

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMANIAN COMMON NAMES GIVEN TO LOWER PLANTS

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### Abstract

This paper represents an investigation in a particular field of the Romanian popular botanical names, that of the vernacular names given to lower plants (algae, bryophytes -mosses and liverworts-, lichens and fungi). The aim is to explain and exemplify the main characteristics of this popular nomenclature: the empirical dimension (defined by the popular denominative patterns and by the empirical categorization of the natural world), the denominative variability (according to the region in which is being used, different names are used for the same lower plant), the denominative imprecision (meaning several common names for a particular plant and one name for several plants) and the cultural individuality (the common names reflect the cultural environment of the community that created them). This nomenclature, based on pre-scientific principles (mainly on observation), is the sign of a primitive science and constitutes an assembly of distinctions and classifications which are made in the natural world. Therefore, it is obvious that the common plant names of lower plants are a mark of the originality, creativity and particular culture of a linguistic community.

**Key words:** folk plant names, nomenclature, lower plants

The Romanian folk names given to lower plants (algae, bryophytes -mosses and liverworts-, lichens and fungi) represent a nomenclature, a list of names that are a part of a wider set of terms, all related to plants. As in the case of every nomenclature or set of terms related to a specific field of knowledge, this nomenclature is defined by a set of distinguishing characteristics. These particular features are: the empirical dimension, the denominative variability, the denominative imprecision and the cultural individuality. The aim of this paper is to explain and illustrate these features.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The resources used to write this paper are divided in two categories. The first one includes the resources which represent lists of Romanian common names given to lower plants. They were used to gain a thorough knowledge of this nomenclature in order to understand its principles of organization and to extract the examples needed in this paper. From this point of view, the most useful materials were the works of Panțu Z.C., Borza A. and Drăgulescu C.. Another important resource is *Dicționarul limbii române*, used in the matters regarding the etymology of some terms. The second category includes the theoretical papers which research the subject

matter.

The methods used to write this paper were: the inductive method (used to gather and analyze the folk plant names in order to discover the principles of organization of this particular nomenclature), the deductive method (because the paper was written having as starting point other researches made in the field of plant folk names and reached conclusions specific to the Romanian common names for non-vascular plants) and the onomasiological method (there were identified the terms which came under the sense features „lower plant” and „common name”).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first characteristic of the Romanian folk nomenclature of lower plants, the empirical dimension, is based on the fact that the terms in question represent a specialized type of knowledge in the field of popular botany, knowledge based on pre-scientific principles, which makes distinctions and classifications in the natural world.

The entire folk nomenclature is the result of empirical evidence which reveals itself through two elements: the comparison between the common name, scientific name and reality and the denominative pattern. The comparison made between the common name, scientific name and reality reveals a faulty overlap of the three.

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The investigation of the natural world with the help of modern equipment has led to the finding of many plants, otherwise invisible to the naked eye. The scientists could classify these plants and could give them a name according to the Linnaean rules. The creators of the folk plant names could only name the plants or the effects of the plants, especially the harmful ones, which they could be able to see with the naked eye. For example, the fungi called *tăciune*<sup>2</sup> (*Tilletia tritici*), *rugină*<sup>3</sup> (*Melampsora* sp., *Puccinia graminis*, *Uromyces* sp.), and *făinare*<sup>4</sup> (*Erisiphae graminis*, *Microsphaera* sp., *Oidium* sp. *Podosphaera* sp., *Uncinula necator*) are all micromycetes. Although the fungus itself cannot be seen with the naked eye, it receives its name based on the effect it has on the harmed plants: corn, wheat, the leaves of various trees and shrubs, generally plants of great importance for the peasant household. Also, there are unicellular lower plants that only have a scientific name, although they are endemic (for example, *Trichosporum heteromorphum*, *Torula ligniperda*, *Poria xantha* etc.). Since these plants are not visible to the naked eye, nor have they had harmful effects on the economy of the peasant household, they have not received vernacular names. Closely linked to this issue is the way in which the lower plants are divided into categories, according to their main characteristics. Thus, in the folk nomenclature does not exist a generic name for the plants that have been categorized as algae by Botany because the elements of this group belonging to the natural world weren't seen as a distinct type of plants. Therefore, they didn't need a distinctive umbrella term. In the case of bryophytes and lichens, in the folk nomenclature these groups share the same generic name. Since the term *mușchi*<sup>5</sup> is used to name both plant groups, it is obvious that the ones who created this nomenclature did not make the difference between the two plant types and that they have seen them as individuals belonging to the same category. However, it should not be forgotten that, until the thorough research of their structure, Botany too regarded them as parts of the same plant group. Moreover, the use of the generic term *mușchi* for lichens is not surprising: the morphological likeness of the two categories is obvious to everyone. In the case of fungi, this category is named, in the Romanian vernacular nomenclature, using two generic terms, depending on the region:

*ciupercă*<sup>6</sup> in Wallachia and *burete*<sup>7</sup> in Moldavia.

The second indicator of the existence of the empirical dimension within the Romanian folk nomenclature of lower plants is represented by its denominative pattern. By analyzing the names belonging to this folk plant nomenclature, it is obvious that these names are, in their great majority, original creations using two patterns: a metaphorical pattern and a non-metaphorical pattern. The two patterns have in common the fact that they are descriptive (they focus on a feature considered –by the creator– as essential for that specific plant). The difference lies in the way in which this description is made: directly, the feature is being expressed using the denotative sense of one or more words, and indirectly, the feature is being expressed using metaphors. Thus, in the case of the metaphorical pattern, we can identify two types of metaphor: an inanimate thing for another inanimate thing and an animate being for an inanimate thing. In the category of inanimate thing for an inanimate thing metaphors, the following examples can be given: *ața apei*<sup>8</sup> (*Mnium undullatum*, *Philonotis fontana*), *ceșcuța babei*<sup>9</sup> (*Disciotis venosa*), *cuișoare*<sup>10</sup> (*Marasmius oreades*), *ouă de copaci*<sup>11</sup> (*Volvariella bombycina*), *scafiță*<sup>12</sup> (*Crucibulum laeve*, *Cyathus striatus*). The animate being for an inanimate thing metaphor can be divided according to the chosen animate. The animate can be a domestic animal or parts of its body (*căpriță*<sup>13</sup> - *Lobaria pulmonaria*, *găinușa pădurii*<sup>14</sup> - *Pleurotus ostreatus*, *limba bouului*<sup>15</sup> - *Fistulina hepatica*, *oiță*<sup>16</sup> - *Cantharellus cibarius*, *Russula alutacea*, *Russula cyanoxantha*, *Russula lepida*, *Russula vesca*, *Russula violacea*, *Russula virescens*) or the animate can be a body part of a

<sup>6</sup> Approx. *mushroom*.

<sup>7</sup> Approx. *mushroom*.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, *water's string*.

<sup>9</sup> It is a name created by compounding, the first element is a derivate of *cea* + *că* (*cup*) and the second is *babă* (*old woman*). The common name can be translated as *old woman's little cup*.

<sup>10</sup> In Romanian, this name is a derivate of *cui* (*nail*). It can be translated as *little nails*.

<sup>11</sup> Literally, *tree eggs*.

<sup>12</sup> In Romanian, this common name is a derivate form of *scafă* (approx. *bowl*). It can be translated as *little bowl* (used to crush garlic).

<sup>13</sup> In Romanian, this name is a derivate of *capră* (*goat*). It can be translated as *little goat*.

<sup>14</sup> In Romanian, this name is created by compounding, the first term is a derivate of *găină* (*hen*), and its determiner is *pădure* (*forest*). The common name can be translated as *forest's little hen*.

<sup>15</sup> Literally, *ox's tongue*.

