Oikonymic Transformations in Romania in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

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The end of World War II caused numerous changes in the urban toponymy of Central and Eastern Europe. For instance, Brașov, one of the most important Romanian cities, bore the name *Orașul Stalin* ("Stalin city") for 10 years. It was an homage paid to the Soviet leader, whose name could be identified in another 13 oikonyms in the Eastern bloc, behind the Iron Curtain: *Stalingrad — Volgograd* (USSR), *Stalin — Varna* (Bulgaria), *Stalinstadt — Eisenhüttenstadt* (German Democratic Republic), *Stalinograd — Katowice* (Poland), *Stalino — Donețk* (Ukraine), and *Sztálinváros — Dunaújváros* (Hungary), among others. Some of the city names abusively altered during communism were readopted after the Revolution of 1989, which brought about the demise of the totalitarian regime in Romania. However, this was not the case with several hundred villages and communes whose names had been changed in 1964 because central authorities believed they displayed negative or inappropriate connotations.

KEYWORDS Settlement names, urban toponymy, name change, commemorative names, Romania.

Introductory notes

After World War II, European space recorded deep/major transformations reflected even in onomastics. These changes were more salient and had a greater impact in relation to oikonyms. Central and Eastern Europe was faced not only with healing the wounds of the war, but also with dealing with an alien form of governance, imposed by the Soviet power. As regards onomastics, the ideology of the new regime was actualized by changing most of the names related to monarchy, religion, democratic values, and political figures and enforcing names that endorsed communism. As David (2011, 215) suggests: "Place names are not only linguistic signs; they also represent social and historical values."

Oikonymic changes: socio and psycholinguistic aspects in communism

The onomastic tradition suffered after World War II when, in 1945, a government that answered to Moscow was imposed in Romania. Liberties steadily disappeared and, under the occupation of the Red Army, the country turned from a constitutional monarchy into a communist people's republic. On the administrative level, one could notice a series of laws (1950, 1951,[1] 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1964) "following the orientation imposed by Lenin in the very first year after the success of the Great Russian revolution" (Moldovanu 1991, LIII) and seeking to reorganize the country in accordance with the aspirations of the new rule. The numerous laws show the communist authorities' interest in the act of (re)naming, as opposed to the first half of the twentieth century. The chief aim was to expunge from the inventory of Romanian placenames the items that were reminiscent of the royal family and key political figures of the former "bourgeois-landowning" regime, and replace them with names of leaders of the proletarian and communist movement, many of whose biographies were suspect. As Nicolae and Suditu (2008, 221) noticed, "these 'proletarian' names of 'criminals' and 'martyrs' would largely go extinct after 1964," which reveals a very important feature of commemorative placenames: their instability. David (2011, 219–220) points out that:

> When used to designate settlements, the stability of place names is a prerequisite for their basic function in communication — i.e. to name a place. Commemorative names are connected and influenced by reality outside the relationship between the named geographical objects and their names. For this reason, commemorative names are frequently changed; ideologically "outdated" names are substituted by new place names.

Oikonymic alterations made "overnight" could not survive for long, as they were not meant to tally with the toponymic landscape of the area, but to erase names related to the old regime from the collective memory. Put differently, the oikonymic changes in question aimed to destroy and then build what was, unfortunately, an artificial reality in keeping with the demands of the system imposed by the USSR.

According to Moldovanu (1991, LIII), the initiative of name change belonged to mayors' offices, but instructions from the central powers determined the choices — "local" options were "approved by means of ministerial decrees." After 1947, mayors' offices received circular letters with instructions that:

> provided lists of exemplary figures whose names could be used/transferred in toponymy: leaders of great uprisings[...], revolutionaries who participated in the events of 1821 and 1848, working class heroes, important figures with democratic opinions (from the viewpoint of the communist party)

(Nicolae and Suditu 2008, 221).[2] Therefore, the oikonymic modifications made by local authorities observed the prescriptions of central officials and their "recommendation" to avoid the use of names of figures who were still alive. This 1966 restriction was reconfirmed in 1977 and has been preserved ever since, including in the case of hodonyms, even if many rules have changed after the Revolution of 1989.

