

# Anthroponymy in Medieval Transylvania

## Introductory Considerations

ADINEL DINCĂ **Regarding the Historical Sources**

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**A**NTHROPONYMY HAS been a reputed but marginal direction within medieval studies, and the manner in which the people from the Middle Ages chose the names of their children, the rules followed in this respect, or the nature of the existing fund of possible names have chiefly been seen as the province of linguistics. During the past three decades, however, historians<sup>1</sup> have begun to show increasing interest in the critical study of given names used throughout the Middle Ages, realizing the

The present text can merely draw attention to a potential direction of research in the field of Romanian medieval studies, a direction turned to good account in Western Europe. In this context, the examples presented and the bibliography represent only a radical selection. The author wishes to express his gratitude for the support received from his colleagues Lidia Gross (Cluj-Napoca), Konrad Gündisch (Oldenburg), András Kovács (Cluj-Napoca) and Zsolt Simon (Târgu-Mureş) in the preparation of the present material.

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unique potential of this direction in research.<sup>2</sup> Earlier approaches focused on the identification of the dialectal origin of certain names (especially of the Germanic ones of the Early Middle Ages), of name etymologies, or their classification according to linguistic criteria. The interdisciplinary perspective adopted in the 1960s sought to clarify and bring some answers concerning the accurate dating of fracture points in the evolution of personal name systems—between Antiquity (three names), Early Middle Ages (one name only), and the name and surname system used starting with the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with the occasional variations from this path—as well as the changes experienced by the fund of names during this process and the inclusion of name analysis in the social, legal, cultural and political context of the investigated phenomena.<sup>3</sup>

Until the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in Western Europe the investigation of medieval names emerged as a vibrant, innovative and extremely fertile direction in contemporary medieval studies. The published texts—macro-analyses (dealing with the ensemble of names), as well as micro-analyses (limited to a particular place/time/social setting)—vary enormously and cannot be summarized in a study as succinct as the present one. However, despite the risk of omissions, we can talk about certain manifest tendencies in the field. On the one hand, the publication in question indicate a manifest interest in the early medieval period,<sup>4</sup> a time of ethno-genesis following the fall of the Roman Empire, or in the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, a time of considerable changes in name systems. Also, the investigations focused on aristocratic names (infinitely better documented by sources), on the social and cultural context that led to the system of “first and last name,” on the changes in the name fund and on the transition to a limited but extremely popular pool of possible names, in a context defined in cultural and juridical terms by *Christianitas*.<sup>5</sup> In what concerns the methodology, especially for those investigations that sought to survey sizable sources or covered long intervals or large geographic areas, the preferred approach has been the statistical one. Also, we notice the increasingly frequent combination between anthroponymy and family history; it has been repeatedly stated that the triumph of the two-name system occurred as kinship solidarities were being redefined in keeping with the Christian perspective on paternal authority within the conventional family, and the investigation of the practices concerning succession or the studies in genealogy and prosopography focused on the manner in which the elites chose the names of their heirs. Quite fruitful have been the investigations devoted to women’s names,<sup>6</sup> a field little explored before. Some aspects, however, require revision or a more in-depth and comprehensive investigation. It would be a fallacy to generalize when it comes to naming practices in the whole area that, during the Middle Ages, found itself under the authority of the Roman Church. In-

stead, the investigations should focus precisely on the existing differences in terms of gender, social status, or generation—especially since we are dealing with environments that have been somewhat less investigated, such as the urban and the rural world of the Late Middle Ages. The studies devoted to the names given in medieval Transylvania, mainly interested in the historical development of the relevant phenomena—and drawing on the information presented in the foreign literature or by Hungarian historians,<sup>7</sup> more interested in the field of historical anthroponymy—, have sought to survey the fund of names as presented by existing sources and process it using statistical methods, with a view to performing complex analyses in several major directions: the identification of the basic procedure for name-giving and of the moment when the two-name system replaced the previous, single name one, the classification of the name fund according to social, occupational, and ethnic criteria, the particular meanings and the developments experienced by the fund of Romanian names in medieval Transylvania.

Of course, in order to achieve these scholarly goals, in a first stage it is necessary to identify the corpus of relevant historical sources. Undoubtedly, the most valuable sources available to those interested in the history of personal names in medieval Transylvania are the diplomatic ones, or indeed chancery documents. Apart from the still inedited texts found in Romanian or foreign libraries and archives, thousands of documentary texts have come to the attention of historians through the publication of diplomata, monographs, or specialized texts. Such editions of documents are usually well-known by those interested in the field,<sup>8</sup> and therefore the following considerations shall not refer to this category of historical sources; the narrative texts or inscriptions will be equally disregarded here.