<sup>16</sup> The name is a derivate of *oaie* (*sheep*). It can be translated as *little sheep*.

<sup>2</sup> Approx. *smut*.

<sup>3</sup> Approx. *rust*.

<sup>4</sup> Approx. *mildew*.

<sup>5</sup> Approx. *moss*.

wild animal (*cap de șarpe*<sup>17</sup> - *Coprinus comatus*, *laba ursului* - *Clavulina cristata* var. *coralloides*, *Hericium coralloides*, *Ramaria aurea*, *Ramaria botrytis*, *Ramaria condensata*, *Ramaria flava* or *limba ursului*<sup>18</sup> - *Clavaria ligula*). The non-metaphorical pattern includes names created, from the lexical point of view, by compounding and derivation. In the case of the names formed by compounding, the pattern *generic name+determiner* is often used. This pattern can be likened to the scientific one (Milică, I., 2010). The generic name indicates the plant groups (*burete/ciupercă*, *mușchi*). The determiner has a descriptive purpose (it indicates the color, shape, odor, taste, place or season of growth, unusual properties of the plant, etc.). In some cases, it can be compared to the specific name used in scientific nomenclature. The pattern *generic name burete/ciupercă+determiner* turns out to be the most fruitful of them all. From the resources used, it follows that there are 142 mushroom names compounded with the help of the term *burete*, 5 compounded with the help of its diminutive and 62 names compounded with the help of the term *ciupercă*. Also, the careful observation of the compounded folk names given to fungi brings to light the existence of some umbrella terms used to name mushrooms with the same morphological characteristics. In this regard, the pre-scientific and the scientific classification are similar but the correspondence between the genera names established by Botany and the „genera” names established empirically is not perfect. There are some categories which overlap perfectly: *barbacaprei*<sup>19</sup> - *Ramaria*, *cocârle*<sup>20</sup> - *Marasmius*, *hrib*<sup>21</sup> and *mănătarcă*<sup>22</sup> - *Boletus*, *lăptucă*<sup>23</sup> and *râșcov*<sup>24</sup> - *Lactarius*, *vinețele*<sup>25</sup> - *Russula*, *trufe*<sup>26</sup> - *Tuber* and there are folk „genera” that correspond to more than one scientific genera: *iască*<sup>27</sup> and *văcălie*<sup>28</sup> - *Fomes* and *Phellinus*, *pâine*<sup>29</sup> and *pită*<sup>30</sup> -

*Lactarius* and *Russula*, *zbârciogi*<sup>31</sup> - *Gyromitra*, *Helvella* and *Morchella*.

The empirical dimension also reveals itself by the fact that the folk names reflect observable plant features<sup>32</sup>. The names express features like: color (*burete brunișor*<sup>33</sup> - *Cantharellus lutescens*, *ciupercă albă*<sup>34</sup> - *Agaricus campester*, *Agaricus silvicolus*, *Amanita phalloides*, *Boletus edulis*, *Tricholoma gambosum*, *roșioare*<sup>35</sup> - *Russula rubra*, *Russula vesca*, *albăstreală*<sup>36</sup> - *Spirogyra* sp.), plant's appearance or form (*burete bubos*<sup>37</sup> - *Amanita pantherina*, *ciuperci crăpate*<sup>38</sup> - *Inocybe fastigiata*, *pestriță*<sup>39</sup> - *Strobilurus esculentus*, *mușchi creț*<sup>40</sup> - *Chondrus crispus*), its taste (*burete acru*<sup>41</sup> - *Lactarius vellereus*, *burete dulce*<sup>42</sup> - *Gyromitra esculenta*, *Lactarius volemus*, *burete pipărat*<sup>43</sup> - *Amanita muscaria*, *Lactarius piperatus*), substances secreted (*bureți cu lapte*<sup>44</sup> - *Lactarius volemus*, *burete bălos*<sup>45</sup> - *Hygrophorus eburneus*, *Russula foetens*), place of growth (*burete de brad*<sup>46</sup> - *Cantharellus cibarius*, *ciupercă de bălegar*<sup>47</sup> - *Agaricus campester*, *mușchi de pământ*<sup>48</sup> - *Polytrichum commune*, *mușchiul stâncii*<sup>49</sup> - *Cetraria islandica*), harvesting season (*burete de mai*<sup>50</sup> - *Calocybe gambosa*, *Tricholoma georgii*, *burete de toamnă*<sup>51</sup> - *Amanita phalloides* var. *virosa*, *ciuperci de toamnă*<sup>52</sup> - *Russula ochroleuca*), its odor (*ciupercă pucioasă*<sup>53</sup> - *Phallus impudicus*, *ciupercă puturoasă*<sup>54</sup> -

