

# POLYONYMY IN ROMANIAN TOPONYMY<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The few situations of toponymic polyonymy we have analyzed here enable us to reveal a series of important characteristics of the phenomenon. At the popular level, polyonymy is always motivated, being caused by historical-social/ administrative/ economic changes affecting the designated referent or by the modified perception of the locals upon the reality designated in different stages of the denominative process. In the case of official toponymy, place names, especially names of human settlements are arbitrarily changed by the local authorities.

Two or more names can be used successively, in different periods of time, to designate the same geographical object (with the occurrence, at one specific point, of denominative simultaneity, and the subsequent definitive replacement of the old name by the new one). Another case is represented by the simultaneous existence of the polyonyms, when two or more names of the same referent are used either by different speakers (for instance speakers living in various localities in the vicinity of the designated object) or by the same speakers, using different registers (popular/ official/ borrowed).

**Keywords:** *place names, polyonymy, diachrony, synchrony, causes*

## Résumé

Les quelques situations de polyonymie toponymique que nous avons analysées ici nous permettent de révéler une série de caractéristiques importantes du phénomène. Au niveau populaire, la polyonymie est toujours motivée, étant causée par des changements historico-sociaux/ administratifs/ économiques affectant le référent désigné ou par la perception modifiée des habitants sur la réalité désignée pendant de différentes étapes du processus dénominatif. Dans le cas de la toponymie officielle, les noms de lieux, en particulier les noms des établissements humains, sont souvent arbitrairement modifiés par les autorités locales.

Deux ou plusieurs noms peuvent être utilisés successivement, à des périodes différentes, pour désigner le même objet géographique (avec l'occurrence, à un moment précis, de la simultanéité dénominative et le remplacement définitif ultérieur de l'ancien

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nom par un autre nouveau). Un autre cas est représenté par l'existence simultanée des polyonymes, lorsque deux ou plusieurs noms du même référent sont utilisés soit par des locuteurs différents (par exemple des locuteurs de diverses localités situées à proximité de l'objet désigné) soit par les mêmes locuteurs, en utilisant de différents registres (populaires/ officiels/ empruntés).

**Mots-clés:** *noms de lieux, polyonymie, diachronie, synchronie, causes*

Sometimes, certain places have been given two or more names. For instance, for one of the left-bank tributaries of Sitna stream we have identified the following names: *Burla*, *Borcila*, *Puturosul* and *Ursoaia*. One of the right-bank tributaries of Bahlui river is called *Pârâul Văcăria*, *Pârâul Urlei*, *Pârâul Măgura* or *Cârjoaia*. Generally, these place names that are used simultaneously in the popular denominative system by different residents refer especially to streams and hills, which are more likely to be named depending on the neighbouring villages they are located or run across. No less prone to the renaming process are the localities, which sometimes suffer the arbitrary intervention of the authorities in this respect: *Gherăieștii Noi*, the county of Neamț (1895) → *Satul Nou* (1896) → *Principele Ferdinand* (1904)/ *Ferdinand* (1924) → *Gheorghe Doja* (1948) → *Gherăieștii Noi* (1964; TTRM, I<sub>1</sub>: 463). This last example illustrates the denominative dynamics of a village, motivated, on the one hand, by its separation from the old village of Gherăiești and, on the other hand, by the fact that the names *Principele Ferdinand* and *Gheorghe Doja* were imposed by the officials, on political grounds. This study is aimed at illustrating and analyzing some of the causes that lead to the renaming of the same (socio)geographical unit, by using both the material resulted from our own investigations and research, as well as examples extracted from *Tezaurul toponimic al Moldovei* [*Toponymic Thesaurus of Moldavia*] (TTRM, I<sub>1,2</sub>) and *Micul dicționar toponimic al Moldovei* [*Brief Toponymic Dictionary of Moldavia*] (MDTM<sub>1,2</sub>).

