

## ON THE CHALLENGES OF A DICTIONARY OF TOPONYMY

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### Abstract

*Micul dicționar toponimic al Moldovei (structural și etimologic)* [*The Concise Toponymic Dictionary of Moldova (structural and etymological)*] was designed to differentiate itself from other dictionaries in the field, on the one hand through its structural approach to contiguous toponyms in a micro-area, and on the other hand, through the attempt to overcome the level of simple linguistic etymologies and identify the toponymic etymologies based on the motivation principle, namely the relation between the linguistic sign and the denominated (socio)geographic object. This work was thus based on the concept of *toponymic field* that designates a denominative ensemble organized around a *toponymic nucleus*. The constraints imposed by the specificity of a dictionary represented for the editors, more than often, real obstacles, mainly related to the effort of deciphering the toponymic etymology and elaborating the lexicographic diagram taking into account the connections between the names that form a toponymic field, these two challenges being often inter-related. The editors' option with regard to the configuration of the emblems was the result of the corroboration between historical-geographical data with linguistic information that was relevant for each situation. However, despite this very rigorous interdisciplinary documentation, the etymological solution remains debatable in the case of certain toponyms.

**Key-words:** *dictionary, toponymy, toponymic field, toponymic etymology, lexicographic diagram*

### Résumé

Le petit dictionnaire toponymique de Moldavie (structurel et étymologique) a été conçu pour se différencier d'autres dictionnaires de profils, d'une part grâce à l'approche structurelle des toponymes d'une microzone et, d'autre part, en essayant de dépasser le niveau de simples étymologies linguistiques en identifiant les étymologies toponymiques sur le principe de la motivation, de la relation qui s'établit entre le signe linguistique et l'objet (socio)géographique nommé. Le dictionnaire est basé sur l'organisation de la toponymie en structures nommés *champs toponymiques*, désignant des ensembles de dénominations organisés autour des *noyaux toponymiques*.

Les principes de rédaction de ce dictionnaire ont amené les éditeurs face à de nombreux défis, parmi lesquels on mentionne notamment l'élucidation de l'étymologie toponymique et la réalisation du schéma lexicographique selon les liens établis entre les noms qui constituent un champ toponymique.

L'option des éditeurs pour configurer les champs toponymiques a résulté de la corroboration des données historiques et géographiques avec des informations linguistiques pertinentes à chaque situation. Même dans les conditions de cette rigoureuse documentation interdisciplinaire, la solution étymologique dans certains cas reste indécise.

**Mots-clés :** *dictionnaire, toponymie, champ toponymique, étymologie, schéma lexicographique*

After participating as co-authors in the elaboration of *Micul dicționar toponimic al Moldovei (structural și etimologic)* – TTRM, II<sub>1-2</sub> – [*The Concise Toponymic Dictionary of Moldova (structural and etymological)* – TTRM, II<sub>1-2</sub>] our aim in this study<sup>1</sup> is to present some of the challenges we encountered in our endeavour. The constraints imposed by the specificity of a dictionary (see *infra*) represented, more than often, real obstacles, mainly related to the effort of deciphering the toponymic etymology and elaborating the lexicographic diagram taking into account the connections between the names that form a toponymic field, these two challenges being often inter-related. The editors' option with regard to the configuration of the emblems was the result of the corroboration between historical-geographical data with linguistic information that was relevant for each situation. However, despite this very rigorous interdisciplinary documentation, the etymological solution remains debatable in the case of certain toponyms.

### **Lexicographic principles**

An initiative of the late researcher Dragoș Moldovanu, *Micul dicționar toponimic al Moldovei (structural și etimologic)* [*The Concise Toponymic Dictionary of Moldova (structural and etymological)*] was designed to differentiate itself from other dictionaries in the field, on the one hand, through its structural approach to contiguous toponyms in a micro-area, and on the other hand, through the attempt to overcome the level of simple linguistic etymologies and identify the toponymic etymologies based on the motivation principle, namely the relation between the linguistic sign and the denominated (socio-)geographic object

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<sup>1</sup>The text represents a continuation of the communication presented at the workshop *Lexicografia academică românească. Provocările informatizării [Romanian academic lexicography. The challenges of computerization]*, a scientific event organized by "A. Philippide" Institute of Romanian Philology of Iași on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2019.