From the perspective of oikonymy, the administrative reorganization of the country focused on two types of changes. Some were triggered by unforeseen events but had a significant emotional load; others were prepared in time, systematically, to transform

the toponymic landscape of the country. The fortuitous changes were in agreement with what was happening behind the Iron Curtain. The cult of Stalin's personality led to the appearance in Romania, as in most countries in the Eastern bloc, of a city that bore the name of the Soviet leader. As David (2011, 222) underlines:

> Internationalization in commemorative naming is typical of situations in which one nation or state controls others, and where the place name systems of its satellites reflect this status. All toponymies of former satellites of the Soviet Union were affected by Stalin's cult of personality in the 1940s and 1950s. With the exception of the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, Stalin's name was used for city names in all national toponymies of the Eastern bloc.

In Romania, *Brașov* became *Orașul Stalin* ("Stalin city") in 1950–1960. The return to the previous name was favored by the death of the dictator (in 1953), Khrushchev's rise to power (in 1956), and the retreat of the Soviet troops from Romania (in 1958). Other notable examples are *Eforie Sud*[3] > *Vasile Roaită*[4] (1949–1965); *Ștei* > *Orașul Dr Petru Groza*, adopted until 1996, after the former president of the Council of Ministers died in 1958; and *Onești* > *Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej*, since the death of the communist leader in March 1965 until 1996. The name of the settlement Iaslovăț was changed to *Emil Bodnăraș* in 1976 (after the death of the communist dignitary) and preserved under this form until 1996 (the village was the dignitary's birthplace). Such oikonymic changes generally occurred in settlements that were in the course of industrialization. In other cases, the territorial entities targeted by the name changes received more attention from the authorities. According to communist ideology, industrialization was a feature of the new rule aimed at creating a "multilaterally developed society" — a phrase typical of the wooden language of the era.

These scattered changes always happened top to bottom due to the absence of democracy and were recorded consistently in 1946–1989 for all types of urbanonyms — not only for towns, cities and villages, but also for streets and squares — depending on the major events that occurred at the highest level of state leadership. The emotional impact of these episodes was prompted in the people by the central powers. This determined the rash selection — without preliminary consultation of the locals and without social or geographical semantic motivation — of names that were more or less linked to the local community. Thus, based on oikonyms one can retrace the socio-political, ethnic, and cultural context of an age.

In what follows, the study presents the systematic transformation of the oikonymic landscape as a result of Decree No. 799 of 1964, the most important official document regarding the administrative-territorial reorganization of the Romanian state under communism. The major significance of the law lies in the fact that as N. Felecan (2015, 479) has underlined:

> [There were a great] many settlements subjected to the process of name change, 879 (145 communes and 734 villages), covering the entire surface of the country […] Most of the changes occurred in the south, the first place being occupied by the region of Bucharest (according to the administrative division at that time) with 151 instances and the last place by Maramureș with 10 substitutions.[5]

The motivation can be explained, from the viewpoint of wave theory, by the proximity to the headquarters of communist power in Romania — Bucharest — where all the decisions were fabricated. Thus, innovations spread from the center towards the periphery

and the marginal areas of the country were less affected by the saliently political and propagandistic oikonymic changes. The reasons that led to the modification of the old oikonymic nomenclature are complex and deserve to be analyzed, as "natural" toponymy was frequently replaced with artificial, semantically and geographically unmotivated names. However, these were typical of undemocratic regimes and constituted forms of manipulating people's conscience, history, and the society, in general.

Following Moldovanu (1991, LIV–LV), Nicolae and Suditu (2008, 223–228) delimit seven frameworks that defined the Romanian ethnic style and functioned in the communist period. These are also operational in other contexts and eras to describe the national oikonymic profile.

(1) *The political framework* "censors all the names derived from old institutions or names of 'unsuitable' figures" (Nicolae and Suditu 2008, 223). Thus, several types of names disappeared: referential names related to the royal family and heroes of the World Wars, as well as names of political personalities from the interwar period. The overzealousness of the authorities resulted in several confusions. For instance, to avoid the homophony with the word *poliție* — "the repressive institution of the bourgeois-landowning regime" — the name of the village Polițeni was changed to *Vadurile* ("the fords," in 1964). Similarly, due to the association with the Liberal family Brătianu, which helped shape the history of Romania beginning with the Revolution of 1848, the name of the village Brăteni was changed to *Pădureni* (from "forest"). These examples illustrate the lack of objectivity of the communist regime, for which it was more important to have placenames that were semantically neutral or unrelated to democratic parties.