### **1. Theoretical background**

The situation in which the same place is given, either simultaneously or successively, two or more names creates what some specialists refer to as *toponymic synonymy*, a topic that is largely discussed in the field of onomastics and which generated opposed viewpoints discussed in detail by Jean-Louis Vaxelaire in a study dedicated to proper names (2005: 95-98). The rather popular theory according to which proper names cannot possibly have synonyms (v. Kleiber, 1981: 411, Manini, 1996: 162) is contradicted by linguists such as Grass (2002: 142), who maintains that the name of a person and that person's pseudonym are in fact synonyms since they stand for the same referent. The toponymy specialist from Iași Dragoș Moldovanu is among the opponents of this theory; the author states that we can speak of toponymic synonymy when two or several names of the same referent are used in different registers (popular / official /

borrowed) or in different periods (Moldovanu, 1991: XLVIII). Gh. Bolocan includes the syntactic variations of a denomination in the category of toponymic synonyms (*Balta Bunescu, Balta lui Bunescu* and *Balta Bunescului*<sup>2</sup>).

An overview of toponymic synonyms is provided by the website <http://www.toponymiefrancophone.org/DivFranco/Formation/tablem/nomlieu3.htm> (visited on September, 10, 2019), where they are defined as those names that designate the same place<sup>3</sup>, with the specification that for this specific case the term *allonym*<sup>4</sup> can also be used, along with the phrase *alternative names*<sup>5</sup>.

Jean-Louis Vaxelaire prefers the use of the term *polyonymy*<sup>6</sup>, also employed by other specialists, among whom the late professor Ion Toma (2015: 43). In an article on Romanian ethno-horonymy, Eugen Munteanu (2005: 308) uses the word *polynomy* (*polinomie* in Romanian) to define “the use of two or more denominations for the same denoted [...] horonym (*Valahia/ Muntenia, Elada/ Grecia, Anglia/ Marea Britanie, Olanda/ Țările de Jos*)”.

If we consider the definition provided by Cobeț and Manea (2013: 6), according to which synonyms are, from a lexical point of view, “words or phraseological units with different forms that denominate (almost) the same semantic reality”, we are entitled to believe that in the field of toponymy, synonymy can be applied to pairs such as *Sărata/ Slatina, Slatina/ Solca, Slatina/ Solonț, Valea Seacă/ Suha, Bistrița/ Repedea*, involving thus terms bearing the same meaning, that have to name the same referent<sup>7</sup>. However, in most cases in which residents refer to a geographical object by several names one can only speak of referential equivalence, since there is no (quasi)semantic equivalence between those names used for the same reality; for this very reason we have opted for the term *polyonymy*.

## 2. Instances of polyonymy and causes of occurrence

Places names are replaced or doubled by a denominator when they are no longer perceived as appropriate for the designation of a socio-geographical unit.

<sup>2</sup> Bolocan, 1991: 281.

<sup>3</sup> Synonyme: Dans le domaine toponymique, sont synonymes des toponymes qui désignent un seul et même lieu. On emploie aussi le terme allonyme: *Oslo* et *Christiana*, <http://www.toponymiefrancophone.org/DivFranco/Formation/tablem/nomlieu3.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Allonyme: Se dit de chacun des deux ou plusieurs noms qui peuvent désigner une même entité géographique (*ibidem*).

<sup>5</sup> On utilisera plutôt l'expression *noms alternatifs* dans le cas de noms également officiels désignant le même lieu (*ibidem*).

<sup>6</sup> In French: *polyonymie*, with the variation *polynomie*: „une même chose peut avoir des noms différents” (Vaxelaire, 2005: 318, 422; see also Vaxelaire 2009: 307).

