

**OICONYMS ORIGINATING FROM THE LIGNEOUS  
VEGETATION AND DEFORESTATION WITHIN OLTENIA**

**OICONIME CU ORIGINEA ÎN DOMENIUL VEGETAȚIEI  
LEMNOASE ȘI AL DEFRIȘĂRII ÎN OLTENIA**

Costela IORDACHE<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Situated in the South-West of Romania, Oltenia represents an important region, both from a historical and a geographical point of view, having a continuous population from ancient times. This statement is sustained by the variety of oiconyms, but also by the linguistic origin of most of the terms. Depending both on social-political circumstances, but also on physical-geographical determinations, oiconyms emphasize the features of the natural background and the peculiarities of the economic development. Among the categories of oiconyms found in Oltenia, we have chosen to analyse those ones that originate in the forest domain. The elements of spontaneous and cultivated forest vegetation have an important place in the oiconymy of Oltenia. The geoecological conditions both determined the dimension and the structure of the forest cover, but also the tree cover.

At present, the actual spread of the forest is connected with the ancient humanization of the Dacic population and its continuity. In the course of time, the population exerted a continuous pressure on the forest by grazing, which is a traditional occupation, even if, as compared to other regions, the forest cover had a lower percentage in the overall surface of Oltenia. The need to extend the cultivated areas, also expressed by the repeated deforestation, especially within plain areas is pointed out by the frequency of oiconyms that assign deforestation. The presence of the forest, its spatial dimension and the composition of the forest and tree areas regarding the component species, but also the geographical repartition of the corresponding oiconyms represent the basic coordinates of the present study. The specialized analysis of oiconyms in specific phytotoponyms emphasizes the fact that assigning names for localities has been made according to the surrounding reality. Also, the form of presentation for oiconyms in their dynamics, starting with the first documentary mention, both reveal the Romanian models of their formation and the historical-demographical conditions in which the settlement network has evolved.

**Key words:** oiconyms, forest, deforestation, fruit trees, Oltenia

**Cuvinte cheie:** oiconime, pădure, defrișare, pomi fructiferi, Oltenia

**INTRODUCTION**

Oiconyms are topic names referring to human settlements. Introduced in the specialized literature by I. Conea in 1960, this term etymologically comes from the Greek words “oikos”, which means *house* and “onyma/onoma” that means *name*.

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Craiova, Geography Department, costelaiordache@yahoo.com

Oiconyms emphasize the features of landscape and economic development of a territory as they are conditioned by social-political and historical events, as well as by physical geographical characteristics. In this context, the academician Jordan (1963, p. 2) states that all kind of moments characteristic to the life of a human collectivity – historical (strictly), social, economic, political, psychological, display a long, sometimes permanent echo in toponimy.

Appeared in Antiquity, present oiconyms are radically different from the initial ones, due to the prolonged period of time and to social and linguistic transformations.

The name of the settlements has been and still is much influenced officially by administration as compared to relief forms or hydronyms (Ungureanu, 1984, p. 41).

Besides the names officially registered, the oiconyms from Oltenia include groups of dwellings, parts of villages, seasonal settlements, which, on the whole, make up an extremely rich toponymic background that reflects the dynamics of the human habitat.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

In order to achieve this study, there have been used the topographic map (1:25,000 scale), the monographs of the counties of Oltenia, toponymic and historical dictionaries, atlases (geographic, road, and linguistic), statistical year books, and materials registered during field trips. We took into account the administrative limits of Oltenia, namely a surface that exceeds the limits of the historical province eastwards, aiming at rendering as accurately as possible the oiconyms that evoke the forest and fruit-growing surfaces.

As research methodology, we used the statistical method by means of which we have evaluated the frequency of oiconyms with origins in the field of wood vegetation and clearing. Then, we systematized them on categories and compared the counties of Oltenia according to this type of toponyms. Using the cartographic and topographic methods, we rendered the territorial distribution of the studied oiconyms. The use of the comparative-historical method allowed us to emphasize certain mutations in the dynamics of forest surfaces in the last three decades and of certain stages in the evolution of human settlements.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

From *phytogeographical point of view*, most of Oltenia is part of the Macaronesian-Mediterranean region, sub-Mediterranean subregion, Dacian province, Banat-Getic subprovince, Getic Sub-Carpathians, Getic Piedmont, Oltenia Plain districts. The northern extremity corresponds to the Central-European region, Southern Carpathians subprovince, district of the Vâlcan, the Căpățâna Mountains and the limestone belt of the Parâng Mountains.

In 2006, Oltenia had 860,434 hectares of forest and forest vegetation, representing 12.7% of the forest patrimony of Romania. At county level, forest distribution is unequal, the largest forest surfaces belonging to the northern counties, which cover vast mountainous and hilly areas (Table no. 1).

Table no. 1

Distribution of forest surface in Oltenia in 2006

Administrative unit	Forest surface (ha)	% of the forest surface of Oltenia	% of the total surface of the county
Dolj	85,041	9.9	11.5
Gorj	274,711	31.9	49.0
Mehedinți	149,840	17.4	30.4
Olt	59,962	7.0	10.9
Vâlcea	290,880	33.8	50.5
OLTENIA	860,434	100	-

Source: Statistic Year Book of Romania, 2007, I.N.S., Bucharest, own calculation

Forest has always been “Romanian’s brother”, representing an element of permanent protection for the population. The ancestral link between humans and forest no matter its type, dimension or composition, is emphasized by the 22 oiconyms, which render this element of the environment in Oltenia (more numerous in Vâlcea and Dolj counties) (Fig. 1).

