 285, 14 September 1645).

a) The word is part of analytical structures formed with the proclitic genitive: *Păru lu Moșu*³⁹ [v. Folești c. Tomșani-VL] and enclitic: *Piatra Moșului* [mountain-MH]. In these examples, its status is that of a proper personal name. *Moș* got this position very early. The archival documents prove it: “That is, I, the Lupul of Urziceni, together with my brother, *Moș*, wrote the present document, so that it would be of great faith in the hand of Bran and his brother, to commander Dragomir, and in the hand of Baico and his brother, Dumitru, let it be known that we sold them our part of the estate in Urziceni, the forest area, to our *moș*, to Șărban, our share as much as we owned”⁴⁰. The oldest attestations⁴¹ of the anthroponym, in Wallachia, date from 1480, and in toponymy from 1598. Today, we find in our patronymic inventory the following denominations⁴² from the lexical family of the quoted anthroponym (are both derived and non-derived forms): *Moș* (371 bearers), *Moșescu* (235), *Moșoi* (49), *Moșu* (172), *Moșuc* (9), *Moșuleac* (5), *Moșuleț* (58), *Moșuleți* (1), *Moșulică* (41) etc.; *Moșescu*, *Moșilă*, *Moșuțan*⁴³; the presence of some of them, *Moș*, *Moșu*, *Moșuleț*, *Moșescu* etc., It has also been reported in the counties of Constanța and Tulcea⁴⁴, just like across the country.

In the toponym *Fântâna lu Moșoiu*, registered in Săpata village, Măceșu de Jos commune, Dolj county, the anthroponym is derived with the suffix *-oiu*.

b) With the meaning of “older man, more distant ascendant, uncle”, *moș* accompanies a single-member anthroponym. The toponymic structures to which it belongs are complex and generally “speak” to us about the ownership of objects or their location; We have subclassified these structures according to the syntactic means used in compiling the names:

1. The expression of belonging to the named geographical object. The genitive case and the possessive-genitival article (with popular and literary forms): *ale*, *lu*, *lui* serve this objective.

³⁹ On *Valea lui Moșu*, toponym with similar structure, Iorgu Iordan said: “*Valea lui Moșu* or *Valea Moșului*...: The anteposition of the article to the noun *Santa* also appears in current familiar speech, where this word, used alone, always has the form *moșu* (that is, *moșul*) and that is why it is treated as a kind of proper name” (*Toponimia românească*, p. 486).

⁴⁰ DRH, B, vol. XXXVII, doc. no. 69, March 3, 1652.

⁴¹ DERS, s.v. *moș*. In Transylvania, it has been documented since the beginning of the 13th century. In *Registrul de la Oradea* (1208-1235), among foreign names, “forms identical or similar to some Romanian words” appear, among them *Mochou* (*Moșu*) (year 1222) – see Domnița Tomescu, *Numele de persoană la români. Perspectivă istorică*, București, Univers enciclopedic, 2001, p. 55.

⁴² Excerpts from BDAR – The anthroponymic database of Romania, established at the Onomastics Research Laboratory at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Craiova, 1994.

⁴³ Excerpts from Iorgu Iordan, *Dicționar al numelor de familie românești*, DNFR, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983, pp. 317-318.

⁴⁴ Liliana Lazea, *Nume de persoane din Dobrogea. Dicționar invers*, Constanța, Ex Ponto, 2004.

– The word accompanies a simple anthroponym (first name, nickname, patronymic): *Moș Adam* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Albu* [Pârâu lu ~, OT], *Moș Andrei* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Bogatu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Cașmir* [Fântâna ale ~, DJ], *Moș Cercel* [Conacu lu ~, MH], *Moș Ducu* [Lotu lu ~, OT], *Moș Dumitru* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Durlea* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Grigore* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Ignat* [Salcia lu ~, OT], *Moș Ionică* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Ivan* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ; Zăvoiu lu ~, OT], *Moș Licsandru (Lisandru)* [Poiana lu ~, MH], *Moș Marcu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Marin* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Matei* [Balta lu ~, DJ; Fântâna la ~, DJ; Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Mărin* [Plopu lu ~ OT], *Moș Melaiche* [Conacu lu ~, MH], *Moș Miai (Mihai)* [Fântâna lu ~, MH], *Moș Mielache* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Mitrache* [Fântâna lu ~, OT; Plopu lu ~ OT], *Moș Nae* [Fântâna lu ~, VL], *Moș Nelache* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Nică* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ, OT], *Moș Nicolae* [Fântâna lu ~, VL; Poiana lu ~, MH], *Moș Nicu* [Fântâna lu ~, MH], *Moș Nine* [Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Oprea* [Cotu lu ~, DJ], *Moș Pantilie* [Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Paul* [Crovu lu ~, MH], *Moș Pășuică* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Pătru* [Fântâna lu ~, OT; Măgura lu ~, OT], *Moș Pârvănel* [Albia lui ~, MH], *Moș Pârvu* [Fântâna lu ~, GJ], *Moș Peșcu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Petre* [Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Radu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Simion* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Trifu* [Cișmeaua lu ~, OT], *Moș Tudor* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Țăranu* [Fântâna lu ~, MH], *Moș Vasile* [Coliba lu ~, MH], *Moș Vășile* [Salcia lu ~, DJ].