<sup>7</sup> Throughout our research we have identified several such synonymic pairs in which one of the terms is used by the locals to designate a geographical object as a whole, whereas the other is used in order to identify just a part of this referent. We are speaking, in such cases, of partial synonymy. For instance, *Sărata/ Slatina* (in the middle basin of Moldova River there flows the Sărata stream, which has a branch called Slatina), *Solca/ Slatina* (near Solca, in the county of Suceava), *Solonț/ Slatina* (near Cucuieți, in the county of Bacău), *Valea Seacă/ Suha* (on the territory of Frasin, the county of Suceava), *Bistrița/ Repedea* (in the county of Bistrița-Năsăud).

a. At the popular level, polyonymy is generated by the changes occurring either throughout the historical/ social/ administrative/ economic evolution of the designated referent or in its geographical configuration, in which cases the renaming process is justified. For instance, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, half of *Rădiești* village was allotted by Stephen the Great to boyar Ioan Albul, and that part of the village was subsequently called *Albești* (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 6). A document from 1522 reveals a similar situation “*Ciorsăceștii* village, which is now called *Arămești*, where Aramă was the judge” (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 11, our emphasis). As Luca Arbure, gatekeeper of Suceava, bought in 1502 some parts of the Solca estate, the village *Solca de Jos* was named *Arbore*, after the name of its new owner (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 12). At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the village *Vlădeștii* is attested with a new name, *Arghira*, after the name of Grigore Arghire, an official at the court, the former owner of the Vlădești estate (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 12). The village *Cujba*, a former part of Protopopești village until 1830, was known for a while, before being given its current name, by the name of the initial village, *Protopopeștii*, also going through an intermediary denominative stage, namely *Protopopeștii lui Cujbă/ Protopopeștii Cujbei* (TTRM, I<sub>1</sub>: 327). We consider here the case of the monasteries that can take the name of their founders: initially named *Mănăstirea din Țarină* (attested since 1594-1595) or *Mănăstirea din Deal* (at 1608), the monastery located near Iași would later take the name of Voivode Aron “The Tyrant” (who had built it in 1594): *Mănăstirea lui Aron-Vodă*, then *Mănăstirea Aroneanu* (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 14). In other cases the very opposite situation occurs: a fading relationship between the topic name and the person after which it was named results in toponymic polyonymy. For instance, the name of the stream near Ghindăoani village, namely *Pârâul Ghindău* (attested in 1620 and based on the anthroponym Hindău) is currently overtaken by the name *Pârâul Ursului* because people no longer know about the boyar Șarban Hindău, a former owner in the area in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (DRH, A, I: 9).

Another cause responsible for the substitution or duplication of a toponym is the fact that the reality it refers to has disappeared. For instance, *Ulița Măjilor* in Iași used to refer to the itinerary of the fishmonger’s carriages, yet, once this commercial activity ceased, the name of the street was successively replaced by arbitrary names such as *Strada Millo*, *Strada Primăriei*, *Strada Mârzescu* (Petre, 2012: 35). On the other hand, the fact that new landmarks appear in a micro-area can condition the denominative process by relating it to the actual state of things. *Pârâul Jijioara*, for instance, was also called *Gârla Morii*, after a mill that the community started to know was built in the area. *Valea Rădăuți*, which runs through the village of Rădăuții-Prut, is also called *Velnița* by the locals, most probably because a “velnița” (an installation used for the production of spirit or *raki*) appeared in the area. A place in Săbăoani known as *La Izvoare* is also called *La Budinele* by the locals, because some barrels were placed there. A field in the village of Dobârceni is known by two distinct names: *La Brazi* and *La Henic*. The former is mainly used nowadays, as it gained a generalized meaning, because the field is situated

in the vicinity of a clump of fir-trees, while the name *La Henic* is barely used, as the mansion of boyar Hynek, where the name comes from, no longer exists.

Another context of toponymic polyonymy is created by the local competition between two names, of which one reveals the characteristics of the designated place: *Pârâul Dineșului* is also known by the locals as *Pârâul Soci*, a hydronym motivated by the vegetation in the area. In the same manner, *Pârâul Strahovei*, the right-bank tributary of Șendriceni stream, is also called *Pârâul Cânepiștea*. *Valea Nicoreștilor*, the right-bank tributary of Tecucel stream, is also called *Valea Rea*, a name that refers to the characteristics of a very steep valley.