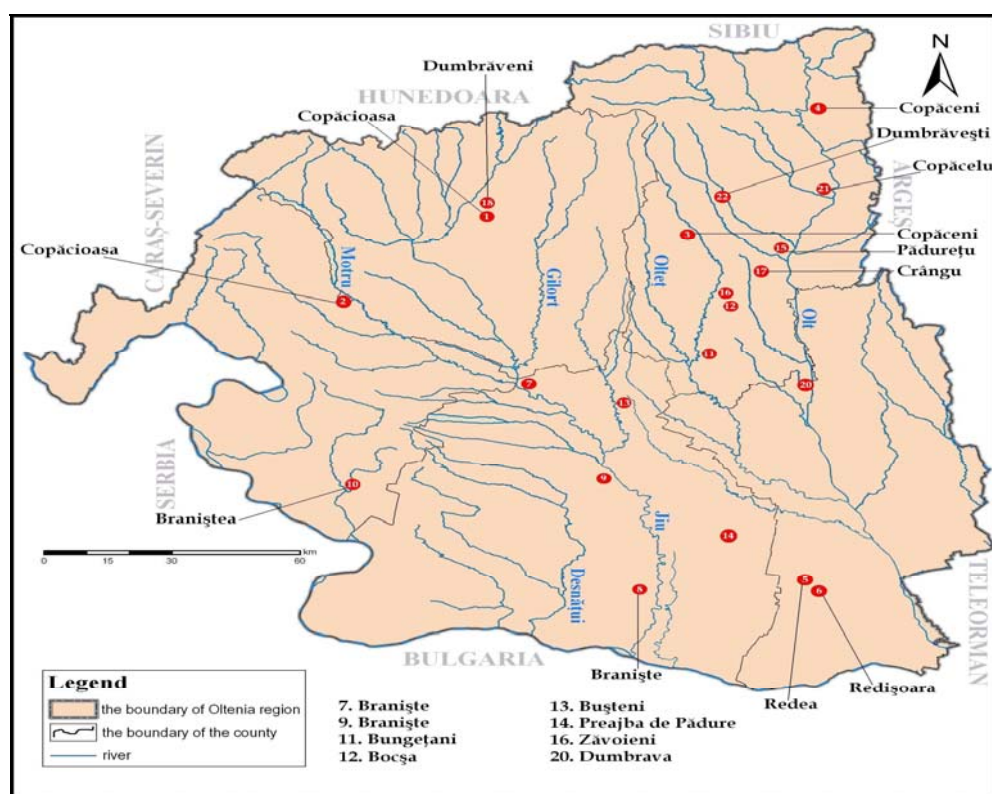


Fig. 1 Geographical distribution of the oiconyms referring to forest

With regard to forest terminology, Rusu (1981, p. 278, quoted by Nicolae & Suditu, 2008, p. 142) states that “it is extremely significant the fact that “forest” terms are among the oldest words of our language, both in Latin and in Dacians’ language. It is mainly about the appellatives related to forest associations: *forest/pădure* (popular Latin *padulem* < *palus*, -udem), *wood/codru* (Latin *quodrum/quadrum*), *thicket/bunget* (var. bunget) – an old pre-Roman term, which means “thick and dark forest; thicket; secular wood”.

Thus, in order to emphasize a rare forest or a forest with old trees where clearing is forbidden, there is used the term of *braniște*, coming from the Bulgarian *branište* (DEX, 1998, p. 110). This appears in the name of three villages belonging to Filiași town and of Daneți and Podari communes from Dolj County. In Vânători commune from Mehedinți County, it appears with the suffix -a, as *Branișteea*.

The term of *grove/dumbravă* is used referring to a young and not very old forest or to an oak forest (from the Slavian *donbrava*; DEX, 1998, p. 323). Consequently, the following oiconyms are relevant: *Dumbrava* (Lungești commune, Vâlcea County) located in the south-east of the Olteț Piedmont, along the Mamu stream; *Dumbrăvița* (one of the 11 component villages of Husnicioara commune, Mehedinți County) located in the western part of the Motru Piedmont; *Dumbrăveni* (Crasna, Gorj County, from the Oltenia Sub-Carpathian Depression) or *Dumbrăvești* (Tomșani, Vâlcea County) from Vâlcea Sub-Carpathians, developed along the upper course of the Bistrița.

The settlement of *Bunețani* is one of the nine villages that make up the commune of Făurești from Vâlcea County, in the south of the Olteț Piedmont, on the left of the homonymous river. At the origins of its name is the appellative *bunget*, the significance of which has been previously mentioned and that appears quite rarely in the present landscape.

If for referring to an old forest, there is used the term of *wood/codru*, for a young vegetal association the corresponding word is *spinney/crâng*, which is found in the name of the village *Crângu* (in the south-east of the Olteț Piedmont), component of Scundu commune, Vâlcea County.

Hydrophilous wood vegetation is named *coppice/zăvoi*, which, according to DEX (1998, p. 1182) comes from the Slavonic *zavoj* and refers to a small forest on the bank of a stream. We find it a little modified in the oiconym *Zăvoieni*, which belongs to Măciuca commune, Vâlcea County.

The villages *Redea* and *Redișoara* from Olt County (located within the Romanați Plain, on the Pârliți Valley) comes from the term *rediu*, which means small and young forest (DEX, 1998, p. 905) and this is concordant with the field reality with regard to forest extension.