Most of them are unique names, registered at the level of a single locality. There are, however, several particular situations here; the first includes homonymous anthroponyms: different persons, bearing identical names, own objects located in the same county or in different counties (*Fântâna lu Moș Pătru* v.c. Studina OT, *Măgura lu Moș Pătru* s. Obârșia Veche c. Obârșia-OT; *Fântâna lu Moș Ivan*-DJ, *Zăvoiu lu Moș Ivan*-OT; *Fântâna lu Moș Nică*-DJ, OT; *Fântâna lu Moș Nicolae*-VL, *Poiana lu Moș Nicolae*-MH); in the second, several objects have the same owner: *Moș Mitrache* from the village of Corlătești, commune of Cezieni, Olt County, has in its possession a source of water – *Fântâna (fountain) lu Moș Mitrache*, but also a tree – *Plopu (poplar) lu Moș Mitrache*.

The enclitic genitive has, unlike the analytic genitive, a frequency reduced to a minimum: *Moș Nicăi* [Vâlcea ~, VL], *Moș Stoicăi* [Fântâna ~, DJ].

– the word *moș* accompanies a double anthroponym (first name + patronymic): *Moș Mitran Voicu* [Bășicuța lui ~, OT], *Moș Cămin Căpitanu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Dincă Stan* [Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Florea Lupu* [Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Florea Petcu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Gheorghe Buzdu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Ion Afronie* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Marin Pădureanu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Nicu Gheonciu* [Fântâna lu ~, MH], *Moș Oane Ciucurel* [Fântâna lu ~, OT], *Moș Stancu Florescu* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ]. Homonymy is, in such examples, less likely, since individualization is maximum (first and last name).

As regards the named geographical object, it can be noted that this time, *fântâna-fountain* occupies the first position.

2. The location in the field of the named geographical object. The accusative with simple and compound prepositions is used for this purpose: *Moș Codin* [Fântâna de la ~, DJ], *Moș Coveanu* [Fântâna de la ~, DJ].

The accusative also, with the ante-positioned preposition *la*, fixes, in the field, the position of a place (without its nature being defined more closely) or establishes a direction, depending on a person: *Moș Dincă* [La ~, DJ], *Moș Drean* [La ~ în Viezuină, OT], *Moș Dreanu* [La ~, OT], *Moș Drugă* [La ~, OT], *Moș Ene* [La ~, DJ], *Moș Paraschiv* [La ~, OT], *Moș Tănase* [La ~, MH].

In *La Moș Enache Olteanu* [DJ] the full name of the person is mentioned.

3. The nominative is encountered extremely rarely. Only two cases are present in the analyzed material: *Moș Miuță* [glade v. Comănești c. Bala-MH] and *Moș Păun* [Zăvoiu ~, OT]. And a designation in which the component parts were merged together: *Moșandru* (village in MH) < p. *Moșandru* < *Moș* + p. *Andru*.

In a few examples – *Moș Iancu lu Pătrană* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Nic al Nițului* [Fântâna lu ~, DJ], *Moș Niță al Lincî* [Teiu lu ~, DJ] – toponyms include the popular model of denomination (in the past, filiation was established by reference to the person who fulfilled the role of head of the family, regardless of their gender, male or female); and in the name *Teiu Moșului Bratilovesc* (place near Baia de Aramă, Mehedinți county) the entopic *tei* appears, “funie de moșie-narrow part of the estate” and an adjectival determiner, *Bratilovesc* (with anthroponymic origin: *Bratilovu*), accompanied by an attribute of the person in case.

Several other names, mostly from Muntenia, contain derivatives: *Fântâna lu Moșoiu* (DJ), *Moșani* (estate-PH; p. *Moșu*), *Moșeasca* (village-BR, BZ, estate-PH; p. *Moșeasca*), *Moșești* (village-BZ, part of village-VR; n. group *moșești* from p. *Moșu*), *Moșeștii Pistruiului* (estate-BZ; n. group + p. *Pistrui*), *Moșoaia* (village-AG, forest-PH; p. *Moșoaia*). Some are adjectivally individualized – *Moșeștii Noi* (village-BZ; n. group + adj. *noi*), *Moșeștii Vechi* (village-BZ; n. group + adj. *vechi*), *Moșii cei Mari* (estate c. Amaru-BZ; toponym *Moșii* + qualifier *Mari*, preceded by the adjectival article, plural form).

