

# LANGUAGE CONTACT EFFECTS IN HISTORICAL HUNGARIAN AND ROMANIAN PERSONAL NAMES<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** In the multilingual Carpathian Basin the language systems influence name-giving, resulting in the emergence of interferential properties in name usage. These characteristics are found where languages come into contact, such as on language borders. The main aim of this paper is to provide an examination of name contact phenomena emerging from Hungarian and Romanian connections. My source is the *Atlas of Historical Surnames of Hungary* (AHSH 1715 and 1720). One of the great advantages of this reference book is that the organic “unity” of personal names in the Carpathian Basin can be represented on maps in relation to how name systems of different languages affected each other. This study discusses how an important source of data—the earliest tax censuses—can be used to trace certain phenomena that arose due to how names were recorded.

**Keywords:** name geography, name contacts, *Atlas of Historical Surnames of Hungary*, personal names of the Carpathian Basin.

1. Within the Hungarian Kingdom, countrywide data concerning taxpayers was first registered in the beginning of the 18th century. The tax censuses carried out during this era only represent a mere two-thirds of the kingdom’s entire territory. All names listed in the first, 1715, and second, 1720, tax registrations have been integrated into the database of the **Atlas of Historical Surnames of Hungary (AHSH)**, which contains the names of approximately 350 thousand individuals (for more details see Fodor and Lánicz 2011: 178–181, Fodor 2013: 519–520, 2014: 451–452). The AHSH is a possible source for Hungarian and international (mainly Carpathian Basin-based) research in geonomastics. When sorted by language, the collected names found in the database provide a reliable indication of the percent of minority populations in this era. According to our estimates, roughly half of this corpus is comprised of Hungarian names. Researchers from neighboring countries have yet to exploit the linguistic and onomastic possibilities offered by digitalized national censuses, even though at least one-fourth of the personal names gathered are Slavic in origin (mostly Slovak, Ruthenian, with smatterings of Czech or Polish), while one-fifth is either Romanian or Southern Slavic.

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The lists from 1715 and 1720 found in the AHSH do not contain names collected from the region of Transylvania. It is our intention to remedy this situation by processing archival materials related to this period. The main focus of our research will be to expand the database using Transylvanian chancellery documents containing county census reports in 1713 and 1721/2.

2. In the course of multiple investigations surrounding this corpus of name data, it came to our attention that names with foreign origins were frequently recorded in forms that were either corruptions, present in many variations, or otherwise representations of several aspects unique to linguistic interference. The most characteristic occurrence was for one person—verified as being the same individual—to be listed under different names or name variations in these registers.

In the following lecture, my intent is to analyse how these corruptions or name variations most likely occurred. My goal is to further the examination of name contactology, the study of how different language systems influence one another, in reference to languages found in the Carpathian Basin. Before doing so, it is necessary to differentiate between those name variation examples suitable for name contactology analysis, as opposed to those reflecting irregular name usage due to outside factors, such as the recording individual. The basic question is how historical name data can be used to reconstruct genuine name usage, while simultaneously revealing what factors lead to the distortion of names during the recording process.

Thanks to current studies in the name contactology of Hungarian communities living beyond Hungary's borders (e.g. Lanstyák 2013; Bauko 2013; see also Ţurcanu 2011), these mainly synchronic investigations provided us with the analytical parameters for examining historical name data predating official family name usage. At the same time, the underlying difference between modern and historical data must be emphasized. While the former can be examined according to its spoken and official (written) forms, names gathered from three hundred years ago are only available in written form. Any type of investigation into their spoken forms is therefore impossible. However, in the latter case, the fact that official name usage does not have to be taken into consideration eases our examination. Laws regulating official family name usage, or requiring the official documentation of individuals, only became widespread much later, at the beginning of the 19th century (cf. Farkas and Kozma eds. 2009: 353–359, Farkas 2009: 365–366).