Among the oiconyms suggesting the forest presence or utilization, we have identified the following villages: Bușteni (Murgași, Dolj County), Copăcelu (settlement belonging to Râmnicu Vâlcea Municipality), Copăcioasa (Scoarța, Gorj County), Pădurețu (component of Băbeni town), Preajba de Pădure (Teslui, Dolj County), and Bocșa (Măciuca commune, Vâlcea County).

The arboriculture and shrub domain is represented by 72 oiconyms (Fig. 2), which reveals the extension of forest surfaces and, especially, their structure.

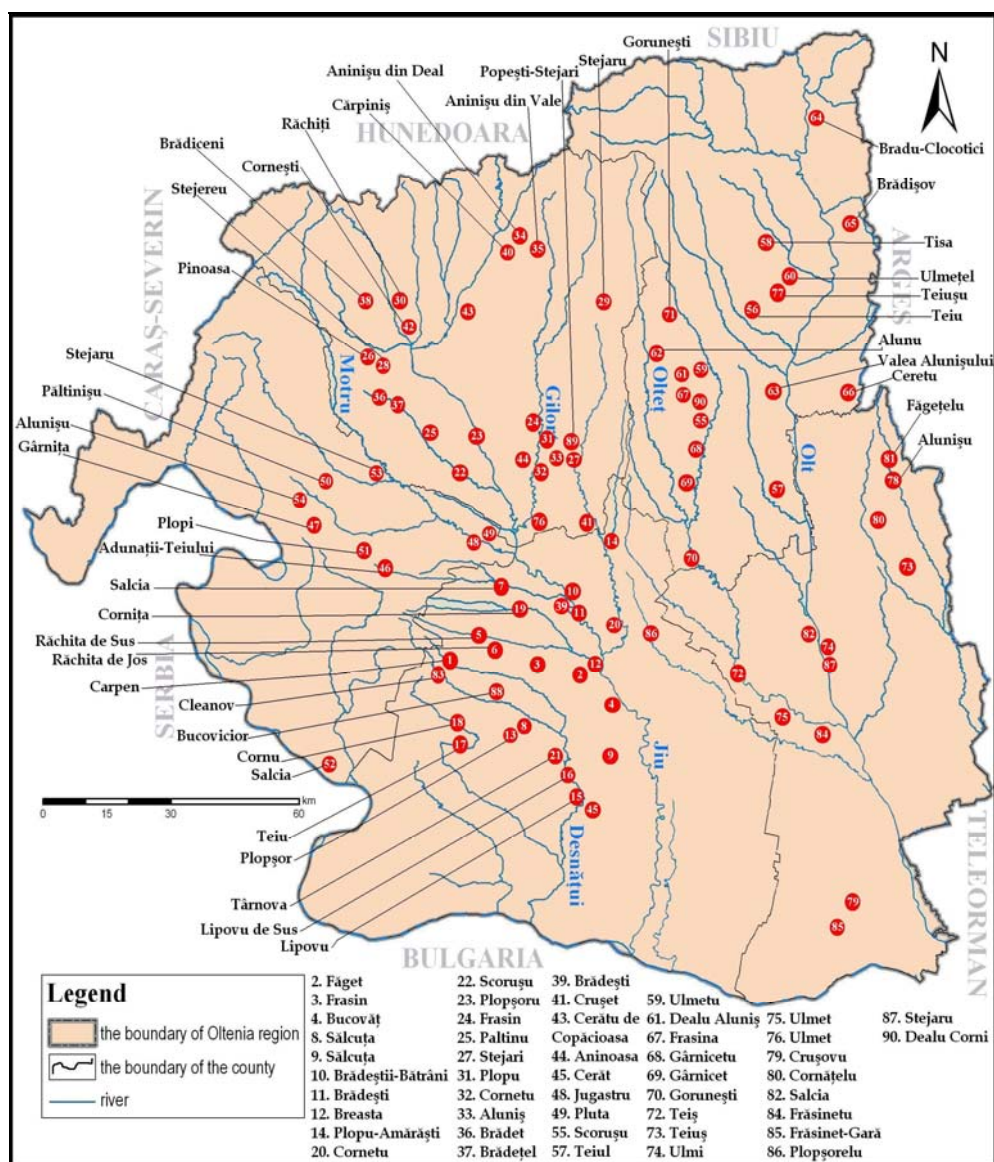


Fig. 2 Geographical distribution of the oiconyms referring to trees and shrub

Most of the appellatives are of Latin origin: hazel nut/alun, alder tree/anin/arini (alnus), hornbeam/carpen (carpinus), Turkey oak/cer (carrus), cornel tree/corn (cornus), beech/fag (fagus), ash tree/frasin (fraxinus), common maple/jugastru (jugaster), birch tree/mesteacăn (masticinus), sycamore

maple/paltin (platanus), pine/pin (pinus), poplar/plop (populus), willow/salcie (salix, -icis), lime tree/tei (tilium), elm tree/ulm (ulmus).

Others come from the Dacian lexical fund, such as fir tree/brad (according to the Albanian *Bradh*, *bredz*), Hungarian oak/gârniță (written Bulgarian granica), common oak/gorun (written Bulgarian gorun), osier/răchită (written Bulgarian rakita), service tree/ scoruș (Bulgarian skoruša), oak/stejar (Bulgarian stežer), yew tree/tisă (Slavonic tisa).

By analysing the geographical distribution of the settlements the names of which comes from tree appellatives, it results they are relatively uniformly distributed on counties and major landforms, except for the southern part of Oltenia. The geoecological conditions specific to plain areas, associated to clearings, explains the extremely reduced number of oiconyms from this category from the Blahnița, Desnățui, Romanăț, and Boianul Plains.