Even if they do not have a high frequency, the names in which the word *moș* appears have, instead, a distribution that covers the entire country. In the non-derived form – *Măgura Moșului*, *Izvorul Moșului*, *Pădurea Moșului*, *Dealul Măgura Moșului*,

*Fântâna Moşului*⁴⁵ etc. or derivative⁴⁶ *Moşanul, Valea Moşanului, Dealu Moşanului*⁴⁷ etc., toponyms, anthroponyms⁴⁸ or nicknames⁴⁹, each with their own history.

In the analysis of toponyms, deciphering the meaning of the word also largely depends on the named geographical object. Viorica Goicu, referring to the word *babă*, pointed out that “if it is about the name of a rocky hill, a rock or a rocky massif, then most likely at the base of the toponym is the entopic *babă*”⁵⁰. The same situation is valid for *moş*.

In the studied material, however, the origin of the toponyms does not concern this acceptance. It refers, as it can be seen, to other meanings of the word, arising from a patriarchal form of establishing property rights according to the kinship relationships existing between the members of the respective family/community. “The word *moş*, in the old language does not just mean «old», but also «the elder from a group of related people». In the latter capacity, however, he also designates «land ownership passed to a descendant in the group according to the rules of kinship». That is why it is said that a person has «un moş» or several, that is, one or more parts of the property, *din moşie*-from the estate”⁵¹.

⁴⁵ Examples extracted from Nicolai Grămadă, *Toponimia minoră a Bucovinei*, edition supervision, introductory study, bibliography, footnotes and index: Ion Popescu-Sireteanu, Introduction: D. Vatamaniuc, vol. I and II, Bucureşti, Editura Anima, 1996.

⁴⁶ Derived from *moş* are also the toponyms *Moşteni, Moşneni* meaning “heir, inheritor, successor; owner of property inherited from ancestors; Moşnean”, found all over the country. Ion Coteanu, in *Originile limbii române*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1981, p. 62, pointed out that the lord himself could be an heir: “The lord, who can be an heir, that is, heir to great landowners, is also an heir of the land, but not necessarily from father to son, but also by collateral kinship. He must be only «princely offspring». As for his quality of *moştean*, word relatively recent, it must be connected with *moşie*, which, in its turn, derives from *moş*, word of Thracian-Dacian origin. *Moş* meant not only «ancestor», but designated that part of the land which belonged to direct or indirect descendants. Together with *ţară, moş* and *moşie* demonstrates continuity of land dominion”.

⁴⁷ Examples extracted from Vasile Tătaru, *Comuna Vlădeni, Judeţul Iaşi – repere monografice. Din preistorie până la reformele lui Cuza (1864)*, Iaşi, Editura Alfa, 2018, p. 308.

⁴⁸ See footnotes 40, 41, 42.

⁴⁹ The nickname works very well in the community (rural and urban alike) even today. Here are some examples in which reference is generally made to the mismatch between the age of those nicknamed and their different behavioural traits: *Moş Martin* – a heavy, elderly man who dresses too thickly (see *Moş Martin* – St. Vasile’s bear); *Moş Pendulă* – (elderly) physics teacher; *Moş Tăgârţă* – A fuddy, prickly old man who thinks he's still young; *Moştoslei* – originally an honourable surname, but as a nickname it was influenced by *Toflea, Toflogos...* to which comes close in meaning; *Moşu Cute* – an elderly person, a womanizer; *Moş Virgulă* – a famous Romanian teacher, very demanding; *Moş Papiţă* – agriculture teacher (*papiţă* – food) (Petru Tomegea, *Apelative onomastice. Dicţionar*, Iaşi, Editura Junimea, 2022, p. 156).

⁵⁰ Viorica Goicu, *Semnificaţia cuvântului babă în toponimia românească*, in LR, XLIX, no. 3, Bucureşti, 2000. p. 471.

⁵¹ Nicolae Constantinescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

The three meanings of the word, encountered in toponymy, are, therefore: elderly person, elderly; (elderly) person to whom other family members refer in establishing parentage; inherited property.

Nowadays, only the first of them is still in use (sometimes it is also used pejoratively); the other two, exponents of bygone eras, find their place in the archaic lexicon and in the pages of the archives.

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