(according to Moldovanu 1972: 75). This work was thus based on the concept of *toponymic field* that designates a denominative ensemble organized around a *toponymic nucleus*, represented by the name of that specific referent which the speakers regard as being the most important in a certain area. One or more *toponymic derivatives* that denominate neighbouring geographic objects of secondary importance and which can, in turn, develop optional dependency relationships, are subordinated to the nucleus. The processes generating such a toponymic structure are *polarization*, which deals with (socio)geographical realities belonging to different classes and *differentiation*, which involves the same (socio)geographical reality. All these concepts are fundamental for revealing the structural character of the toponymy of a certain micro-area, as indicated by the reality in the field. The transposition in the pages of a dictionary of this manner of understanding and approaching Moldavian toponymy is based on the conviction of toponymist Dragoș Moldovanu that “the description of toponymic fields represents [...] the main object of toponymic lexicography” (Moldovanu 2010: 22).

### 1. Difficulties derived from establishing the nucleus-toponym

The toponymic nucleus was often indicated by the very linguistic expression of the place name under analysis. In the case of toponymic formations derived in the plural, the collective suffixes *-ești*, *-ani/-eni*, *-ari*, *-oń/-oi* are certain indicators of an oikonym nucleus. Singular toponyms containing suffixes also include a clue that indicates the direction of polarization: either motional suffixes (*-a*, *-easa*), that agree with understated entopics *apă/vale* [*water/valley*], *moșie* [*estate*], *poiană* [*meadow*] etc., or masculine suffixes (*-oiu*, *-ov*), which agree with entopics such as *munte* [*mountain*], *deal* [*hill*], *pârâu* [*stream*] etc.

There were however situations when, despite the suffixation of the toponym, the significance of the appellative base forced us to look for a polarizing nucleus other than the one suggested by the suffix. In the case of the toponymic field *Pustiata*, both the motional suffix *-a*, and the attestation of the syntagm *Pârâu Pustiatei* [*Pustiata Stream*] in 1824 would have justified a hydronymic nucleus. In reality, the etymology of the toponym (adj. *pustiat* < *pustiit* [*deserted*]), as well as the historical data required the reconstitution of a phytonym nucleus, \**Poiana Pustiata* [*Pustiata Meadow*] (non-attested in documents), which is likely to have denominated a settlement in a meadow, inhabited in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently deserted (according to TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.)

To provide another example we can discuss the toponymic field formed around the name *Bucovăț*, an old Ukrainian derivative from the appellative *buk* “fag” [beech] with the compound suffix *-ovec* – with the meaning of “făget” [beech forest]. For the hydronym *Bucovăț* there are very old attestations, from the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, so we could have been tempted to opt for a hydronymic

nucleus. However, the etymology of the place name determined us to consider the phytonym *Pădurea Bucovăț* [*Bucovăț Forest*] as being the primary toponym (designating a forest located at the source of the stream bearing the same name), despite the fact that the latter was only attested at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (according to TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.).

The primacy of the documentary attestation of a certain element in a toponymic field usually leads to a safe toponymic nucleus in the case of toponyms derived with collective suffixes, but, as shown in the previous example, it can be confusing when analysing toponyms in the singular. The accurate configuration of toponymic structures requires the corroboration of historical and geographical data with linguistic information that can clarify the etymology and in certain instances requires recourse to the “laws” of the popular or cult denominative system. Thus, within the toponymic field of *Bicaz*, both an oronym (in 1781) and a hydronym (*Pârâul Bicaz* [*Bicaz Stream*], in 1788) were attested in basically the same period. The choice of the oronymic nucleus was also influenced by the frequency of the situations in which, in the popular toponymic denomination, streams take their names from the mountains or hills in their vicinity (according to TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.).

Another case that raised a series of questions was that of the toponym *Brădățelul*, which first designated a forest in the village of Horodniceni. This phytonym, first attested as late as 1898, developed a relatively large toponymic field around it. The issue that came up in the elaboration of that dictionary entry was related to establishing the headword depending on the identification of the toponymic nucleus. Since the appellative *brădățelul* results from the derivation of *brădet* with the diminutive suffix *-el*, its presence as a toponym would require, according to the toponymic “logics”, the existence in the area of a toponym such as *Brădet*, from which *Brădățel* would have derived to designate a smaller or younger forest. Our dilemma in this specific case was the following: in order to comprehend the entire toponymic process of the field and explain the diminutive form of the name, should we reconstitute the nucleus toponym \**Brădetul*, from which the phytonym *Brădățel* could have been formed by means of toponymic differentiation? Otherwise could we consider that this diminutive is the main toponym of the field? We present below, in a simplified version, the two possible configurations of the toponymic field according to the option for a specific polarizing agent:

**BRĂDĂȚELUL** descriptive toponym **A**. Phytonym. Forest crossed by the Brădățel stream (**I**). MDG, I, 600/3 (y. 1898). ◇ In a syntagm: *Brădățel Forest* ib. 601/1 (y. 1898).