The highest frequency is displayed by the oiconyms coming from the term *lime/tei*: two villages called *Teiu* (Orodel in Dolj County and Pietrari in Vâlcea County), two villages *Teiușu* (Bunești in Vâlcea County and Brebeni in Olt County), one village *Teiul* (Amărăști commune in Vâlcea County), *Teiș* (Balș, Olt County), *Teiuș* (Scornicești, Olt County), and two villages with compound names – *Adunații Teiului* (Tâmba, Mehedinți County) and *Valea Teiului* (Breznița – Motru, Mehedinți County).

The appellative *fir/brad* is found under different forms in the following oiconyms: *Bradul-Clocotici* (Racovița, Vâlcea County), *Brădeț* and *Brădețel* (Mătășari commune, Gorj County), *Brădești* (village and commune in Dolj County), *Brănești* commune in Gorj County, *Brădeștii Bătrâni* (Brădești, Dolj County), *Brădișor* (Berislăvești, Vâlcea County), *Brădiceni* (Peștișani, Gorj County).

The *cornel tree* is a shrub that appears in seven oiconyms, either simple or compound and as diminutives: *Cornu* (Orodel, Dolj County), *Cornetu* (Șimnicu de Sus, Dolj County and Căpreni, Gorj County), *Cornești* (Bălești, Gorj County), *Dealul Corni* (Lădești, Vâlcea County), *Cornița* (Cernătești, Dolj County), *Cornățelu* (Poboru, Olt County).

The *hazel nut/alunul* and the *poplar/plopul* are found in six oiconyms: *Alunișu* (Spineni, Olt County and Husnicioara, Mehedinți County), *Aluniș* (Căpreni, Gorj County), *Alunu* (Vâlcea County), *Dealul Aluniș* (Berbești town, Vâlcea County), *Valea Alunișului* (Șirineasca, Vâlcea County), respectively *Plopu* (Hurezani, Gorj County), *Plopu-Amărăști* (Fărcaș, Dolj County), *Plopi* (Tâmba, Mehedinți County), *Plopșor* (Sălcuța, Dolj County), *Plopșoru* (village and commune in Gorj County), *Plopșorelu* (Vulpeni, Olt County).

Under several forms, there have been identified five oiconyms coming from the terms *ash tree/frasin* and *oak/stejar*: *Frasin* (Predești, Dolj County and Vladimir, Gorj County), *Frasina* (Roești, Vâlcea County), *Frăsinetu* (Dobrosloveni, Olt County), *Frăsinet-Gară* (Vladila, Olt County), *Stejaru* (Corcova, Mehedinți County; Mîlcov, Olt County; Roșia de Amaradia, Gorj County), *Stejari* (village and commune in Gorj County), and *Stejerei* (Câlnic, Gorj County).

The willow/*salcia* as the species called *osier/răchită* appears in eight oiconyms: three *Salcia* settlements (village and commune in Mehedinți County, Argetoaia in Dolj County, and Slătioara in Vâlcea County), two settlements with the diminutive *Sălcuța* (the homonymous commune and Calopăr, Dolj County), respectively with determinatives or plural form – *Răchita de Sus* (Seaca de Pădure, Dolj County), *Răchita de Jos* (Brabova, Dolj County), *Răchiți* (Runcu, Gorj County).

From the same vegetation level, but placed at extremes, the *Hungarian oak/gârnița* and *common oak/gorunul* are found in the following oiconyms: *Gârnița* (Prunișor, Mehedinți County), *Gârnicet* (Fârtățești, Vâlcea County), *Gârnicetu* (Stănești, Vâlcea County), and *Gorunești* (Bălcești town and Slătioara, Vâlcea County).

The plural form or collective appellatives with the suffix –et/-etu or diminutive forms of the *elm tree/ulmul* appear in five oiconyms: *Ulmi* (Milcov, Olt County), *Ulmet* (Stoina, Gorj County and Dobrun, Dolj County), *Ulmetu* (Copăcenii, Vâlcea County), and *Ulmețel* (Păușești-Maglași, Vâlcea County).

With a more reduced number of representations, the variety of oiconyms coming from tree vegetation is also emphasized by other examples, starting from shrub (*alder tree/anin*, *service tree/scoruș*) to rare coniferous trees (*yew tree/tisa*): *Aninișu din Deal* (Crasna, Gorj County), *Aninoasa* (village and commune in Gorj County), *Scorușu* (Lăpușata, Vâlcea County and Borăscu, Gorj County), *Făget* (Breasta, Dolj County), *Făgețelu* (village and commune in Olt County), *Paltinu* (Negomir, Gorj County), *Păltinișu* (Căzănești, Mehedinți County), *Jugastru* (Butoiești, Mehedinți County), *Pinoasa* (Călnic, Gorj County), *Țișa* (Băile Olănești, Vâlcea County).

Besides the oiconyms that render identically, as derivatives or syntagms the wood species, there are others that preserve well the etymologic origin. Among them, we mention: *Breasta* (village and commune in Dolj County, coming from *brăstă-elm/elm tree*), *Bucovăț* (village and commune in Dolj County) and *Bucovicior* (Vela, Dolj County, coming from the Slavonic *buk-fag*/beech tree), *Cerăt* (village and commune in Dolj County), *Ceretu* (Dănicei, Vâlcea County), and *Cerātu de Copăcioasa* (Scoarța, Gorj County, coming from the word *cer/-i* – Turkey oak, a species of thermophile oak), *Cleanov* (Carpen, Dolj County, from the Bulgarian *klenu* – arțar/maple tree), *Lipovu* and *Lipovu de Sus* (Lipovu, Dolj County, coming from the Slavonic *lipa-tei*/lime tree), *Târnavă* (Radovan, Dolj County, from the Slavonic *trînă* – thorny shrub, thorn), *Verbița* and *Verbicioara* (Verbița, Dolj County, from the Ukrainian *verbyca*-salcie/willow).