3. In order to interpret name data accurately, it is first essential to reveal the circumstances surrounding how these censuses were conducted. It is a well-established fact that the foremost purpose for collecting countrywide records was to verify how many individuals would be paying taxes. No kind of effort was made to assess ethnicity. At this period in Hungarian history, most ethnicities were listed according to social status (such as tax eligibility), rather than ethnic background. This is particularly significant to our investigation for two reasons: first of all, it allows the examination of non-Hungarian name systems. Secondly, it provides us with an invaluable source for

the study of any interferential phenomena arising from contact between various ethnic groups possessing different customs in name usage. In order to do so, we must first decide what the data reflect: is it the written form of a name genuinely in use, or rather a name form corrupted by the recorder's lack of linguistic competence?

In the case of both tax censuses, the methods used to record data were regulated by law. On the county level, only those deputies originating from a different county were allowed to collect names. This frequently meant that names were recorded by deputies who did not speak the language used by non-Hungarian ethnic groups present in the given county, a factor that must be taken into consideration. Many of the final drafts of these censuses include the names of the recording deputies, who were mostly members of the petty nobility and therefore familiar with administrative tasks. Given their social status, it can be concluded that the majority knew Hungarian and used this language, even if their family did not happen to be Hungarian in origin. Knowledge of Latin was naturally a given.

The names of 78 deputies have been established from the 1715 census. 55 possessed Hungarian family names, while 16 names attested to Slavic origins. Four were German in origin and three unresolved. Roughly three-fourths (70.51%) of the deputies could be said to be Hungarian in origin, while there was a relatively high chance of having a Slavic background (20.15%). Only 5.13% of deputies were German.

No Romanian family names were found among the county deputies. This does not necessarily mean deputies had no knowledge of Romanian; on the other hand, it is unlikely that deputies from the Transdanubian Region or Northern Hungarian counties were fluent in Romanian. This is why Romanian names provide the best source for examining the interferential aspects of written data. In these records, the following administrative units contain Romanian-speaking populations: Ugocsa (*Comitatul Ugocea*), Szatmár (*Com. Sătmar*), and Máramaros (*Com. Maramureș*) counties, Kővár district (*Țara Chioarului*), Central-Szolnok (*Com. Solnocul de Mijloc*), Kraszna (*Com. Crasna*), Bihar (*Com. Bihor*), Arad and Zaránd counties (now in Arad county in Romania). The deputies who recorded the taxpayers in Ugocsa county were from Transdanubian Veszprém, in Bihar from Central-Hungarian Pest-Pilis-Solt, in Zaránd from Esztergom, in Arad from Baranya, in Máramaros, Kővár region, Central-Szolnok and Kraszna from North-Hungary, Hont county.

4. It must be emphasized that—according to the classic definition—interferential phenomena suggest the presence of bilingualism. According to this interpretation, linguistic interference can either point to the influence or effect a language/variation of a language has on another language, or indicate “phenomena, structures or elements not belonging to a certain language or type of language,” the usage of which was influenced by a different language (Kiss 1995: 202–203). In spite of the fact that the cases listed below bear no relation to bilingualism, they still make allowance for instances in which a lack of language knowledge leads to what could be interpreted as “negative” interference. Regarding lexical (word adaptation) interference, Kiss Jenő mentions

(1995: 203) that words can transfer from one language to another without requiring actual knowledge of the language they were transferred from (e.g. *vígéc* 'traveling agent', from the German *Wie geht's?* 'How are you?/How do you do?').

To a certain extent, language proficiency demands some ability to recognize disparate name systems. While this kind of information can be acquired without actually knowing the other language, names possessing transparent etymologies can only be understood if the other language is at least somewhat familiar. When a census deputy "interprets" non-Hungarian names in relation to his own language, or simply mishears the name and thereby records it in a corrupted form, the culprit in this case is clearly the lack of proficiency in the foreign language.