**I**. B y p o l a r. Hydronym (Non-articulated) *Brădățel*. Right-hand tributary of Șomuzul Mare River. DRH, A, II, 177 (y. 1464).

1. *By differ.* Hydronym (In the syntagm *Gura Brădățelului*) The area where the Brădățel stream flows into Șomuzul Mare. Ib. 89 (y. 1456, text in Slv.).

2. *By differ.* Hydronym (In the syntagm *Pârâul Obârșie*) Source of Brădățel stream. ATLAS MOLD. (y. 1895). ◇ Without entopic: *Obârșia* NALR–DATE, 99.

3. *By polar.* Oikonym (With the entopic *village* often implied) [Attested as village in 1752-1753: IORGA, S.D. VII, 197.] Village in Horodniceni, the county of Suceava.

– Etym.: the appellative **brădățel** “small or young fir-tree forest” in toponymic function.

or:

\***BRĂDET** descriptive toponym A. Phytonym. Unidentified forest in the Șomuzul Mare basin.

1. *By differ.* Phytonym (Derivative) *Brădățelul*. Forest crossed by the Brădățel stream (1). MDG, I, 600/3 (y. 1898). ◇ In the syntagm: *Pădurea Brădățelul* ib. 601/1 (y. 1898).

1. *By polar.* Hydronym (Non-articulated) *Brădățel*. Right-hand tributary of Șomuzul Mare. DRH, A, II, 177 (y. 1464).

a. *By differ.* Hydronym (In the syntagm *Gura Brădățelului*) The area where the Brădățel stream flows into Șomuzul Mare. Ib. 89 (y. 1456, after Slv.).

b. *By differ.* Hydronym (In the syntagm *Pârâul Obârșie*) Source of Brădățel stream. ATLAS MOLD. (y. 1895). ◇ Without entopic: *Obârșia* NALR–DATE, 99.

c. *By polar.* Oikonym (With the entopic *village* often implied) *Brădățel* [Attested as village in 1752-1753: IORGA, S.D. VII, 197.] Village in Horodniceni, the county of Suceava.

– Etym.: the appellative **brădet** “fir-tree forest” in toponym function.

The following question thus comes up: how far should we go with the reconstruction of certain toponymic fields to acquire a valid reliable perspective on the toponymic configuration? In some cases, the etymology of the headword toponym forces us to engage in this reconstitution process: in the case of *Polocin*, the compatibility between the meaning of this Slavonic compound (*pol* “half” and *otcina* “estate from one’s father”, indicating the “old division of the first inheritance in two parts: two old people” – Ghibănescu 1906: 207) and the nucleus of the field was achieved by the presupposition as polarizing agent of a hodonym indicating a non-identified estate. In other cases we witness a reversed process: the unobscured etymology requires the reconstruction of toponymic structures. See in this respect

the case of *Bârlad*, where the explanation of the hydronym form *Bârlovița* required the reconstruction of the hydronym *\*Bârlova (voda)* and the form of the hydronym *Bârlad* was explained by the presupposition of an oronym *\*Bîrljadî*, which eventually led to establishing the appellative base *\*Birlo* (according to Moldovanu 2010: 36-37).