*Fruit-bearing trees* appear in 33 oiconyms, mainly located within the Getic Piedmont, more numerous in Mehedinți County (ten), then in Dolj, Vâlcea and Gorj Counties (six), and five appellatives in Olt (Fig. 3).

The best represented is the *apple tree/mărul* (*Malus domestica*) as it appears in eight oiconyms. From Latin, it appears in its simple form – *Măru* (Logrești, Gorj County), with a determinative – *Măru Roșu* (Corcova, Mehedinți County), and as a compound – *Valea Merilor* (Potcoava, Olt County), or slightly modified – *Merești*



(Amărăști in Vâlcea County, formed from the plural and the suffix -ști) and *Meriș* (Broșteni, Mehedinți County). From Hungarian (*alma* – *măr/apple tree*), it is present in three settlements: *Almăj* (village and commune in Dolj County) and the diminutive *Almăjel* as a village belonging to Filiași, Dolj County and to Vlădaia commune in Mehedinți County.

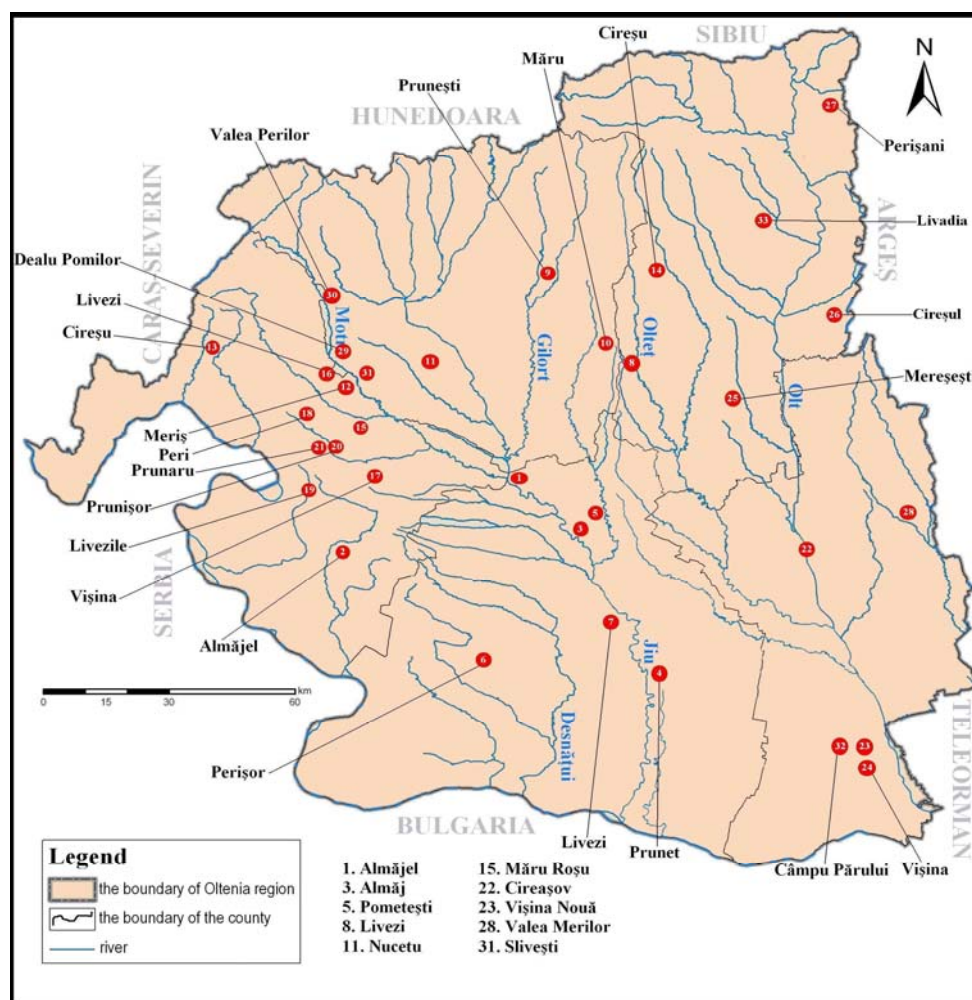


Fig. 3 Geographical distribution of oiconyms coming from fruit-bearing trees

The *plum tree/prunul* (*Prunus domestica*) was identified in the following oiconyms: *Prunet* (Bratovoiești, Dolj County) with the meaning of plum tree orchard formed with the suffix -et; *Prunești* (Albeni, Vâlcea County) with the same meaning; *Prunișor* (village and commune in Mehedinți County) as a diminutive formed from the singular form and the suffix -ișor; *Prunaru* (Prunișor) with the meaning of plum tree grower resulted by adding the suffix -aru. The



oiconym *Slivești* (village and commune in Gorj County) comes from the Slavonic *sliva*, which means plum tree.