Our research has also revealed situations in which the initial name of a place is abandoned in favour of another name, regarded by the denominator as more suggestive for the historical, social, administrative and/or geographical characteristics of the designated referent. The village Crasna in the county of Iași, formerly known as *Fundul Crasnei* (due to the fact that it was situated at the source of the stream bearing the same name) is mentioned in official documents dating from 1871 by the name *Rotarul* or *Rotarul din Fundul Crasnei*<sup>8</sup>, whereas in documents from 1873 it is called *Rotarii*, and in documents from 1876 it is called *Rotăria*, most probably indicating the occupation of local people in the area (TTRM, I<sub>2</sub>: 1005). In the case of Corhana village, in the county of Neamț, the former name, *Cojocăreștii*, was abandoned in favour of the current name that hints at the steep and barren aspect of the hill the village is located on (TTRM, I<sub>1</sub>: 276). In 1594, Aron Vodă allots the treasurer's helper "a quarter of the village *Găureni*, which had been previously called *Nicorești*" (DRH, A, IX: 91, our emphasis). The new name of the village, based on the appellative *gaură* [hole], is suggestive for the geographical positioning of the location, in the valley between Dealul Găureana and Muchia Bobeicii (MDTM<sub>2</sub>, ms.). Yet, because it was thought that it could suggest the lack of productivity of the place, the name did not last, being replaced by the authorities with *Gura Văii* (in 1964).

The attraction of a topic name towards a toponymic field is another cause that may generate polyonymy. Examples in this respect are rather numerous and we shall mention but a few. On its course, the Neagra stream, a right-bank tributary of River Bistrița, takes the names of the villages along which it runs, namely *Neagra Drăgoiesei* and *Neagra Păltinișului*. Another name by which it is known, *Neagra Secuiască*, can be explained by the fact that it springs from an area located in the vicinity of the Szeklers in Transylvania. The case of the streams that "borrow" the names of the villages along/through which they run is quite common in toponymy: *Pârâul Bolașilor*, a left-bank tributary of Rebricea stream, is also called *Pârâul Draxeni*, because it runs west of the village of Draxeni. The *Urechioiu* stream, a left-bank tributary of Sitna, is also called

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<sup>8</sup> The name was formed from the anthroponym *Rotaru(l)*; several people with this surname were registered in 1820 in Ciortești, an estate on the location of which the above mentioned village was founded (Butnaru, 2019: 2).

*Pârâul Brăiești*, because it crosses the village of Brăiești. *Pârâul Cetății*, along which the village of Brădicești is located, is also called *Pârâul Brădicești*. *Valea Berendești*, nearby which there once was a village called Berindești, is also called *Valea Traianului*, because it runs along the village of Traian.

The oscillation of toponyms between two toponymic fields generates polyonymy not only among hydronyms, but also within other toponymic classes: a pond on the Zahorna stream, called *Iazul Zahorna*, is also known by the name *Iazul Horlești*, being situated north-east of the village of Horlești. The hill *Pietrosul Mare* is also known as *Pietrosul Bohotinului*, because it is situated near the Bohotin stream. *Dealul Româneștilor*, in the county of Botoșani, on which the village of Românești is situated, is also called *Dealul Ostopcenilor*, as the older name of this village used to be *Ostopceni*.

A special case of polyonymy, which is exclusively successive, is caused by the extinction of some toponymic fields<sup>9</sup>. For instance, *Pârâul Rânghilești*, as it is known today, used to be called *Cirnohalul*. Since it was the only element to “survive” the breaking up of an old toponymic field, the hydronym did not last, being replaced by the name of the riparian village (TTRM, I<sub>4</sub>: XVII). The extinction or renaming of the toponym nucleus of a field may also lead to a change of names when it comes to its toponymic derivatives: after the village of Bârlești was incorporated in Hărmăneștii Vechi, *Pârâul Bârleștilor* was renamed *Pârâul Hărmăneștilor* (TTRM, I<sub>4</sub>: 22). Once the toponym *Lețcanii Vechi* was replaced by *Bogonosul*, the *Valea Lețcanilor* stream, which runs across the village, was renamed *Pârâul Bogonos* (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 238).