<sup>31</sup> The name indicates the wrinkled shape of these mushrooms.

<sup>32</sup> As some terms of this folk nomenclature are borrowed from other languages, they are not descriptive. Thus they will not be taken into consideration.

<sup>33</sup> Literally, brownish mushroom.

<sup>34</sup> Literally, white mushroom.

<sup>35</sup> Literally, reddish. It reflects the bright red color of the mushroom's cap.

<sup>36</sup> Literally, blueness.

<sup>37</sup> Literally, mushroom with boils.

<sup>38</sup> Literally, mushroom with cracks.

<sup>39</sup> The name indicates the spotty aspect of this mushroom's cap.

<sup>40</sup> Literally, curly moss.

<sup>41</sup> Literally, sour mushroom.

<sup>42</sup> Literally, sweet mushroom.

<sup>43</sup> Literally, peppery mushroom.

<sup>44</sup> Literally, mushroom with milk.

<sup>45</sup> Literally, slobbery mushroom.

<sup>46</sup> Literally, fir mushroom.

<sup>47</sup> Literally, manure mushroom.

<sup>48</sup> Literally, earth moss.

<sup>49</sup> Literally, cliff's moss.

<sup>50</sup> Literally, may mushroom.

<sup>51</sup> Literally, autumn mushroom.

<sup>52</sup> Literally, autumn mushroom.

<sup>53</sup> The name indicates the sulphur like smell released by this mushroom.

<sup>54</sup> Literally, stinking mushroom.

<sup>17</sup> Literally, snake's head.

<sup>18</sup> Literally, bear's tongue.

<sup>19</sup> Literally, goat's beard.

<sup>20</sup> It cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>21</sup> It cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>22</sup> It cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>23</sup> This name indicates the fact that the plants release a milky substance when they are harmed.

<sup>24</sup> It cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>25</sup> This name indicates the brownish-purple color of the plant.

<sup>26</sup> This is also a borrowed word. The English equivalent is *truffle*.

<sup>27</sup> It cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>28</sup> This name refers to the round shape of the plants.

<sup>29</sup> Literally, bread.

<sup>30</sup> Literally, bread.

*Agaricus xanthodermus*, *Russula foetens*, *cânepița*<sup>55</sup> - *Tricholoma sulphureum*) or medicinal use (*burete de bubă/bubă rea*<sup>56</sup> - *Phallus impudicus*, *burete de inimă/de inimioară*<sup>57</sup> - *Phallus impudicus*, *burete de răni*<sup>58</sup> - *Lasiosphaera gigantea*, *dalac*<sup>59</sup> - *Phallus impudicus*).