## 2. Personal toponym or descriptive toponym?

According to the nature of the denomination, Petar Skok classified the toponymy in personal and descriptive toponymy. The two volumes of *Micul dicționar toponimic (structural și etimologic)* [*The Concise toponymic dictionary (structural and etymological)*] follow this differentiation, each being dedicated to a specific type of toponymy. However, not knowing the etymology of a place name makes it difficult or even impossible to include it in one of these two categories. For instance, numerous toponyms derive from names of plants and animals. Nevertheless, we also had to consider the fact that many anthroponyms were also formed from such words. *Piciorul Lupului* (the county of Iași), *Valea Ursului* (the county of Neamț), *Boușorii* (the county of Vaslui), *Broștenii* (the county of Neamț), *Șopârlenii* (the county of Vaslui) are just a few examples of toponyms formed from names of people, which therefore should not be considered as being descriptive. Likewise, names such as *Bârboșii* (the county of Iași), *Blânzii* (the county of Galați), *Buzații* (the county of Bacău), *Speriații* (the county of Vrancea), *Smulții* (the county of Galați), *Uscații* (the county of Neamț) etc., considered as psychological by Iorgu Iordan (1963: 314), have proved to be personal since, as indicated by the documents, they were based on anthroponyms (*Bărbosul [the bearded]*, *Blândul [the gentle]*, *Budzatul [the full-lipped]*, *Speriatul [the scared]*, *Smultu [the ripped]*, *Uscatul [the skinny]*) rather than on the characteristics of the inhabitants of the respective villages.

The historical-geographical documentation is decisive in establishing the etymon and implicitly the type of headword toponym. At first sight the oikonym *Bâlcani*, designating a village in the municipality located in the county of Bacău that bears the same name, and has been attested since 1477, could be regarded as a descriptive toponym formed from the entopic term *bâlc* “puddle, mud” and the collective suffix *-ani*. However, the documentary attestations prove the contrary: that was Petru *Bâlco*’s village (DRH, A, II: 317), and consequently the oikonym is a personal one (according to TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 21). Similarly, the documents reveal that quite a lot of oikonoms susceptible of being descriptive are in fact personal: the oikonym *Poieni* (known today as *Slobozia*, the county of Neamț) is based on the name of Ivan *Poiană*, attested in 1572 (DIR, A, XVI-III: 9); *Movilenii* (the county Galați) was formed from the name of stolnik Ioniță *Movilă* with the collective suffix *-eni* (acc. TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 278); *Ruginoasa* (the county of Iași) is formed from the family name

*Rugină*, of some landowners from the neighbouring village of Vascani, mentioned in documents in 1608 and 1621 (Rosetti, 1906: 37-38; TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 354); *Dumbrăvenii* (the county of Suceava) is derived from the name of boyar *Dumbravă* (TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 156); the anthroponym base of the oikonym *Sălcenii* (the county of Vaslui) is the family name of boyar Toma *Salce* (TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 361) etc.

Whenever historical-geographical data is missing or is unconvincing, linguistic information can help clarify the toponymic etymology. The toponym *Simila*, for instance, was classified as personal (derived from the Ukrainian name of person *Smil* with the possessive suffix *-ja*) taking into account the fact that the Ukrainian adjective *smilyj* (“daring, brave, rude”), that could have justified the descriptive character of the toponym, only refers to characteristics that are specific to people (TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 374). In the case of *Falcău* (< v. Ukr. \**Wolkov* “of the wolf”), the Ukrainian suffix *-ov* determined us to include this toponym in the series of names for personal places, as descriptive toponyms involve derivation with the possessive suffix *-j-* (Scr. *Vukovo Gorica* vs. *Vučji Del*; TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 160).

Although we have tried to identify the etymology of toponyms as precisely as possible, ensuring thus an accurate classification of these toponyms, the fact that some entries are still governed by probability is caused by the lack of information or limited available data.

### **3. Establishing the structure of the toponymic fields / the direction of polarization within toponymic fields**

In the *Introduction* to the first part of the *Micul dicționar toponimic (structural și etimologic)* [*The Concise toponymic dictionary (structural and etymological)*], Dragoș Moldovanu speaks about *secondary etymology*, a concept that refers to the attempt of establishing the direction of polarization within a toponymic field, a *sine qua non* condition of the accurate configuration of toponymic structures. The identification of the dependency relations established between a polarizing agent and the toponymic derivatives depends, as shown above, by the precise identification of the toponymic nucleus. However, there are cases in which two or more neighbouring toponyms are formed (perhaps independently) from the same anthroponym or appellative, without the possibility of establishing the chronology of the polarizations especially since many of those develop, in turn, autonomous toponymic fields. In such a situation, when it is practically impossible to establish the direction of polarization, the preferred solution is to organize the toponymic fields around a *centre of toponymic polarization*. The diversity of place names recorded in certain micro-areas provided us with the opportunity to configure certain toponymic structures with two, three or even four toponymic nuclei, the by-nuclear toponymic fields being however the most frequent:



- the entopic *cunună* (“horseshoe shaped hill peak”) generated two different oikonyms, *Cununa* and *Cununschi* (TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.);

- from the reconstructed appellative base *\*Birlo* two different toponymic nuclei were formed, namely the hydronym *\*Bărlova (voda)*, which polarized the hydronym *Bârlovița*, and the choronym *\*Bîrljadî*, which clarifies the name of Bârlad River (TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.);

- both the hydronym *Benia*, and the oronym *Benschi* (TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 40) were formed from the person name *Bene*, attested in the syntagm *Casa lui Bene [Bene’s house]*;

- the name of boyar Brae represented the anthroponym base for the oikonym nucleus *Brăieștii* and the hydronym nucleus *Brăiasa* (TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>: 60).

As it can be noticed, many of the toponymic nuclei are formed, at the expression level, through derivation with various suffixes from the anthroponym or appellative etymon. Sometimes suffixation itself is an indication of the impossibility of establishing a polarization relation between the names of places involved in a toponymic structure: *Brăiasa*, for instance, cannot be regarded as a regressive derivative from *Brăiești*, since if it were it should occur as *Brăiasca*.

#### 4. Identifying the geographical objects designated by certain toponyms belonging to a toponymic field.

Another difficulty we encountered while elaborating the dictionary was the impossibility to geographically identify certain referents, although they are mentioned in various sources. The most complicated case in this respect was that of the Bârlad River with its tributaries and backwaters which were identified with great difficulty on the field. Thus, following the thorough analysis of the contexts in which it is used, we concluded that the name *Bârlăzelul* (formed, after a process of toponymic differentiation, from the hydronym *Bârlad* through derivation with the diminutive suffix) was used to designate the following water courses:

	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . The upper course of Bârlad River up to its confluence with Rebricea Stream.	→ <i>Bârlăzelul Vechi [Old Bârlăzel]</i> → <i>Bârlăzelul Nou [New Bârlăzel]</i>
<i>Bârladul</i>	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . The course of Bozianca (Săcăleanca) Stream.	
	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . The course of Poienariilor (Chiselița) Stream.	
	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . The course of Pănceștilor Stream and Crăiasca Stream.	



	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . The course of Vilna Stream, tributary of Bârlad River, near the town of Negrești	
	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . Backwater of Bârlad River, in the Northern part of the town of Tecuci, Galați county.	→ <i>Bârlăzelul Vechi</i> [Old Bârlăzel]
	→ <i>Bârlăzelul</i> . Backwater on the right side of Bârlad River, on the South side of the town of Tecuci, Galați county.	→ <i>Bârlăzelul cel Vechi</i> [Old Bârlăzel]

There were also situations in which it was practically impossible to identify the referents designated by toponymic syntagms that include the hydronym *Bârlad* or its derivatives. Thus, in a document dating from 1814 which contained a map with the borders of Tecuci town, the following hydronyms formed from the name of this river are mentioned: “*apa Bârlăzălului*” [the water of Bârlăzăl], “*apa Bârladului*” [the water of Bârlad], “*apa Bârladului cea mai vechi*” [the oldest water of Bârlad], “*malul Bârlăzălului celui vechi*” [the bank of old Bârlad], “*malul Bârladului*” [the bank of Bârlad], “*malul Bârladului nou*” [the bank of new Bârlad], “*malul Bârlăzălului vechi*” [the bank of old Bârlăzăl], “*Bârlăzăl*”, “unde <i>esă gărla din Bârlad” [“*Bârlăzăl*”, „where the backwaters flow from Bârlad”]; the document continues with such mentions: “the watermill of Bârlad, that is in *the old Bârlăzăl*. [...] searching all the fords, both on *Bârlăzăl*, and *the new Bârlad*, in Alăge’s ford, that is at the border between *Bârlăzăl* and the owners of the estate of Tâmpeschi and upstreams, where the backwaters flow from Bârlad, which is now called *the new Bârlad*, I have found no ford [...], and where the water flows from the old riverbed, called Bălănescului, and also on the backwaters that are now called *the new Bârlad*...”<sup>2</sup> (Andronache, 2002: 56-57).