(2) *The religious framework* eliminated most oikonyms that "were or seemed to be related to religion" (Nicolae and Suditu 2008, 224), which in the Leninist doctrine was likened to a drug: *Biserica* ("the church") > *Făgetu de Sus* ("upper beechwood"); *Călugăra* ("the nun") > *Măgura* ("the hill"); and *Episcopia* ("the bishopric") > *Piscu Pietrii* ("the peak of the rock"). At the same time, oikonyms derived from superstitions were also considered obsolete, unbefitting the new rule: *Strigoaia* ("the evil spirit") > *Vârful Dealului* ("the peak of the hill"); *Vrăjitoru* ("the wizard") > *Dumbrava* ("the grove"). Nevertheless, certain settlement names were "overlooked" by the communist vigilance, surviving unscathed throughout the twentieth century. The most eloquent example is *Sfântu Gheorghe* ("Saint George") — a municipality and the county seat of Covasna, as well as a village located at the mouth of the homonymous arm of the Danube delta. On the one hand, a likely explanation could be the fact that Romanians represented the minority in those settlements. On the other hand, such omissions may be explained by the achievement of the target to change most religious names. In other words, the aim was not to eliminate religion from the oikonymic landscape, but to take it out of the spotlight.

(3) *The social framework* was manifested through the elimination of oikonyms reminiscent of the "imperfections" of the past. Derogatory names evocative of the precarious condition of the peasantry were largely replaced: *Cârpiți* ("botched," plural masculine form) > *Victoria* ("the victory"); *Golani* ("ruffians") > *Zorile* ("the dawns"); *Haimanale* ("tramps") > *Caragiale*;[6] *Robu* ("the slave") > *Stejaru* ("the oak"); and *Tâlhărești* (from "thief") > *Codreni* (from "forest"). The

authorities attempted to alter a century-old social reality overnight by means of administrative actions. Nonetheless, as a sign of respect for the memory of certain events associated with positive values in the communist period, certain oikonyms were left unchanged despite their "disagreement" with the new society. A striking example in this respect is the settlement named *Flămânzi* ("hungry," plural masculine form), which was considered to be the heart of the peasants' uprising of 1907.

(4) *The ethnic framework* referred, on the one hand, to the elimination of names of fighters from other countries (e.g. *Generalisimul Suvorov*, an eighteenth-century general in the Russian army > *Dumbrăveni*)[7] and, on the other, to the removal of ethnonyms "that, in the opinion of the communist authorities, could create or encourage discrimination between the Romanians and the minorities" (Nicolae and Suditu 2008, 225). This was in agreement with the regime's policy of ethnic uniformization, of instilling a state of interethnic harmony in the collective mentality. Most abandoned or changed names referred to the Gypsies, but other ethnic groups were targeted as well: *Cotu Ruşi* (from "Russians") > *Cotu*;[8] *Tătăruşi* (from "Tartars") > *Rediu*; and *Ungurii* ("the Hungarians") > *Arini* ("sandy land"). Essentially, the message conveyed by the authorities was that ethnic differences were not important in the socialist society, as people were united by a shared political ideal. In the same category, one can include Slavic oikonyms (*Jurilovca* > *Independenţa*: "the independence") and Turkish ones (*Murighiol* > *Unirea*: "the union"), which were modified in the context of an increasingly intensive promotion of national communism during the last years of the Ceauşescu era. The change proved short-lived (1983–1996) and did not last for long after the Revolution of 1989.

(5) *The economic framework* was aimed at the replacement of names of former owners of lands and villages and generic names reminiscent of "oppressive" social classes (*Boereşti*, from "landlord" > *Cioara de Sus* ("upper crow"); *Iobăgeni*, from "serf" > *Valea* ("the valley")) or names "that revealed the unproductiveness or unsuitability for crops of certain lands (in the vicinity of villages, naturally), and names that were clearly motivated by the spatial reality designated" (Nicolae and Suditu 2008, 225): *Secătura* ("the dried place") > *Livada Nouă* ("the new orchard"); *Valea Rea* ("the evil valley") > *Vălişoara* ("the little valley"). Based on the model of the Soviet society, in which disinformation was a state policy, euphemism was also practiced in Romania, even by means of onomastic transformations. From the perspective of central authorities, a land could become fertile or a village could be made more attractive simply by changing its name. The subliminal message was that the inhabitants' lives improved along with the oikonymic change.