The competition between polyonyms often favours the supremacy of one of the names. For instance, in the county of Botoșani, in the village of Bivolari we have identified the pair *Pârâul Hrițcului/ Pârâul Bivolarilor*. *Pârâul Hrițcului* was the old name of the water the valley of which sheltered the former village. Since the connection with the anthroponym-etymon *Hrițcu* was lost, the name of the stream was attracted into the toponymic field *Bivolari*, so that the toponym *Pârâul Bivolarilor* is used almost exclusively at the present date, the other name being known only by few elderly people. An opposite example is the one of *Ozana*, the name designating Neamț River, which is part of an important toponymic field – *Neamțul*. Initially, *Ozana* was just the backwater of Neamț River, named after the owner of some orchards in the area of Târgu Neamț<sup>10</sup>. The name subsequently extended to the river proper and became extremely popular due to Ion Creangă’s *Amintiri din copilărie*, where the author speaks about “beautiful crystal-clear *Ozana*”. The competition between the two names is maintained to the current date, as many locals prefer to use the hydronym *Ozana*, out of local patriotism, while geographers still use the older name *Neamțul*.

The existence of denominative pairs is determined by the presence, in some localities, of other ethnic groups besides the Romanians. *Traian* village in Neamț county,

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<sup>9</sup> On the theory of toponymic fields, see Moldovanu 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Butnaru 2011: 29-30.

for instance, is also called *Zuifolo* by the Csangos, meaning *the New Village*. Polyonymy is mainly detectable at a micro-toponymic level: within this community, minor toponyms have either Romanian or Csango versions, depending on the idiom used for communication between the locals: *Coasta – Costar*, *Balta – Tu*, *Marginea – Silube*, *Șoseaua Națională – Nogi Suse*, *La Budinele – Kutosco*, *Loturile Mari – Nogi Lut*, *Loturile Mici – Kici Lut*, etc.

**b.** As opposed to the renaming at the popular level of the same socio-geographic entity, which has, as we have shown, an exclusively justified character, official toponymic polyonymy occurs following the totally arbitrary intervention of the authorities, a situation in which the new names acquire an artificial character, completely ignoring the relationship of motivation between the topic name and the designated referent, either out of socio-human reasons or, in most cases, of reasons grounded in political restrictions. The official reconfiguration of Romanian toponymy started right after the proclamation of the state independence (1877), when “the new status of Romania allowed and required full control over the entire territory, a control that also demanded a good, accurate and clear topic nomenclature” (Nicolae–Suditu, 2008: 217), culminating in the age of “popular democracy” (1948-1989), when most of the artificial names appear<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, one of the major changes targeted the replacement of names that evoked personalities who were hostile to the political trend of the time or names related to old state institutions: the name of village *Brăteni*, in the county of Botoșani, attested since 1427 as “village in Carpeni, where Dobrăcin’s and Bratul Pleșescul’s houses were located”, became, during the communist period, *Pădureni*, although, as it had been attested as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it could not possibly have any connection with Brătianu – the politicians, for which reason it was given back its initial name in 1996 (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 63). The name of *Polițeni* village in the county of Vaslui was replaced in 1964 by *Vadurile*, despite the fact that it had no connection with the police institution, which was founded after the locality was attested. *Avereștii/ Golanii* → *Stejarul* (1964), *Cătușa* → *Bărboși-Cartier* (1964), *Salahorul/ Salahorii* → *Salcia* (1964) are just a few other examples belonging to the same register. This is also the case of the settlements whose name eulogized the royal family; these settlements were given new names by the regime: *Carol I* → *Nicolae Bălcescu*, *Carol al II-lea* → *Secuienii Noi*, *Ferdinand* → *Nicolae Bălcescu*, *Regina Maria* → *Toader Enache* → *Băltățenii*, *Poșta Roman* → *Elisabeta-Doamna* (1887) → *Horia* (1948), etc.

Many street names were also changed for political reasons: in Botoșani, for instance, after the fall of the communist regime, *Miciurin Street* became *Nicolae Grigorescu*, *I.C. Frimu Street* became *Octav Onicescu*, *Karl Marx Street* was renamed *Ștefan Luchian*, *7 Noiembrie* is currently known as *Aleea Împărat Traian*, *Ilie Pintilie*

<sup>11</sup> A detailed analysis of the phenomenon is provided by Dragoș Moldovanu (1991: LII-LX).