Generally speaking, diplomatic sources (writs issued by the medieval chancelleries and certifying specific juridical realities) refer to a limited number of individuals, usually mentioned by name, and thus they are relevant for the field only to the extent in which the source material is significant in volume, coherent, covering a wide geographic area and a long period of time.<sup>9</sup> There are also historical sources which, by their vary nature, mention a large number of people's names. Sometimes this category includes sources generically known as "registers." Regardless of the type of document (chancery writ, matricule, judicial or fiscal documents, etc.), under this umbrella term we find a class of texts insufficiently investigated in Romania.<sup>10</sup> Hard to define as historical sources, ascribable to categories such as diplomatic documents, codices "notebooks" (described, according to their use, also as "matricules," "protocols," "urbaria," "accounts," etc.) include essential information for the historical investigation of medieval names. Written for dominantly pragmatic, administrative purposes,

these historical sources often appear as long lists of data, numbers, and, first and foremost, names. While other medieval documents or inscriptions (regardless of the subjacent material) refer to a limited number of individuals and implicitly names, a register can provide researchers with hundreds of names. Consequently, the European specialists in the field have been paying great attention to these registers, seeing them as privileged sources.<sup>11</sup> Several such registers were created in medieval Transylvania or in connection to it, and all are particularly relevant when it comes to piecing together the fund of Transylvanian names between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Somewhat less relevant<sup>12</sup> for the study of names is another category of Transylvania sources, namely, the registers or the protocols issued by the institutions enjoying this prerogative, such as the Benedictine convent of Cluj-Mănăştur, an otherwise singular case.<sup>13</sup> Many names can be found in the “registers” that kept record of economic matters. Among the early such texts we find the tax records from the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century: the notes of papal tax collector Rufino of Civinio from 1317–1320, the tithe register of the Transylvanian chapter for the year 1331, and especially the fascinating “dossier” with names from all over Transylvania drawn up by papal tax collectors Jacob and Raymond between 1331 and 1337.<sup>14</sup> Equally rich in information are some ecclesiastical sources from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, which remained in use until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, such as the *Matricula plebaniae Cibiniensis*<sup>15</sup> or the membership list for the association of the Saschiz chapter.<sup>16</sup> The first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century left us several lists with the names of the Dominican friars from Sighișoara, Sibiu, Cluj, Brașov, Bistrița, etc. (including the *conversi*).<sup>17</sup> In the category of pragmatic documents (usually tax-related) produced by the lay circles—urban or manorial—we find a number of remarkable sources relevant for the names typical for the environment in which they were created. One such example would be the taxation list for the year 1453, the *Regestrum Hungarorum de civitate Cluswar*,<sup>18</sup> the Bistrița register of accounts (1461),<sup>19</sup> the documents concerning the payment of a tax levied on the Romanians, the *quingagesima*, especially in the northern half of Transylvania, also for the year 1461,<sup>20</sup> or several sources dealing with the history of some estates, which also mention many people’s names.<sup>21</sup> Interesting information can also be found in the *vigesima* registers of the towns,<sup>22</sup> and also quite useful are the records concerning university enrollment.<sup>23</sup> It must also be said that some Transylvanian libraries hold medieval liturgical manuscripts which include long lists of names, either as obituaries or as records of the membership of some religious associations; this interesting category shall be dealt with more extensively in another study.

OF COURSE, this extremely succinct presentation of some of the most representative “registers” concerning the medieval history of Transylvania is anything but exhaustive. Instead, it is meant to draw attention to a historiographical field and to a category of sources particularly relevant for anthroponymic research. The investigation of the personal names used in medieval Transylvania, previously confined mostly to the German component of the country’s population,<sup>24</sup> can therefore draw upon a remarkable variety of sources, likely to guarantee the success of any such scholarly endeavor. □