5. Other than the evidence offered by family names, the fact that deputies possessed knowledge of Hungarian is supported by the way names were spelled in the records. This circumstance is especially apparent in the case of sounds not signified by the Latin alphabet, such as palatal [d'], [t'], [n'], [l'] consonants. The fact that deputies used letter combinations to designate these sounds indicates knowledge of Hungarian orthography. This is particularly true in the case of the [ɟ] sound, only signified in Hungarian by combining the letters *g+y/i/j* (cf. Korompay 2003: 285–286). Pairing the letters *s+z* to designate the [s] sound is another indication of the same phenomenon. The names *Gyurkucsá, Gyurcsk, Abrogyán, Tógyer, Pangy; Mátyusz, Szerb, Vaszil; Nyegro, Nyisztor, Telekany; Pintye, Mattyo* etc. found in this corpus offer substantial proof concerning the deputies' competency in written Hungarian. It must be mentioned that written Romanian utilized a Cyrillic alphabet for centuries; in this particular period, it is highly unlikely that Romanian was influenced by the Latin alphabet. This is due to the fact that the writing system of the Romanian language was altered at a much later date: during the 1840's in the Romanian Greek Catholic Church and in 1881 in the Orthodox Church (Berecz 2009: 264).

6. The next part of my analysis examines cases in which the lack of foreign language proficiency has resulted in certain types of recording phenomena.

1) In most counties, the names of taxpayers were listed in the **name order** common to Latin (first name + surname), with the first name indicated in its Latin form (e. g. *Johannes Kovács*) (in detail see also Farkas and Slíz 2013: 4). In contrast, records from counties (Máramaros, Kővár district, Central-Szolnok és Kraszna) where Hont county deputies were registering, the Hungarian name order was used. Unfamiliarity with foreign names can lead to cases in which the Hungarian order of placing the first name after the family name is disrupted. In spite of the generally utilized Hungarian name order, the name *Marianul Lupejeszk* was still recorded in the Latin order (see e.g. 1715: *Moka Sziminik* ~ 1720: *Simon Moka*).

2) **Lack of language proficiency** essentially influenced the spelling and recording of names, producing numerous corrupted, deformed name forms grouped into the following categories below:

a) The word ending is left off due to defective perception

1715	1720
<i>Bu</i>	<i>Buk</i>
<i>Porum</i>	<i>Porumb</i>
<i>Boj</i>	<i>Boje</i>
<i>Thodor Gavrilla</i>	<i>Gabriel Tódorán</i>
<i>Andrekan Petre</i>	<i>Petrus Andreka</i>

b) Phonetically-based mistakes occurred at the beginning and within the name

1715	1720
<i>Kingye</i>	<i>Kinde</i>
<i>Kingie</i>	<i>Kingya</i>
<i>Semenik</i>	<i>Sziminik</i>
<i>Borza Vrats</i>	<i>Morcza Vrad</i>
<i>Zurat</i>	<i>Csurad</i>

c) In numerous instances, the deputies “clarified” the sound of the foreign name according to their own native language (i.e. Hungarian)