(6) *The ethical framework* prompted the removal of names that appeared indecent, offensive, or disparaging to the inhabitants of a certain settlement. The elimination of such oikonyms dates further back in the history of the Romanian language. The process was documented at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but it expanded after 1945. The explanation lies in the fact that the new society was very restrictive as regards obscene allusions and slang. The following examples are illustrative: *Baliga* ("the dung") > *Viişoara* ("the little vine"); *Băutori*

("drinkers") > *Hulubeşti* (from "dove"); *Ciungi* ("armless," plural masculine form) > *Fântânele* ("little wells"); *Floceşti* (from "pubic hair") > *Floreşti*;[9] and *Găuricea* ("the little hole") > *Livezi* ("orchards"). It is interesting to note that this framework was also applied in multiethnic regions. Thus, the Transylvanian settlement Buduş became *Vâlcele*, as the original name was too similar to the Hungarian adjective *büdös* ("smelly, fetid, stinky"). Ethically speaking, the communists claimed that the Marxist-Leninist society was perfect. This ideal had to be noticeable in settlement names as well.

(7)   *The aesthetic framework* was concerned with the elimination of ugly, striking names, derived from dialectal words which evoked aspects of rural life or the satirical attitude typical of the Romanian people. The reasons are manifold: the names (a) awoke fear (*Balauru* ("the dragon") > *Crângu Nou* ("the new Crâng"); *Sângeroasa*[10] ("the bloody," singular feminine form) > *Valea Frumoasă* ("the beautiful valley")); (b) included names of animals deemed inappropriate (by local authorities) to designate the settlements in question: *Bou* ("the bullock, the ox") (two villages) > *Izvoraşu* ("the little spring")/*Viişoara* ("the little vine"); *Broaşte* ("frogs") > *Stânceşti* (from "rock"); (c) referred to household objects unfit for modern peasants: *Cîrpa* ("the rag") > *Valea Timişului* ("Timiş valley"). As one can see, settlement names were turned into an instrument of communist propaganda. The new society had to be proclaimed on the level of onomastics too, by the abandonment of compromised and compromising names and the adoption of new ones in keeping with the philosophy of the political regime.

A particular aspect of early 1970s oikonymic changes was the over-glorification of Romanian cultural and political achievements. Influenced by Thracian-Dacian ideological and historical movements, Nicolae Ceauşescu encouraged and elaborated the cultural and historical discourse, claiming the superiority of autochthonous culture over any foreign influence. Under the national-communist ideology, the secretary general of the Romanian Communist Party became directly involved in the shaping of national history along the lines of expressing the Romanians' pride of having Latin origins. Two of the most notable examples in this respect are the county seats Drobeta-Turnu Severin[11] and Cluj-Napoca. Until 1972, the name of the former municipality was *Turnu Severin* (Hungarian *Szörényvár* or *Szörénytornya*, German *Turm Severin*), whereas for the latter the first component was added in 1974, as a result of a decree issued by Ceauşescu himself, when the city celebrated 1850 years since its first documented mention as *Napoca*.[12] Such oikonymic alterations must be linked to the attempt of the communist authorities to legitimize themselves by referring to the glorious millennial history of the country. The ancient names, restored to eternalize the old settlements, evidenced the great age and continuity of the Romanian people in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space. According to David (2011: 218): "The function of mythicization helps political power to create a new myth and adapt history to suit its ideological interpretation. This myth may be a myth of state, or a myth of landscape — whether a 'Communist' or 'national' landscape."

Conservatism vs democratic transformation in post-Revolution oikonyms

The period after the Revolution of 1989 is characterized by the preservation of hundreds of oikonyms established in previous years under communism. This approach is

suggestive of the influence of the 45 years of communism on people's mentality. While totalitarian authorities were disturbed by names that were against the regime, current authorities do not see the change of several settlement names as a priority. "All the changes achieved within the ethical and aesthetic frameworks were kept" (Nicolae and Suditu 2008, 231), as well as some of the names that were intrinsically linked to the communist dictatorship: *23 August* (two settlements), *Oţelu Roşu* ("the red steel"), and *Tovărăşia* ("the comradeship"). The preservation of the historical name *23 August*, which marked the national day of Romania under communism, does not upset the locals, who are accustomed to this name. An official position was issued by the vice-mayor of the commune on the shore of the Black Sea. On the one hand, he considered the name to be reminiscent of a historical decision that had been beneficial to Romania (when the country turned against the Nazi occupation). On the other, as a representative of the local authorities, he believed that "the idea of changing the name of the settlement is not only ill-timed, but also inconvenient, leading to bureaucracy and administrative complications" (see Ionescu 2015).