## Notes

1. Elda Morlicchio, “Namenforschung ohne Geschichtswissenschaften? Nein, danke!” in *Onomastik*, vol. 6, *Namenforschung und Geschichtswissenschaften: Literarische Onomastik, Namenrecht, Ausgewählte Beiträge*, ed. Dieter Kremer (Tübingen, 2002), 149–154.
2. George T. Beech, Monique Bourin, and Pascal Chareille, *Personal Names Studies of Medieval Europe: Social Identity and Familial Structures* (Michigan, 2002), IX–XVI.
3. Michael Mitterauer, *Abnen und Heilige: Namengebung in der europäischen Geschichte* (Munich, 1993); Stephen Wilson, *The Means of Naming: A Social History* (London, 1998), 63–181.
4. Dieter Geuenich, Wolfgang Haubrichs, and Jörg Jarnut, eds., *Nomen et gens: Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen* (Berlin–New York, 1997); Dieter Geuenich, Wolfgang Haubrichs, and Jörg Jarnut, eds., *Person und Name: Methodische Probleme bei der Erstellung eines Personennamenbuchs des Frühmittelalters* (Berlin–New York, 2002); Dieter Geuenich and Ingo Runde, eds., *Name und Gesellschaft im Frühmittelalter: Personennamen als Indikatoren für sprachliche, ethnische, soziale und kulturelle Gruppenzugehörigkeiten ihrer Träger* (Hildesheim, 2006); Walter Kettemann, “Name, Person, Gruppe Potential und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten der Freiburg-Duisburger Datenbank mittelalterlicher Personennamen (DMP) für künftige Forschungsvorhaben,” *Concilium mediæ ævi* 11 (2008): 123–150.
5. Beech et al., IX–XVI.
6. Monique Bourin and Pascal Chareille, *Genèse médiévale de l’anthroponymie moderne*, vol. II, 2, *Persistances du nom unique: Méthodes statistiques pour l’anthroponymie. Désignation et anthroponymie des femmes* (Tours, 1992); Joseph Morsel, “Personal Naming and Representations of Feminine Identity in Franconia in the Later Middle Ages,” in Beech et al., 157–180.
7. Miklós Kázmér, *Régi magyar családnevek szótára, XIV–XVI. század* (Budapest, 1993); András Kubinyi, “Fragen der Familiennamengebung im mittelalterlichen Ungarn,” in *Personennamen und Identität: Namengebung und Namensgebrauch als Anzeiger individueller Bestimmung und gruppenbezogener Zuordnung. Akten der Akademie Friesach ‘Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter’, Friesach (Kärnten), 25. bis 29. September 1995*, ed.

- Reinhard Härtel (Graz, 1997), 345–362; Loránd Benkő, *Név és történelem: Tanulmányok az Árpád-korról* (Budapest, 1998); Katalin Fehértói, *Árpád-kori személynévtár (1000–1301): Onomasticon Hungaricum: Nomina propria personarum aetatis Arpadianae (1000–1301)* (Budapest, 2004).
8. Konrad Gündisch, “Urkundenbücher und Regestenwerke zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte Siebenbürgens,” *Berichte und Forschungen: Jahrbuch des Bundesinstituts für ostdeutsche Kultur und Geschichte* 5 (1997): 203–217; W. Kovács András, *Magyar vonatkozású oklevélközlések Romániában* (Cluj-Napoca, 2009).
  9. Franz Zimmermann, “Die Zeugenreihe in den mittelalterlichen Urkunden des Weissenburger Kapitels,” *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 21 (1887): 121–160; Jacob Lutz, “Die Personennamen in den Urkunden der Stadt Halle von den Anfängen der Überlieferung bis zum Jahre 1350,” in *Onomastik*, vol. 3, *Akten des 18. Internationalen Kongresses für Namenforschung (Trier, 12.–17. April 1993): Namensoziologie*, eds. Dieter Kremer and Friedhelm Debus (Tübingen, 1999), 197–205; Trevor Chalmers, “Beyond DEEDS: A Role for Personal Names?” in *Dating Undated Medieval Charters*, ed. Michael Gervers (Woodbridge, 2000), 177–188. Fundamental for the methodology is Rudolf Schützeichel, “Zur Bedeutung der Quellenkritik für die Namenforschung,” *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 13 (1962): 227–234.
  10. Of the few references, see Francisc Pall, “Diplomatica latină cu referire la Transilvania (sec. XI–XV),” in *Documente privind istoria României: Introducere*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1956), 235–236; Sigismund Jakó and Radu Manolescu, *Scrierea latină în evul mediu* (Bucharest, 1970), 60–61. See also Imre Szentpétery, *Magyar oklevéltan* (Budapest, 1930), 246–247. An introduction to the issue, with an additional bibliography, in Josef Hartmann and Jürgen Kloosterhuis, “Amtsbücher,” in *Die archivalischen Quellen*, eds. Friedrich Beck and Eckart Henning (Cologne, 2004), 40–73.
  11. Fundamental, Friedhelm Debus, ed., *Stadtbücher als namenkundliche Quelle* (Mainz, 2000).
  12. The Oradea court register (first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century), an exceptional text also for the names of the arrested, received special attention in this issue (pp. 90–101).
  13. Zsigmond Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei (1289–1556)*, 2 vols. (Budapest, 1990).
  14. *Documente privind Istoria României, veac XIV*, vol. 1: 256–270; vol. 2: 16–23; vol. 3: 41–253 (Romanian translations with references to the original editions).
  15. Batthyaneum Library, Alba Iulia, Ms. II. 135 (ed. Anton Kurz, *Die ältesten deutschen Sprachdenkmale...*, Leipzig, 1848).
  16. Karl Fabritius, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des Kisdler Kapitels vor der Reformation...* (Hermannstadt, 1875), 239–257. The associations of medieval Transylvania are discussed in a monograph by Lidia Gross, *Confreziile medievale în Transilvania (sec. XIV–XVI)* (Cluj-Napoca, 2004), which features several lists of names: the members of the Sebeş chapter, the members of the associations of the Rosary of Bistrița (many women’s names!), the Transylvanian members of St. Paul’s convent of Trier, etc., pp. 287–292. Quite interesting is the list of the Transylvanian members of the Roman association of the Holy Spirit (1478–1520), published by Georg Daniel Teutsch in *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 13, 8 (1890).