The *sweet cherry tree/cireșul* (*Cerasus avium*) appear in four cases: *Cireășov* (belonging to Slatina Municipality, Olt County, where it also appears as hydronym and oronym), identified in the form of Ceșesöv (1392), Cireșovul (1476), and Cireșovo (1517-1521) (Petrovici, 1970, p. 191). The name used without article – *Cireșu* appears as village and commune in Mehedinți County and as village in Stroești commune from Vâlcea County. With article – *Cireșul*, it appears as a component village of Dănicei commune from Vâlcea County.

The *cherry tree/vișinul* (*Prunus cerasus*) appears in the name of the settlements *Vișina* (village and commune in Olt County and as a village of Greci commune from Mehedinți County) and *Vișina Nouă* (component of Vădastra commune, Olt County).

The term of *pear tree/păr* (*Pirus sativa*) appears in four oiconyms, as it follows: *Perișor* (as a diminutive for a village and commune from Dolj County), *Peri* (in the plural, for a village belonging to Hușnicioara commune, Mehedinți County), *Perișani* (village and commune from Vâlcea County), *Valea Perilor* (village in Cătunele commune, Gorj County), and *Câmpia Părului* (village of Obârșia commune, Olt County).

The oiconym *Nucet* (component village of Negomir commune, Gorj County) comes from the Latin word *nucetum*, which means nut tree orchard, emphasizing thus its location within an area where fruit trees growing is characteristic.

The oiconym *Pometești* (a village from Goești commune, Dolj County) certifies the presence of poame (Latin *poma*), a term used in rural areas as a synonymous for fruit.

*Dealul Pomilor* is one of the five component settlements of Motru town, Gorj County, the name of which is in agreement with the structure of agricultural fields, namely the high rate (29.1%) of fruit tree orchards and nurseries.

The settlements the name of which includes the term of *livadă/orchard* (Bulgarian *livada*), which nominates a surface planted with fruit bearing trees (DEX, 1998, p. 578) are: *Livezi* (which appears as a village of Podari commune, Dolj County and Florești, Mehedinți County, and as a village and commune in Vâlcea County), *Livezile* (village and commune in Mehedinți County) and *Livadia* (component settlement of Băile Olănești town, Vâlcea County).

In the denomination process of settlements, people also used appellatives referring to *clearing*. Thus, Nicolae & Suditu (2008, p. 146) states that, alphabetically, the series of this appellatives is as it follows: arsa, arsurile, arșiță, butură, curătură, curățatu, gărnă, jariște, laz, livadă, lom, lucină, oaș, padină, pârl(ură), pleasă, poiană, pojarată, prelucă, priseacă, runc(u), runcușor, runcurea, ruptură, sârcă, scătură, secătură, seci(u)ri, smidă, târsă, tăietură, trebiș/terebej.

If some terms referring to clearing, preserved in toponimy, precisely express a technique or another, meaning they are presently understood and used by speakers – tăietură or târsoare/cutting down (a mechanical action), arsură,

pojar/burning (one resulted from fire action), ciungitul, certitul, mezdritul (special clearing techniques), while other terms, especially the old ones, could refer to each or to many of these techniques, as they were practiced in correlation to each other (Ioniță, 1982, p. 125).

A numerous category of village names refers to man-made *glades*, which are called runc, curătură, secătură, laz, jariște and arșiță, the last two ones aiming at, as their name says, fire use (Giurescu, 1976, quoted by Nicolae, 2006, p. 137).

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (1998, p. 816), the term *glade/poiană* refers to a surface inside a forest, without trees, covered by grass and flowers. In the present catalogue of the settlements from Oltenia, the oiconym *glade* and its variants, either diminutives or determinatives, display a higher frequency in Gorj (five), Dolj and Vâlcea (four), while there are used more rarely in Olt (three) and Mehedinți (one) (Fig. 4).

The appearance of glades is related to clearings, but we do not have to ignore the situation when this term is “the expression of the society’s action of expansion of the agricultural and dwelling surfaces”. By analysing the spatial distribution of this oiconym and of its derivatives, we shall notice that 81.3% of the 16 settlements are located within the hilly and mountainous area. They are small villages, no larger than 100 inhabitants, the less populated being the village *Poienile* (Bulzești, Dolj County) with a stabile population of only 28 persons. *Poiana Mare* is a village and a commune from Dolj County, located in the Desnățui Plain, Ciurumela forest being part of its administrative territory; it registered a population of 10,636 inhabitants at the last census. In Dolj, we also find the village *Horezu-Poenari* belonging to Valea Stanciului commune, placed at the contact between the Desnățui and the Romanați Plains, with a total population of 1,328 inhabitants. The village *Poiana* from Radomirești commune, Olt County, is located in the Boianu Plain, on the banks of the Călmățui and in the structure of its land resources, there appear more than 30 hectares of forest. The determinative *large/mare* that accompanies the aforementioned term, emphasizes the demographic and territorial ascendant the settlements called *Poiana Mare* from Dolj and Olt have upon the neighbouring settlements. At the opposite pole, we find the villages *Poienița* from Gorj County (Bustuchin) and Vâlcea County (Golești) located on the valleys of the Amaradia, respectively, the Peșteana, which are among the smallest component units of the mentioned communes. With compound name, the term appears in three cases: *Poiana Fântâni* (Argetoaia, Dolj County), *Valea Poienii* (Samarinești, Gorj County), and *Satu Poieni* (Bălcești town, Vâlcea County).