Moreover, in a document dating from 1833 about the boundary between the Cămilești and Cucorăști estates, the following hydronyms (which were difficult to identify) referring to the meanders of Bârlad River, are recorded: “*Bârladul vechi*” [The old Bârlad], “*Bârladul uscat*” [The dried Bârlad], “locul unde s-a rupt *Bârladul* din *Bârladul vechi*” [the place where Bârlad separated from *the old Bârlad*], “*Bârlăzel*”, “între *Bârladul uscat* și între *Bârladul cu apă*, iar nu di undi s-ar fi rupt *Bârladul nou* de acel *vechi*” [between *the dried Bârlad* and *the flowing Bârlad*, not the place where *the new*

<sup>2</sup> In the original: “locul de moară în Bârlad, adică în *Bârlăzălul vechi*. [...] cercetând toate vadurile, atât pe *Bârlăzăl*, cât și pe *Bârladul nou*, din vadul lui Alăge, ce este pe *Bârlăzăl* hotar despre Țiitorii moșiei târgului de Tâmpeschi și în sus, unde au <i>eșit gărla din Bârlad, care acum se numește *Bârladul nou*, n-am găsit niciun vad [...], iar unde <i>esă gura din matca vechi, ce să numește a Bălănescului, precum și pe gărla care acum este *Bârlad nou*...”

*Bărlad* separated from the *old river*] (Andronache, 2002: 145-147). All these toponyms were processed within the toponymic field of *Bărlad* (acc. TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.), yet without the possibility of indicating in their case the exact identification of the designated geographical objects.

### 5. Difficulties derived from establishing the form of the nucleus-toponym.

Establishing the form of the nucleus-toponym proved to be a complicated process in some specific cases, sometimes because of the erroneous interpretations provided by the editors of the document volumes.

The option for the singular form of the headword *Pângăraș* (< Hun. *Pongorász* < *Pongrácz* “Pancratius”; TTRM, II<sub>1</sub>, 309) – to the detriment of the plural form, *Pângărași*, which is recorded in most Romanian documentary sources –, was imposed by a thorough analysis of the first attestations of the toponym in Slavonic documents: *P\ng\ra]0* (DRH, A, II: 419, y. 1458), where the final *0* reflects just a graphic tradition and should not be perceived as the plural mark *-i*; the same principle applies to the syntagms *wt P\ng\ra]i* and *u P\ng\ra]i* (DRH, A, XIX: 108, y. 1626; ib. XXI: 72, y. 1632), where *-i* is not a plural morpheme, but actually marks the genitive in the Slavonic language (also acc. to *PolIna Pangara]i* “Poiana Pângărașului” DRH, A, XXI: 153, y. 1632).

Our dictionary also recorded as a singular form the oikonym nucleus *Răcăciunea*, derived through Hungarian (*\*Rakacsene*), from the old Ukrainian derivative *\*Rokičene* “Răchiteni” (< appellative *rokita* + the patronymic plural suffix *-jane* (*-ěne*); TTRM, II<sub>2</sub>, ms.). The first attestation of the toponym occurs as *Răcăcine* (na ustĭi R\c\kinI “la gura Răcăcinei” DRH, A, II, 365, y. 1481), thus the final *-iune* is replaced in court Slavonic with the suffix *-inĭ* as “an attempt towards ‘normalization’ that can be identified in later Slavonic-Moldavian or Romanian documents” (Moldovanu, Prisacaru 2018: 91). This form was subsequently attracted in the series of masculine plural forms ending in *-i*, *Răcăciunii*, a version of the toponym that occurs in most Romanian documents. Another notable obstacle in establishing the form of this nucleus-toponym was the fact that it appears in certain old Romanian sources with the non-articulated version *Răcăciuni*, a situation that made it difficult for us to distinguish between a genuine plural form and a singular form with the closure to *-i* of the unstressed vowel *-e*.

Another case that raised many questions was that of the toponymic field formed around a phytonym recorded in 1852 with the form *Ciritei* (Iorga 1927: 41). Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it occurs in the syntagm *Pădurea Ciritei* [*Ciritei Forest*] (MDG, II: 441, y. 1899), designating a forest which in ATLAS MOLD. (y. 1895) appeared to be divided into two sectors, differentiated according to the

