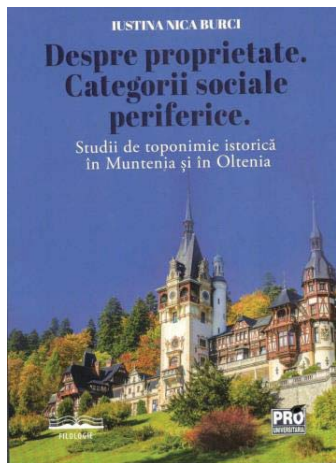


Iustina Nica Burci, *Despre proprietate. Categoriile sociale periferice. Studii de toponimie istorică în Muntenia și în Oltenia*, București, Editura Pro Universitaria, 2021, 272 p. (Simona Sandu Pîrvulescu)



The tempo of today's socio-economic transformations considerably contributes to the enrichment of the vocabulary either by borrowing lexemes from languages of international use, or by internal means of vocabulary enrichment, or by the process of semantic extension which makes it possible to identify terms in various linguistic occurrences. When everything around us is constantly changing, we feel the need to return to a fixed point, a fixed point that becomes our lexical "root". By the volume *Despre proprietate. Categoriile sociale periferice. Studii de toponimie istorică în Muntenia și în Oltenia* 'On property. Peripheral social categories. Studies of historical toponymy in Muntenia and Oltenia', Iustina Nica Burci returns to the "lexical root" of the Romanian language vocabulary, using the analysis of toponyms specific to the areas of Muntenia and Oltenia. Intuiting the richness of the linguistic treasure provided by toponymy, Iustina Nica Burci offers us a complete radiography of the two geographical areas, while making a linguistic analysis by the use of historical, geographical, legal, fiscal sources.

The two parts of the book reflect the conceptual delimitation "inanimate/animate", applied to the structuring of information: the first part is intended to study "those names that involve the notions of property/inheritance (but also law, taxation, prohibitions, sanctions [...])" (p. 12); the second part "no longer considers (geographical) objects, but people." (p. 12) as representatives of different social strata (social stratification corresponding to the studied historical period) and, implicitly, as an involuntary generating source of lexemes that are found in the toponyms immortalized in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space.

In *Part One*, the author identifies "[...] what appellations are, to what degree and in what form they have been preserved in the current linguistic reality - of place names in particular - appellations that once designated old forms of property (generally goods acquired following a succession process, but also through sale and purchase, gift, princely confirmation)." (p. 30). The inventory of these appellations records 8 lexeme-entries: "baștină, dedină, delniță, moșie, ocină, ohabă, uric, vislujenie" (all referring to land ownership or possession) (pp. 30-31). The special skills of the author in point of linguistic research/analysis are proven by the detailed analysis performed for each lexeme (she presents definitions, etymologies,

attestations, various contexts identified in “traditional” sources - books, journals, and “modern” sources - various websites, the author thus demonstrating the ability to facilitate the “popularization” of scientific language, fostering access to information for non-specialist speakers). The linguistic analysis of each lexeme is followed by the exemplification of the presence of the lexemes “moșie, ocină, ohabă” in the toponymy of Muntenia and Oltenia (pp. 33-80). The author also identified the use of the lexeme “partea (lui)...”/ ‘his (part) ...’ (pp. 81-101) as a source generating toponyms in the researched geographical areas: for Muntenia, the inventory includes “641 names for which the first documentary attestation was specified in DTRM.” (p. 85), for Oltenia – “50 toponyms documented and attested in DTRO;” (p. 85). We are particularly impressed by the analysis of the appellation *vie* as a historical, anthropological, religious, sociological, economic, artistic testimony. The linguistic occurrences of this appellation led to the identification of six types of place names: “appellation + anthroponym; appellation + toponym; appellation + appellation; appellation + adjective; appellation + preposition + noun; appellation + preposition + adverb” (pp. 103-158). The author’s synthetic capacity is also demonstrated by presenting (in a table) the 18 connectives used in the phrases that include the term *vie* (p. 136), the author noting “[...] that meaning restricts their presence and consistency of occurring in one or another category. Not all connectives can be in the “pole position”; *în*, in contrast to *cu*, for example, fits much better the meaning aimed at in toponymy, that of determining the location of the denoted object, having, in addition, the ability to express this from switchable positions.” (p. 136). The term *braniște* acquires the status of “toponymic micromodel” (p. 148), due to its presence in numerous toponyms in the Oltenia area; through a meticulous work, the author identified numerous derivatives based on the noun *braniște* (*brăniștar*, *Brănișteanca*, *Brănișteanu*, *Brăniștioara*, etc.) (pp. 156-158). The first part ends with the inventory of toponyms whose origin is identified among the terms referring to land ownership, its delimitation, the law and taxation related to land (pp. 159-181).

The second part is dedicated to toponyms that reflect “people’s identity”: “[...] we easily notice that first names, patronymics, nicknames, bynames generally had a significant share in the economy of place names, being involved in their formation [...]” (p. 183). The inventory of toponyms includes both toponyms derived from the names of historical figures (pp. 186-205), names of boyars (pp. 206-221), and names of simple people belonging to the “peripheral social categories” (pp. 222-256). One can see that “godfathers” of places are not only the people who honoured the name of Romanian (Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Constantin Brâncoveanu, Dimitrie Cantemir, Michael the Brave, Mircea the Old, Stephen the Great, Tudor Vladimirescu, etc.), but also common people - some with questionable moral

qualities (bandit, loafer, thief, scoundrel, madman, convict, robber, etc.) - different human patterns that bring to the fore the overall image of past society.

Although most of the lexemes analyzed in the book passed into the compartment of archaisms (no longer in general, current linguistic use), they have been preserved in Romanian toponymy, as both a branch of the root of the Romanian lexicon and a silent witness of Romanian history and socio-economy: "Leaving their 'natural' environment for an 'adoptive' one - *toponymy*, the latter giving them the chance to transcend the epochs which they characterized and the possibility of contributing, today, by their presence in this space, to the knowledge of our more or less distant past." (pp. 258-259).

The extensive bibliography, which includes both reference names in the fields of linguistics, history, law, viticulture, and dictionaries, online sources, demonstrates the extensive, thorough research initiated by the author. The variety of titles in the bibliography shows us, once again, the usefulness and importance of studying terms from a diachronic perspective and a synchronic perspective as well, while identifying temporal and/or spatial variations of lexemes, universals that resist over time and maintain their relevance.