The oiconym *Runcu* (Latin *runcus* referring to a deforested place, used as pasture or for crops – DEX, 1998, p. 939) appears in Dolj and Vâlcea counties as village and commune. Runcu commune from Gorj is located in the north of the county, in the Getic Sub-Carpathians, between the Bătrâna, a tributary of the Bistrița, and the Șușeni, a tributary of the Șușița (Runcu village is located on the left of the Jaleș Valley). It is one of the largest administrative units (27,200 hectares); it has seven villages, counts more than 2,500 households and 5,500

inhabitants. Runcu commune from Vâlcea is located in the central-western part of the county, within the Argeş Hills, at the foot of the homonymous hill, on the Alunoasa Valley. It is made up of seven villages covering a surface of more than 4,876 hectares, where there are organized 650 households for a stabile population of 1,100 persons.

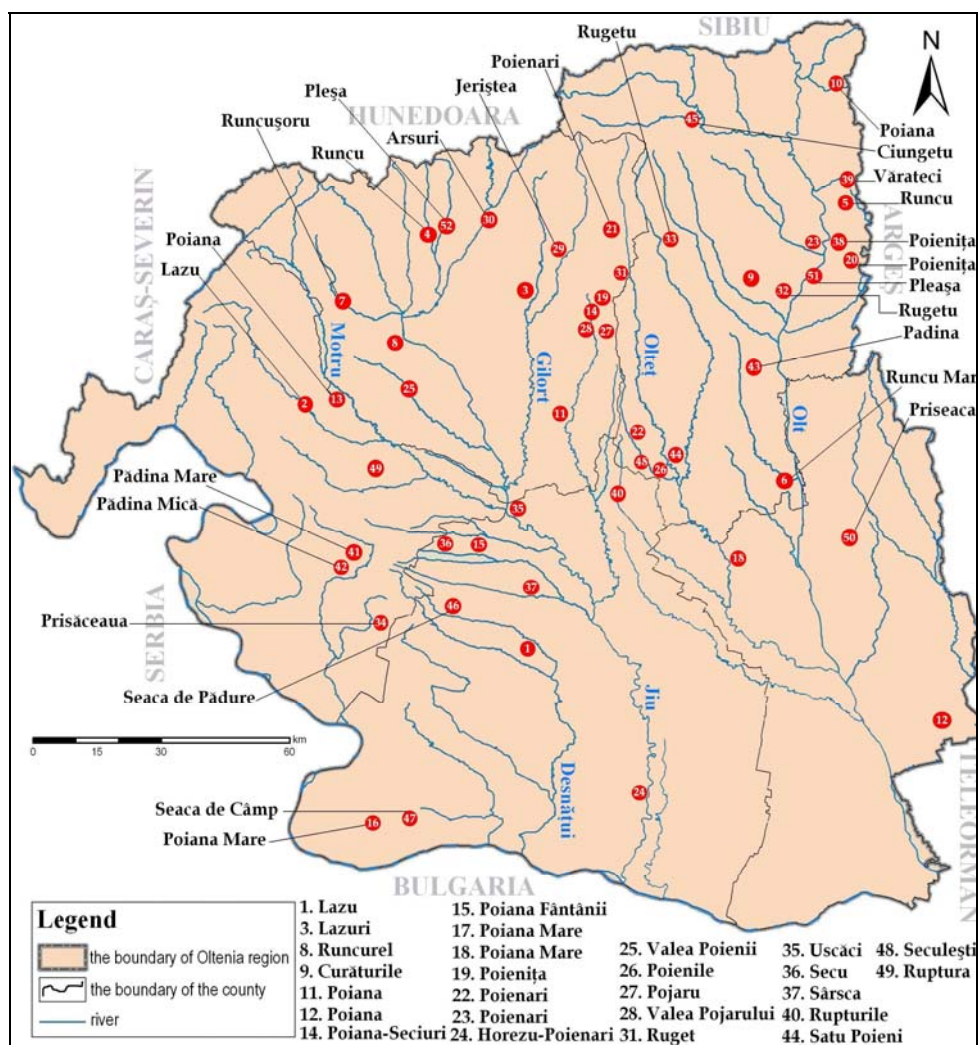


Fig. 4 Geographical distribution of the oiconyms originating in clearings

*Lazu* is the name of two villages from Dolj (Terpezița) and Mehedinți (Malovăț) counties. They are small settlements having 334 inhabitants and 233 households respectively, 143 inhabitants and 77 households (at the last census). In plural, *Lazuri*, it appears as a component village of Scoarța commune in Gorj County, located in the east of Târgu Jiu – Câmpu Mare Depression, at the foot of

Copăcioasa Hill. This appellative comes from the Latin *laz* and refers to a deforested field, transformed in agricultural terrain or pasture (DEX, 1998, p. 561).

Among the three component settlements of Băile Govora town, we mention *Curăturile*, term holding the same significance as *runc*, meaning a place in a forest cleared of trees for cropping (DEX, 1998, p. 251).

In the north of Vâlcea County, we mention Malaia commune, made up of the homonymous village and *Ciunget* village. According to DEX (1998, p. 182), the term *ciunget* is related to the verb *a ciungi*, which means to clean or to cut the branches of a tree (Italian *cionco* – *ciung*).

The villages the appearance of which seems to be related to forest burning have specific names: *Arsuri* (Schela, Gorj County), *Pojaru* and *Valea Pojarului* (Bustuchin, Gorj County), *Jeriștea* (Săcelu, Gorj County), *Ruget* (Roșia de Amaradia, Gorj County), and *Rugetu* (Mihăilești and Slătioara, Vâlcea County).