owners: *Pădurea Ciretei Pepeli*<sup>3</sup> [*Pepelea's Ciritei Forest*] and *Pădurea Ciretei lui Cuza* [*Cuza's Ciritei Forest*]. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century a settlement called *Ciritei* was established in the vicinity of that place. In TTRM, I<sub>1</sub>: 239 (a work from which we used various attestations and names of localities from the period 1772-1989), this locality is recorded under the entry *Ciriteiul*, although this specific form cannot be identified in official or informal documents. In the current Romanian language dictionaries the non-articulated singular form is *ciritel* (cf. DEX, DLRLC, NODEX, DOOM). Starting from the principles used in the elaboration of TTRM, I and comparing it with other oikonyms included in the volume, we inferred that the editors regarded the form *Ciritei* from the attestations as a non-articulated singular form (as attested in SCRIBAN) and, since all the entry-toponyms were articulated in this work, there resulted the form *Ciriteiul*. However, after analysing the available versions, our opinion is that in the configuration of the toponymic field we should start from the non-articulated plural form, namely *Ciriteii*.

## 6. Conclusions

This study continues the series of texts and oral presentations in which the authors use relevant examples to emphasize some of the difficulties and challenges encountered by the editors in the elaboration of the *Micul dicționar toponimic al Moldovei (structural și etimologic)* [*The Concise toponymic dictionary of Moldova (structural and etymological)*]: the identification of the nucleus-toponym (representing the headword in the dictionary), the classification of toponyms as personal (based on an anthroponym) or descriptive (formed from appellatives), establishing the structure of toponymic fields or the direction of polarization within these fields, the identification or disambiguation of the localization of the referents designated by certain homonymic toponyms when historical geographical information is scarce or missing altogether and establishing the form of the nucleus-toponym.

The project for this dictionary aimed from the very beginning to go beyond a purely informative volume and produce a scientific work that would provide the readers with a comprehensive historical-geographical and linguistic perspective on the toponyms included in it. Furthermore, the specific aim of this dictionary – namely to present toponyms from Moldova by integrating them into toponymic fields and indicating toponymic etymologies solely based on the motivation principle – was more than often a challenge for the editors. Besides rigorous documentation and the correlation of all information derived from sources and investigations, the necessity to remain consistent and comply with strict lexicographic principles required the editors, as shown in this study, to find

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<sup>3</sup> The version *Ciritei* resulted from progressive vowel dissimilation and diphthong reduction -*ii*- to -*i*.

pertinent solutions and make personal decisions with regard to the configuration of the most difficult toponymic field emblems that were occasionally detailed in the etymology paragraphs.

### **Abbreviations**

by differ. = by differentiation

by polar. = by polarization

Hun. = Hungarian

Scr. = Serbo-Croatian

Slv. = Slavonic

Ukr. = Ukrainian

y. = year

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## **SIGLE**

- ATLAS MOLD. = Institutul Geografic al Armatei, *Atlasul Moldovei* (sc. 1:50000), București, 1892–1898.
- DEX = *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, 2nd edition revised and added, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2009.
- DIR, A, XVI-III = *Documente privind istoria României*, A. Moldova, vol. XVI-III, București, Editura Academiei, 1951.
- DLRLC = *Dicționarul limbii române literare contemporane*, București, Editura Academiei, 1955.
- DOOM = *Dicționar ortografic, ortoepic și morfologic al limbii române*, 2nd edition revised and added, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2005.
- DRH, A = *Documenta Romaniae Historica. Moldova*, volumes I-XXI, București, Editura Academiei, 1971 etc.
- MDG = *Marele dicționar geografic al României* (Ioan Lahovari, C.I. Bratianu and Grigore G. Tocilescu), I–V, București, Stabilimentul Grafic I.V. Socec, 1898–1902.
- NALR–DATE = *Noul atlas lingvistic al României. Moldova și Bucovina. Date despre localități și informatori*, București, 1987.
- NODEX = *Noul dicționar explicativ al limbii române*, București, Editura Litera Internațional, 2002.
- SCRIBAN = August Scriban, *Dicționarul limbii românești*, Iași, Institutul de Arte Grafice „Presa Bună”, 1939.
- TTRM, I<sub>1</sub> = *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Moldova*. volume I, part 1, *Repertoriul istoric al unităților administrativ-teritoriale (1772–1988)*, Dragoș Moldovanu (coordinator), București, Editura Academiei, 1991.
- TTRM, II<sub>1,2</sub> = *Mic dicționar toponimic al Moldovei (structural și etimologic)*. Part 1. *Toponime personale*, Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2014; Part 2. *Toponime descriptive* (manuscript).