1715		1720	
Name	Full Name	Name	Full Name
<i>Demiter</i> (Rom. <i>Dimitru</i> ) 'Demeter'	<i>Markus Demiter</i>	<i>Demeter</i> (Hung.) 'Demeter'	<i>Márkus Demeter</i>
<i>Blas</i> (Rom. <i>Blaj/Vlasie</i> ) 'Blase' (DOR. 24)	<i>Blas Petrul</i>	<i>Balázs</i> (Hung.) 'Blase'	<i>Balázs Petrul</i>
<i>Mațus</i> (< Rom. <i>Matei?</i> ) 'Matthew'	<i>Matus Togier</i>	<i>Mátyus</i> (Hung.) 'Matthew'	<i>Mátyus Tógyer</i>
<i>Dema</i> (Rom. <i>Dima</i> ) (DOR. 42)	<i>Dema Flori</i>	<i>Deme</i> (Hung.) 'Demeter'	<i>Deme Lőrincz</i>
<i>Gsurka</i> (Rom. <i>Giurca</i> ) 'George' (DOR. 66)	<i>Gsurka Theoder</i>	<i>Gyurka</i> (Hung.) 'George'	<i>Gyurka Theodorus</i>
<i>Pop</i> (Rom.) 'priest' (DOR. 134)	<i>Pop Juon</i>	<i>Pap</i> (Hung.) 'priest'	<i>Pap János</i>
<i>Rossa</i> (Rom. <i>Roșa</i> ) (DOR. 363)	<i>Rossa Gyurcsk</i>	<i>Rúzsza</i> (Hung.) 'rosa'	<i>Rúzsza György</i>
<i>Sus</i> (Rom.) (DOR. 378)	<i>Sus Petrul</i>	<i>Szász</i> (Hung.) 'Saxon'	<i>Szász Péter</i>
<i>Toko</i> (Rom. <i>Toca</i> < <i>Todor?</i> [DOR. 159, 390] / Hung. <i>toka</i> 'dewlap?')	<i>Toko [Juon]</i>	<i>Tokaj</i> (Hung.) 'town in Zemplén county'	<i>Tokaj [Balázs]</i>
<i>Drobus</i> (Rom.) (< Hung. <i>Darabos?</i> )	<i>Drobud Daniel</i>	<i>Darabos</i> (Hung.) 'lumpy?'	<i>Darabos Daniel</i>
<i>Kubullo</i> (< Rom. <i>Cobil</i> 'mare') (DOR. 244)	<i>Kubullo György</i>	<i>Köbölő</i> (Hung. orth.) '?'	<i>Köbölő Gyurka</i>

In these cases, it becomes much more difficult to establish the name's etymology, as well as the ethnicity of the name's bearer. This difficulty is most aptly demonstrated

by name pairs from Zaránd county (e.g. *Pop Juon ~ Pap János*, *Sus Petrul ~ Szász Péter*, *Rossa Gyurcsk ~ Rúzsa György* etc.). In the first example, the Romanian family name and first name clearly point to a Romanian origin, while the second name form indicates a Hungarian one. However, in this case we know that both name forms actually designate the same individual. One interpretation must therefore be excluded. If this circumstance had not been known, we would have categorized both names differently, based on ethnicity (see Fodor 2013: 524–525).

Further investigation is required in the case of name forms exhibiting divergent linguistic parallels and name translations (see below), especially in reference to whether the parallel usage of name forms from two linguistic systems exists in ethnically mixed populations (cf. Kniezsa 2003: 261).

d) Among mistakes made due to a lack of language proficiency or knowledge of name systems, the most common occurrences are those in which the recorder does not separate the first name from the family name. The two names are therefore recorded in a **contracted form**. The example of *Pavellan*, mentioned in reference to the 1715 census, appears to be one name. Compared to the form found in the 1720 census (*Pavel János*), this clearly presents a contracted form of *Pavel Jan*. The name *Paskucsul* is a similar example. In 1720, the source refers to the name *Páskul Urszul*, an inhabitant of the same settlement. This name is another case of the recorder misunderstanding the name.

1715	1720	Recostruction of Name	Settlement in Zaránd County
<i>Pavellan</i>	<i>Pavel János</i>	< <i>Ion Pavel</i>	Aranyág/Arăneag
<i>Paskucsul</i>	<i>Paskul Urszul</i>	< <i>Ursul Pascul</i>	Szinte/Sintea Mare
<i>Tokourcz</i> (cf. <i>Toko Juon</i> )	<i>Tokaj Urszul</i>	< <i>Ursul Toko?</i>	Zaránd/Zărând
<i>Paskuczil</i>	-	< <i>Ursul Pascul?</i>	Zaránd/Zărând
<i>Nyete-pasko</i>	-	< <i>Pascul Nete?</i>	Szinte/ Sintea Mare

e) **Cases of first names recorded in their original form, as opposed to the Latin form**, are another indication of limited knowledge of the other language or name system. In 1715, many deputies were most likely not aware of the Latin form of Greek Orthodox first names or nicknames, which is why they could not be translated into Latin. As a result, these names were recorded (frequently incorrectly) in their original Romanian form. The name corpus contains numerous instances of cases in which the same first name was replaced with its nickname, the form most likely used.