The old name of the town Oţelu Roşu was *Ferdinandsberg* (Hungarian *Nandorhegy*), derived from the hill nearby. The German name is owing to the fact that the settlement was founded by German colonizers, who were joined by Italians when the settlement became a center of ferrous metallurgy. In 1924–1947, the name was Romanianized (*Ferdinand*), which upset the communist authorities due to the association with the king who achieved the union of the Romanian lands.[13] The decision not to return to the interwar name may be construed as evidence of the antimonarchical attitude of the post-1989 power.

The name of the village *Tovărăşia* is reminiscent of the forced collectivization of the 1950s, when peasants' properties were confiscated and the peasants were compelled to become associates and work for the state. Although the repression against the people who were against the process was violent (arrests, deportations, confiscations of possessions, and forced labor), it appears that the oikonym has not bothered anyone so far.

The return to old names did not come about suddenly, as it did in the years after communism was established, but steadily, sometimes via intermediate names. An eloquent example is *Ştei*, a settlement that became a town (in 1956) after important uranium reserves were discovered there. In 1958 the town received the name *Dr Petru Groza*, in memory of the prime minister of the first communist government (1945–1952). Between April 1989 and May 1990, the settlement bore the name *Petru Groza*, without the preceding academic title *doctor*. After that period, the town went back to its previous, century-old name, *Ştei*. The town of Oneşti became *Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej* upon the death of the communist leader of Romania (from 1947 until his death in 1965). The restoration of the politically untarnished name occurred only in 1996. The recovery of old names was not systematic; it unfolded sporadically, as a result of referenda organized by local authorities: the commune name *Unirea* ("the union") > *General Berthelot* (2001);[14] the village name *Dumbrava* ("the grove") > *Limba*[15] ("the tongue") (2004);[15] the town names *Basarabi* > *Murfatlar* (2007);[16] *Ionel* > *Iohanisfeld* (2008);[17] and *Satu Nou* ("the new village") > *Gârciu* (2011).[18] The reasons for these changes are diverse, but they are culturally, historically, geographically, economically, ethnically, and practically legitimate. The absence of an important law regarding oikonymic changes in post-revolutionary Romania can be accounted for by the following:

- The authorities' lack of interest in official toponymy. The explanation is complex: first, there were socioeconomic priorities on which the country's exiting the prolonged crisis depended, and oikonymic changes imply high costs; second, one can deduce the unwillingness of the central power, which did not find such an endeavor necessary to people's welfare;
- The existence of democratic laws, which allow settlements in multiethnic areas or those in which the minorities make up more than 20 % of the population to use bi/trilingual signs. From the viewpoint of sociolinguistics, complete freedom in the use of a mother tongue even in the field of onomastics quenches a potential conflict triggered by the nationalistic attitude of people who are dissatisfied with the name of a town or village. In multiethnic settlements, it is not the connotation of the oikonym that counts, but the language in which it is used.

By comparison with the totalitarian age when change was prescribed by central authorities, oikonymic transformations currently follow a democratic path, from local authorities towards central ones. According to the number of oikonymic changes, the onomastic impact appears minor, but it is profound precisely because it is no longer imposed from abroad or by a dictatorship.

Concluding remarks

The consequences of the waves of oikonymic changes after World War II, when geographic nomenclature became an instrument of communist propaganda, were sudden. There occurred a break in the history of hundreds of settlements, manifested in the termination of their onomastic continuity. As Moldovanu (1991, LV) noticed:

> we are faced with a manifestation of communist strategy, aimed at rebuilding everything from the ground, erasing the traces of the past or subjecting it to drastic selection. The past stopped being valuable in itself, as it was valued only as long as it foreshadowed the present.

The communist-imposed changes affected a wide variety of Romanian oikonyms through the subjective-ideological perception of communist power. Entire categories of names were eliminated and massively replaced with neutral designations or names with generic meanings, which do not have the power to individualize (such as *Poiana*: "the meadow" and *Livada*: "the orchard"). Some new oikonyms with abstract semantic content (*Progresul*: "the progress" and *Victoria*: "the victory") and commemorative oikonyms referring to the symbols cherished by the central powers (*23 August*, *1 Decembrie*[19]) are no longer related to the socio-geographical reality, as they have become mere tags attached by convention through the intervention of the authorities.