*Street* became *Armeană Street*, etc.

Certain economic and aesthetic reasons motivated the replacement of names that could affect both the productivity of those localities and the dignity of their inhabitants: *Glodurile*, the name of a village in Bacău, was replaced by the officials in 1968 with *Gura Berheciului*. *Găunoasa* → *Poiana Șcheii* (1964), *Gropile* → *Dumbrava* (1964), *Pârlita* → *Bălușenii Noi* (1964), *Secăturile* → *Livada Nouă* (1964), *Valea Seacă* → *Ștefan cel Mare* (1958) are further such examples of place names that were eliminated so that they would not suggest a lack of productivity or prosperity of the places they designated. On the other hand, Bășenii village in the county of Iași, named after judge Bașa, was given in 1925 the name *Mihail Kogălniceanu* (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 34), as the initial name was regarded as offensive for the locals. *Baliga*, *Borăștii*, *Găinariii*, *Jăvrenii* or *Tonții* belong to the same category and were substituted by *Viișoara* (1929), respectively *Cuza-Vodă* (1929), *Făgetul* (1964), *Viișoara* (1964) and *Râșca* (1964). *Balaurul* → *Crângul Nou* (1956), *Boul* → *Viișoara* (1964), *Cioara* → *Podenii* (1964), *Râpa Iepii* → *Bogdăneștii* (1964), *Văcăria* → *Brădetul* (1964) is just another series of names of localities that were replaced, this time based on aesthetic grounds.

Many of the new place names that were officially imposed were meant to eulogize outstanding personalities with an impact on the historical, political or cultural life of the country, the aim of the authorities being to “consolidate the ‘educational and formative’ function of toponymy” (Nicolae–Suditu, 2008: 219). Thus, the name of *Pătrășcani* village in the county of Vaslui was changed in 1956 to *Alexandru Vlahuță*, because the writer was born in Pleșești, a village that was assimilated to Pătrășcani (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 7). Râpile village in the county of Vaslui, where Mihail Kogălniceanu owned some properties, was given the politician’s name in 1925 (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 267). Stupca village, where Ciprian Porumbescu died, was given the name of the composer in 1956 (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 86). Ichimenii-Morțun was renamed in 1948 *Avram Iancu*, a unjustified official name bearing a commemorative value aimed at honouring one of the leaders of the Revolution of 1948 in Transylvania (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 16). There are, of course, more notorious examples, such as the town of *Onești*, which was renamed *Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej* in 1965, or *Brașov*, which was given the name *Stalin*.

A special case of polyonymy, which cannot be regarded as official according to the above-mentioned criteria, is the one referring to the double names assigned to certain places by geographers, who renamed many waters or hills according to the name of the locality/ settlement where a certain geographical object is located. *Dealul Coroiului*, located east of Bogonos village, is mentioned in geographical studies by the name *Dealul Bogonos*. *Pârâul Cetății*, where Brădicești village is situated is also mentioned as *Pârâul Brădicești*. The upper course of Tecucel stream (the lower basin of Bârlad River), also called *Tecucelul Sec*, where Buciumeni village is situated, is mentioned in MDG and ATLAS MOLD. with the name *Valea Buciumenilor*. *Pârâul Buga*, which crosses Chițcani village in the county of Vaslui, is recorded in ATLAS MOLD. as *Valea Chițcani*, whereas



geographer Pompiliu Poghiric speaks about *Pârâul Chițcani*. A pond located between the villages Cucuteni and Cogeasca is recorded under the names *Iazul Cogeasca*, *Iazul Cucuteni* or *Iazul Cucuteni-Cogeasca* (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 89). The hill situated north of Comănești, in the county of Bacău, with the popular name *Dealul Cetățuii*, is attested in geographical papers as *Dealul Comănești* or *Dealul Comăneștilor* (MDTM<sub>1</sub>: 91). *Pârâul Leordiș*, which crosses Conțești village, in the county of Iași, is marked on a road map as *Pârâul Conțești* (ROM.). *Pârâul Mare*, tributary of Siret River, is also attested with the official name *Pârâul Grămești*, as it runs in the vicinity of Grămești village.