Forms of First Names			
Romanian (with Hung. orth.)	Latin	English	Hungarian
<i>Pintye, Petrul</i> [< <i>Petre</i> ]	<i>Petrus</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>Péter</i>
<i>Juon, Jovan, Jánk, Jankul</i>	<i>Johannes</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>János</i>
<i>Gyürcs, Gyurka, Gyurkucs, Gyurcsk</i>	<i>Georgius</i>	<i>George</i>	<i>György</i>
<i>Andrika, Andrics</i>	<i>Andreas</i>	<i>Andrew</i>	<i>András</i>

Forms of First Names			
Romanian (with Hung. orth.)	Latin	English	Hungarian
<i>Todor, Tógyer~Togier, Tiodor, Todir, Toda, Tódorán</i>	<i>Theodorus</i>	<i>Theodore</i>	<i>Tódor, Tivadar</i>

On the other hand, deputies from the 1720 census generally used the Latin form (e.g. Rom. *Lupe* à Lat. *Volfgangus*; Rom. *Griga, Giriga* à Lat. *Gregorius*; Rom. *Vaszalie* à Lat. *Ladislaus*; Rom. *Gavrila* à Lat. *Gabriel*). (Further examples of Romanian and Slav (Ruthenian) first name forms can be found: Bélay 1943: 118.)

7. The examples discussed above are mainly reflections of name corruptions or various other recording phenomena that occurred due to gaps in foreign language proficiency. In the following examples, I would like to demonstrate how some deputies knew enough of the other language to identify foreign names, which did not lead to the ethnically neutral Latinization of the recorded names, but rather to their Hungarianization. Names such as these can be grouped into three categories.

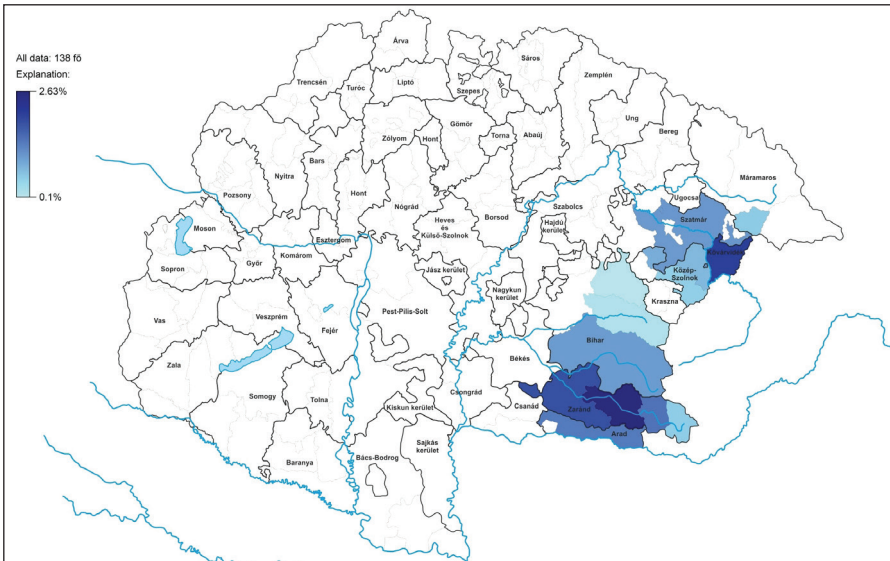


Fig. 1. Geographical location of the first name *Ursus* and its variations (AHSH 1720)

a) The previously mentioned instances already contain examples in which **Romanian first names were recorded in their Hungarian form.**

Romanian First Name		Hungarian First Name	English Name
<i>Juon</i>	→	<i>János</i>	<i>John</i>
<i>Petrul</i>	→	<i>Péter</i>	<i>Peter</i>



Romanian First Name		Hungarian First Name	English Name
<i>Gyurcsk</i>	→	<i>György</i>	<i>George</i>
<i>Demiter</i>	→	<i>Demeter</i>	<i>Demeter</i>
<i>Flori</i> [< <i>Florie</i> ] (DOR. 58)	→	<i>Lőrincz (!)</i>	<i>Florian/Lawrence</i>

Deputies for the 1720 census were characteristically capable of identifying first names used by Orthodox Romanians, but also present in Western Catholic Church traditions. Other than the usual Latin, these names were often recorded in Hungarian as well, a practice that definitely points to deliberate attempts at translation, or the occasional attempt to Hungarianize names. While previously mentioned instances indicate name identification that happened on the basis of sounds or pronunciation resembling Hungarian name forms rather than any concrete knowledge of the other language or name system, the following cases strongly indicate a conscious effort to transform names.