As opposed to the communist age, the post-Revolution period is defined by far fewer oikonymic changes, but these are underpinned by objective political, religious, social, ethnic, economic, ethic, and aesthetic motivations. The reasons for this state of affairs are related to internal politics and the socioeconomic situation in the country. The communist authorities considered it to be a priority to change many settlement names because they needed to impose their values in the society. On the other hand, the post-1989 powers, which were established as a result of democratic elections, did not find oikonymic transformations to be opportune. *Mutatis mutandis*, the change of certain placenames, refers to the totalitarian versus democratic nature of central and local powers.

Notes

[1.] Article 3 of Decree No. 226 of 1951 mentioned that "name changes occur when there is a lack of correspondence between an extant name and the regime of popular democracy." The real issue is that the divergences were mostly fictitious.

[2.] In a private conversation with a topomastic scholar in Cluj, a researcher at the Institute of the Romanian Academy who was co-opted into the committee responsible for the revision of settlement names in the 1960s, I learned that specialists' opinions were completely ignored and decisions were made in the office of the committee's chairperson, a general.

[3.] Between the two World Wars, it was called *Carmen Sylva*, after the literary pseudonym of Queen Elisabeth of Romania.

[4.] A worker who was shot to death in 1933 during a strike in Bucharest, an important event during the economic crisis but largely overestimated and extensively interpreted propagandistically in the communist regime.

[5.] It should be mentioned that, as compared to the administrative reform of 1926, when records noted 173 towns, 8,879 communes, and 14,607 villages, in 1968 the registers counted 236 towns, 2,706 communes, and 13,149 villages. The data reveal the approximate number of abandoned village names: 1,458 (see Tomescu 2012, 354, 358).

[6.] A great Romanian writer.

[7.] According to Moldovanu (1991, LIII), this cleansing occurred in 1964, but it targeted many communist criminals before 1945 as well.

[8.] The ethnonym was abandoned in 1968, against the background of the anti-Soviet attitude of the central authorities in Bucharest, as a result of the Czechoslovakian invasion by the troops of the Warsaw Treaty.

[9.] The euphonic resemblance between the old name and the new one also contributed to this transformation.

[10.] The correct interpretation of the oikonym was *Valea cu Sângeri* ("the valley with common dogwood"), namely the valley with wood from this species of tree: *Cornus sanguinea*.

[11.] The famous bridge across the Danube was built in this region by the architect Apollodorus of Damascus in 103–105 A.C., to facilitate the access of the Roman army led by Emperor Trajan to Dacia.

[12.] The settlement was founded in 124 A.C. as *Municipium Aelium Hadrianum Napoca*. Cluj was first documented in the medieval period, in 1167, as *Castrum Clus*. The Romans simply referred to it as *Cluj*, the Hungarians as *Kolozsvar*, and the Germans as *Klausenburg*.

[13.] According to David (2011: 220): "Another reason why a place name may be changed is its misinterpretation. In such cases, a geographical name is considered to be commemorative because it is thought to relate to a previous political regime, and is therefore deemed ideologically unsuitable. Such a place is renamed using a new, ideologically correct place name — despite the fact that the base of the original name actually bore no relationship to ideology or politics."

[14.] The settlement was given this name in 1923, after the name of a French general who owned a mansion and agricultural land in the area, which he had received from King Ferdinand as a token of gratitude for the contribution of the French army to the liberation of Romania in World War I. After his death (in 1927), the general donated his property to the Romanian Academy.

[15.] The first documented mention of the settlement dates from the first half of the twelfth century. The etymology of the name is related to the tongue of land/peninsula in the bed of the river Mureş, which forms a bend in that area.

[16.] The wine brand Murfatlar, one of the most famous brands in Romania, also contributed to this oikonymic change.

[17.] The village was built by (German) Swabian colonizers in the first half of the nineteenth century, after they leased the land from Count Johann Buttler — hence the name *Johannesfeld* ("Johann's field"), which was re-employed in the memory of the Germans who emigrated massively in the second half of the nineteenth century.

[18.] The abandonment of the previous name was accounted for by the difficulties caused by the delivery of mail in a settlement with Hungarian majority.

[19.] The two dates refer to when the national day of Romania was celebrated before and after 1989.

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