Another appellative used to emphasize clearings is that of *ruptură*, the meaning of which, according to DEX (1998, p. 939), is that of “interruption of the matter continuity”. Analysing the geographical background where the village *Rupturile* from Murgași commune, Dolj County, is located, we came to the conclusion that there is a clear concordance between the significance of the name and the field reality. It is a gathered village located in the south of the Amaradia Hills, between the Bejenelu and the Mijlociu valleys, with a population of 124 persons (63 of which representing stabile population) and 96 households. The inhabitants’ ageing degree is quite high, the rate of old people category exceeding 46%. It is located within an area with common oak forests, but they do not appear in the landscape of the village, thus justifying its name. *Ruptura* was the name of the village Vârvoru de Jos belonging to the homonymous commune till December 17, 1964. It is a gathered village located in the south-east of the Bălăcița Piedmont, near the confluence between the Terpezița and the Baia Casanca. It is situated in an area with Hungarian oak and Turkey oak forests, where it induces a discontinuity. The village *Ruptura* is one of the eight component villages of Voloia commune, Mehedinți County, located in the south-east of the Motru Piedmont, on the Cotoroia Valley, a tributary of the Hușnița. The presence of a community formed by 92 inhabitants and 43 households represents an interruption of the common oak sub-area within the geographical assembly where it develops.

The name of the villages *Pădina Mare* and *Pădina Mică* (which make up Pădina commune from Mehedinți County) and *Pădina* (Amărăști, Vâlcea County), do not have any relation to the terrain configuration, but to the vegetal associations where oak species are dominant. The term of *pădină* is included by Nicolae & Suditu (2008, p. 146) in the category of terms referring to forest clearing, quoting Frățilă (1993, p. 8) who states that this appellative can be found in the Aromanian dialect.

Within Oltenia territory, there are met other appellatives that make reference to the presence of vegetation in the past, to the way forest was cut or to the consequences of this action. Among these, we mention the following oiconyms: *Prisăceaua* (Oprișor, Mehedinți County), *Pleașa* (Vlădești, Vâlcea County), *Pleșa*

(Bumbești Jiu town, Gorj County), Sârsca (Sopot), Secu, Seculești (Bulzești), Seaca de Câmp, Seaca de Pădure (Dolj County), Sterpoaia (Aninoasa, Gorj County), Uscăci (Filiași, Dolj County), and Vărateci (Runcu, Vâlcea County).

## CONCLUSIONS

The physical-geographical and social-economic features of Oltenia are quite well reflected by the toponymic background. With regard to the number and variety of categories of oiconyms, the analysed region includes a rich toponymic background. The number of the settlements the name of which comes from the field of spontaneous or cultivated wood vegetation or of clearings reaches 183, representing 8.9% of the total settlements from the analysed region. Of the oiconyms, the highest rate, 39.4%, is held by those whose name comes from trees, closely followed by those referring to clearings, 30.6%, then by those originating in fruit bearing trees, 18.0%, while 12% are appellatives that nominate forest as a generic term.

The geomorphologic, climatic, hydrographic, pedogeographical differences are emphasized by the diversity of the wood vegetal cover. From the achieved analysis it results that oiconyms express different situations related to forest extension, its age, density and structure of trees, frequency and types of orchards, as well as to clearing. All these emphasize both elements characteristic to the natural landscape, to inhabitation continuity, and to the intensity and the way human pressure is exerted upon the environment.

## REFERENCES

- AVRAM, C., et. al., (2002), *Dicționarul istoric al localităților din județul Dolj*, vol. I-III, Editura Alma, Craiova
- BĂLTEA, N., (1982), *Sufixul -oni în antroponimia și toponimia unor sate din nord-vestul Olteniei*, în *Cercetări de Lingvistică XXVII*, nr. 1, Cluj Napoca
- BĂRBUȚ, Dorina, (1990), *Dicționar de grai oltenesc*, Tipografia I. P. Oltenia, Craiova
- BOLOCAN Gh., et al., (1993-2003), *Dicționarul toponimic al României. Oltenia*, vol. I-IV, Editura Universitaria Craiova
- BUREȚEA, E., (1988), *Nume de sate oltenești. Contribuții etimologice în limba română*, XXXVII, nr. 5, București
- BUZA, M., (2002), *Toponimie geografică românească*, Editura Universității „Lucian Blaga”, Sibiu
- BUZATU, D., (1960), *Nume de sate oltenești*, în *Mitropolia Olteniei*, XII, nr. 3-4, Craiova
- CONEA, I., (1960), *Toponimia. Aspectele ei geografice*, în *Monografia Geografică a R.P. Române*, I, Geografie fizică, Editura Academiei, București
- CREȚAN, R., (2000), *Toponimie geografică*, Editura Mirton, Timișoara
- DRAGU, Gh., (1976), *Toponimie geografică*, Tipografia Universității din București

- IONIȚĂ, V., (1982), *Nume de locuri din Banat*, Editura Facla, Timișoara
- IORDAN, I. (1963), „*Toponimia românească*”, Editura Academiei, București
- NICOLAE, I. (2006), *Toponimie geografică*, Editura Meronia, București
- NICOLAE, I, Suditu, B. (2008), *Toponimie românească și internațională*, Editura Meronia, București
- PETROVICI, E. (1970), *Studii de dialectologie și antropologie*, Editura Academiei, București
- UNGUREANU, Al. (1984), *Oiconime în geografie României*, vol. II, Geografie umană și economică, Editura Academiei, București
- \*\*\* (1998), *Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române*, ediția a II-a, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București
- \*\*\* (2007), *Anuarul Statistic al României*, I.N.S., București