Names not present in Western name-giving traditions are understandably seldom found in Hungarian. The Hungarian translation of the Romanian first name *Ursul* ('bear') (Lat. *Ursus/Ursinus/Ursulus*) appears in one instance. (The geographical location for the name *Ursus* and its variations can be seen in the first figure, which clearly shows that this name is exclusively found in areas also populated by Romanians.)

Variants of the first name <i>Ursul</i> in censuses	
1715	<i>Ursz, Urs, Urss, Urszuly, Ursuly, Ursully, Urszul, Ursul, Urssul, Ursuj</i>
1720	<i>Ursz, Urs, Urszuy, Urszul, Ursul</i>

b) The "Hungarianization" of **Romanian surnames stemming from place names** also indicates a certain level of knowledge concerning the linguistic and name system of the opposite language. The Hungarian equivalent for names bearing the Romanian affix, *-an* (~*-ean*) mainly appear when the Romanian family name stems from a Hungarian toponym.

1715		1720	Origin
<i>Erdellan Juon</i>	→	<i>Erdélyi János</i>	< <i>Erdély</i> 'Transylvania'
<i>Argillan Gabrilla</i>	→	<i>Erdéli Gavrilla</i>	< <i>Erdély</i> 'Transylvania'
<i>Mathias Tarpány</i>	→	<i>Matheus (!) Tarpai</i>	< <i>Tarpa</i> 'settlement in Szatmár county'
<i>Bogdan Moldovan</i>	→	<i>Moldvai Bogdány</i>	< <i>Moldva</i> or <i>Moldavia</i> placenames

Deputies for the 1720 census are aware of the Romanian affix's function and can match it to the correct Hungarian formant. The 1715 census, on the other hand, only contains one example of name data being transferred into Hungarian.

At this point, I would like to mention that the transferral of place names between different linguistic systems is already an indication of a naturally occurring name contact. This explains how the name of a region, *Erdély*, eventually plays an important role



in the creation of personal names in Romanian (see *Erdelan* and its various forms: *Erdelán*, *Erdellan*, *Erdélyan*, *Erdilány*, *Erdillan*, *Ardelan*, *Ardilan*, *Ardilán*, *Ardillan*, *Ardilyan*, *Argillan*, *Argyilan*), similar to how settlement names transferred from Romanian to Hungarian. (Fig. 2. illustrates the geographic spread of *Erdelan* and its variations.)