17. Karl Fabritius, "Zwei Funde in der ehemaligen Dominikanerkirche zu Schäßburg," *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 5 (1861): 1–40.
18. Library of the Cluj-Napoca Division of the Romanian Academy: *Ms U 1379*, ed. Károly Szabó, "A kolozsvári magyar polgárság összeírása 1454-ből," *Történelmi tár* (1882): 525–41, 729–45. See also id., "Kolozsvár város 1496-diki számadása," *Történelmi tár* (1883): 571–584; Ádám T. Szabó, "'Namenrecht' in Klausenburg, in Kolozsvár und in Cluj," in Kremer, 413–419.
19. Konrad Gündisch, "Cel mai vechi registru de socoteli al oraşului Bistriţa (1461, 1462)," *Acta Musei Napocensis* 14 (1977): 337–347.
20. Zenovie Păclişanu, "Un registru al quinquagesimei din 1461," in *Fraţilor Alexandru şi Ion I. Lăpedatu la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani* (Bucharest, 1936), 595–603.
21. Iosif Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoarei la începutul secolului al XVI-lea* (Bucharest, 1973); Zsolt Simon, "A dévai vár számadása 1531-ből," *Sic itur ad astra* (Budapest) 13 (2002): 19–46; id., "Szapolyai János familiárisainak egy lajstroma 1531-ből," in *Tanulmányok Szapolyai Jánosról és a kora újkori Erdélyről*, eds. József Bessenyei, Zita Horváth, and Péter Tóth (Miskolc, 2004), 231–243.
22. *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Hermannstadt und der sächsischen Nation*, vol. 1 (Hermannstadt, 1880), 270–304; see also Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, *Sibiu–Hermannstadt: Oriental Trade in Sixteenth Century Transylvania* (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna, 2006); *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Kronstadt*, vol. 1 (Kronstadt, 1886); see also Gernot Nussbächer, "Un document privind comerţul Braşovului cu Moldova la sfârşitul secolului XV (I–IV)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* (Iaşi) 21 (1984): 425–437; 22 (1985): 667–678.
23. Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a középkorban* (Bucharest, 1979), with references to the rich literature of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, found especially in the *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*; additional data in Maja Philippi, *Die Bürger von Kronstadt im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Sozialstruktur einer siebenbürgischen Stadt im Mittelalter* (Bucharest, 1986) and in Gabriel Astrik, *The University of Paris and its Hungarian Students and Masters During the Reign of Louis XII and François Ier* (Notre Dame, 1986).
24. Gustav Kisch, "Nordsiebenbürgisches Namenbuch," *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 34 (1907): 5–153; Fritz Keintzel-Schön, *Die siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Familiennamen* (Cologne–Vienna, 1976); Albert Klein d. Ä., "Kurzformen bei siebenbürgischen Familiennamen," *Siebenbürgische Familienforschung* 24 (2007): 69–70.

## Abstract

Anthroponymy in Medieval Transylvania:

Introductory Considerations Regarding the Historical Sources

Anthroponymy has been a reputed but marginal direction within medieval studies, its object of study being chiefly seen as the province of linguistics. During the past three decades, however, his-

torians have begun to show increasing interest in the critical study of given names used throughout the Middle Ages. The studies devoted to the names given in medieval Transylvania have sought to survey the fund of personal names as presented by existing sources and process it using statistical methods, with a view to performing complex analyses in several major directions: the identification of the basic procedure for name-giving, the classification of the name fund according to social, occupational, and ethnic criteria, and the particular meanings and the developments experienced by the fund of Romanian names in medieval Transylvania. In this context, the study discusses the most relevant sources likely to be useful to such a scholarly endeavor.

**Keywords**

anthroponymy, personal names studies, medieval Transylvania, registers (as historical sources)