Finally, we are providing a series of examples of polyonymy related to names of forms of relief, namely cases in which the popular names coexisted with literary language names or names derived from other languages or cultures. For instance, Poland used to be referred to as *Țara Leșească* or *Țara Poleacului*. The current official name *Polonia [Poland]*, occurs at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in certain translations, under the influence of the source languages in which the respective works were written, and was increasingly used starting with the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, Switzerland was identified by the phrase *Țara Zvițirilor* (1693) or the name *Elveția* (with the variation *Helveția*, from the Latin *Helvetia*), *Svițera* (from the Italian *Svizzera*), *Șvițera* (under the German influence *Schweiz*) and *Suisia* (from the French *Suisse*). In the old writings, *Albania* (from the Latin *Albania*) is mentioned as *Țara Arbănașilor* (in Ion Neculce) or *Țara Arbănășească* (in *Foletul Novel. Calendarul lui Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu*), whereas in *Cronicile turcești [The Turkish Chronicles]* it is mentioned as *Arnavût* (from the Turkish *Arnavud*)<sup>12</sup>.

### 3. Conclusive remarks

Although the issue of toponymic polyonymy is much vaster than we have attempted to present in this study, the few situations we have analyzed here enable us to reveal a series of important characteristics of the phenomenon. At the popular level, polyonymy is always motivated, being caused by historical-social/ administrative/ economic changes affecting the designated referent or by the modified perception of the locals upon the reality designated in different stages of the denominative process. In the case of official toponymy, place names, especially names of human settlements are arbitrarily changed by the local authorities.

Two or more names can be used successively, in different periods of time, to designate the same geographical object (with the occurrence, at one specific point, of denominative simultaneity, and the subsequent definitive replacement of the old name by the new one). Another case is represented by the simultaneous existence of the polyonyms, when two or more names of the same referent are used either by different speakers (for instance speakers living in various localities in the vicinity of the designated object) or by the same speakers, using different registers (popular/ official/ borrowed).

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<sup>12</sup> Butnaru, 2009: 374-377.

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<http://www.toponymiefrancophone.org/DivFranco/Formation/tablem/nomlieu3.htm>  
(seen on september 10, 2019).

## ABBREVIATIONS

- ATLAS MOLD.= Institutul Geografic al Armatei, *Atlasul Moldovei* (sc. 1:50000), București, 1892-1898.

- DRH, A, I-XXVII= *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, vol. I-XXVII, București, Editura Academiei, 1975-2006.
- MDG= *Marele dicționar geografic al României*, Ioan Lahovari, C.I. Brătianu and Grigore G. Tocilescu (eds.), I–V, București, 1898-1902.
- MDTM<sub>1-2</sub>= *Mic dicționar toponimic al Moldovei (structural și etimologic)*. Partea 1. *Toponime personale*, Daniela Butnaru, Dinu Moscal, Ana-Maria Prisacaru, Vlad Cojocaru (autori), Dragoș Moldovanu (scheme lexicografice, etimologii, revizia generală), Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2014 and Partea a 2-a. *Toponime descriptive*, Daniela Butnaru, Dinu Moscal, Ana-Maria Prisacaru, Vlad Cojocaru (autori), ms.
- ROM.= *România. Atlas rutier*, de general maior ing. Vasile Dragomir, col. ing. Victor Balea, col. ing. Gheorghe Mureșanu, Gheorghe Epuran, sc. 1:350.000, București, 1981.
- TTRM, I<sub>1-2</sub>= *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Moldova, I<sub>1-2</sub>, Repertoriul istoric al unităților administrativ-teritoriale (1772-1988)*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1991-1992.
- TTRM, I<sub>4</sub>= *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Moldova. I<sub>4</sub>, Toponimia Moldovei în cartografia europeană veche (cca 1395-1789)*, Iași, Editura Universității « Alexandru Ioan Cuza », 2005.