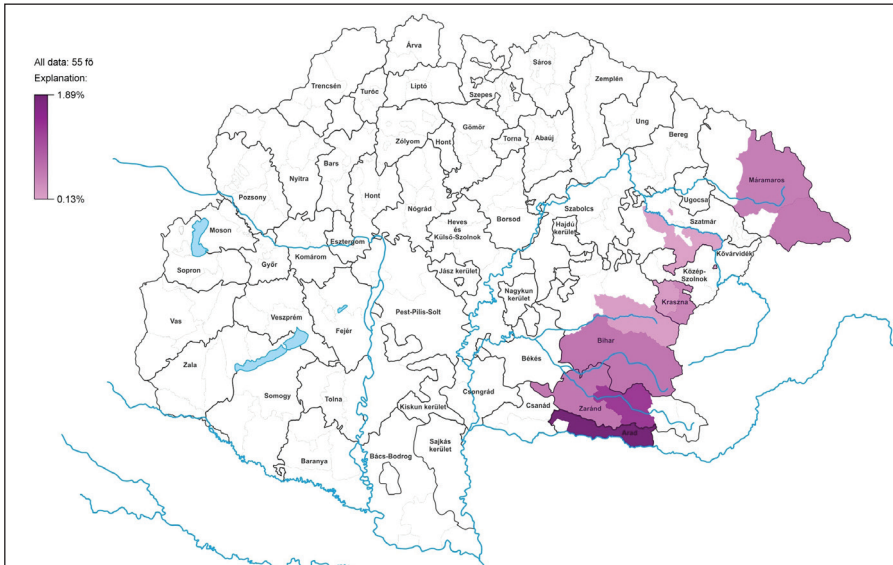


Fig. 2. Geographical location of the *Erdelan* surname and its variations (AHS 1720)

In the 19th century, the spelling reform that accompanied the linguistic movement to Latinize Romanian language usage—the so-called etymologic spelling—called for the suffix *-u* to be added to words ending in consonants (see e.g. *Moldov(e)an* > *Moldov(e)anu*), initially a requirement only in writing. This was when the derivative form *-eanu* arose (Berecz 2009: 264). It therefore comes as no surprise that 18th century records contain only family names bearing the *-an* formant. To mention an interesting name geography fact, according to present-day Romanian telephone books, the name *Moldoveanu* is mostly found in areas outside Transylvania. Its variant *Moldovanu* is characteristic of Moldavia's northern region, while *Moldovan* is mainly present in Transylvania, particularly in the Transylvanian Plain (Mezőség/Câmpia Transilvaniei) region (cf. Lipan 2012. *Moldoveanu*, *Moldovanu*, *Moldovan*). A similar distribution can be seen in the case of Latinized (standard noun) names ending in *-u*: forms without the *-u* are present in regions that formerly belonged to Hungary, while those ending in *-u* are common outside of the Carpathians. The determining factor behind this phenomenon can most likely be found in the continuation of earlier practices in the semi-official recording of names by Hungarian officials. The present examination of census practices can certainly be applied to this context as well (see also Berecz 2009: 265).

c) The **translation of family names** stemming from standard nouns bears a close resemblance to the place name case mentioned above. The deputy (presumably working on information provided by the local, bilingual informant) translated any semantically transparent Romanian family names.

Romanian Name in 1715		Hungarian Name in 1720	Meaning
<i>Albus Tamás</i> (DOR. 180)	→	<i>Fehér Tamás</i>	'white'
<i>Albus Jovan</i>	→	<i>Fehér Jancsi</i> (!)	'white'
<i>Pekora</i> (< <i>păcurar</i> ) <i>Juon</i>	→	<i>Juhász János</i>	'shepherd'
<i>Popa Ursz</i>	→	<i>Pap Urszuly</i>	'priest'

Any examination of translated names such as these can only be conducted following a thorough investigation. The lack of foreign language proficiency fortunately means that there exist few cases of translated names.

## Conclusion

As my final thought, I would like to state that my research of official practices concerning the recording of names in the Hungarian Kingdom of this period refutes the presence of any type of ideological movement similar to that experienced in 19th and 20th century, when the development of modern states was often accompanied by the aggressive translation of names. (For example, compulsory usage of first names in the official, state language as a requirement for registering births.) In the case of 18th century censuses, it seems more likely that we are witnessing the impact of deputies who were mostly Hungarian in origin, or fluent in Hungarian. Within the confines of their personal judgement, it seems that—other than the primary role of Latin—greater prestige was given to Hungarian, an indication of its presence as a semi-official language. In no way does it indicate the deliberate attempt to Hungarianize names as a means of modifying the presence of ethnic populations boundaries. Even suggesting such an idea would be anachronistic from the point of view of history. The fact that very few instances of this phenomenon occur in the entire database of names collected in these censuses further supports this conclusion.

This study has discussed how an important source of data—the earliest tax censuses—can be used to trace certain phenomena that arose due to how names were recorded. The results of these practices are still present in name systems used today and can be said to represent a kind of orthographic tradition.

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