Denominative variability is a constant characteristic of popular names. These variations mostly depend on the region in which the folk names are used. Thus, the moss scientifically named *Polytrichum commune* is called *făchiuță*<sup>60</sup> in Bukovina, *bugeag*<sup>61</sup> in Moldavia and *jabghie*<sup>62</sup> in Wallachia, the lichen *Usnea barbata* is called in Bukovina *barba ursului*<sup>63</sup> and in Moldavia *pletele muierii*<sup>64</sup>, the mushroom *Boletus edulis* is called *hrib*<sup>65</sup> in Moldavia and *mănătarcă*<sup>66</sup> in Wallachia. Variation can also be observed in the phonetic and morphologic structure of the folk names. Thus, *Lycoperdon gemmatum* is called in Bukovina *sprăhaiț* and *sprîhaiț*<sup>67</sup> and *Tricholoma georgii* and *Clitopilus prunulus* are called in Moldavia *nicorete*, *nicurete*, *nicoreți*, *nicureți*<sup>68</sup>, *Armillaria mellea* is called in Moldavia *popenchi*, *popinci*, *popene*<sup>69</sup> (the last two names being alterations of the first) and *Fomes fomentarius* is called in Moldavia *văcălie* and *băcălie*<sup>70</sup> (form with betacism of the first name). Thus, variation is the result of name creation based on observation (the creator(s) of this folk names have chosen one emblematic feature of the plant and used it to name it: *barba ursului*, *pletele muierii*), borrowing ((*hrib* < ucr. Хриб, *mănătarcă* < bg. Манатарка) and the result of various individual changes made in

the phonetic body of the word, changes that have spread and have been adopted by the members of the linguistic community.

The denominative imprecision is divided into two sections: one name is given to more than one plant and one plant receives more than one name. In the case of the folk names given to lower plants, the overwhelming majority has at least two or three names, created by using different patterns, depending on the feature that has been considered emblematic. For example, the plant scientifically named *Morchella esculenta* is known as *burete*<sup>71</sup>, *burete de bubă*<sup>72</sup>, *buretele dalacului*<sup>73</sup>, *ciuciulete*<sup>74</sup>, *pupi*<sup>75</sup>, *zbârciog*<sup>76</sup>, alga *Tribonema sp.* is called *albăstreală*<sup>77</sup>, *brădiș*<sup>78</sup>, *iarbă de baltă*<sup>79</sup>, *lână de apă*<sup>80</sup>, *lână verde*<sup>81</sup>, *râie broștească*<sup>82</sup>, *zmoală*<sup>83</sup>, bryophyte *Marchantia polymorpha* is called *fierea pământului*<sup>84</sup>, *câlbează*<sup>85</sup>, *coada rândunicii*<sup>86</sup>, *mușchi de baltă*<sup>87</sup>, *mușchi de fântână*<sup>88</sup>, *mușchi de mlaștină*<sup>89</sup> and the lichen *Cetraria islandica* is called *mușchi de munte*<sup>90</sup>, *mușchi creți*<sup>91</sup>, *mușchi creți amari*<sup>92</sup>, *mușchi de piatră*<sup>93</sup>, *mușchiul stâncii*<sup>94</sup>.

The use of the same folk name for several lower plants is motivated by the presence of the same emblematic feature in the case of all plants (color, odor, taste, place of growth etc.). The common name *lână verde*<sup>95</sup> is used for algae *Conferva sp.*, *Spirogyra sp.* and *Tribonema sp.*, the common name *ața apeii*<sup>96</sup> is used for bryophytes

<sup>55</sup> The name indicates the smell of this plant, which resembles the one of wet cannabis plant.

<sup>56</sup> Literally, *carbuncle mushroom*.

<sup>57</sup> Literally, *stomach mushroom*.

<sup>58</sup> Literally, *wound mushroom*.

<sup>59</sup> Literally, *carbuncle*.

<sup>60</sup> Literally, *little flare*.

<sup>61</sup> The name cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>62</sup> The name cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>63</sup> Literally, *bear's beard*.

<sup>64</sup> Literally, *women's tresses*.

<sup>65</sup> The name cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>66</sup> The name cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>67</sup> The etymology of this folk name is disputed. Some consider it a borrowed name. Some consider it a derivate form of *praf* (*dust*).

<sup>68</sup> The name cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>69</sup> The name cannot be translated because it is a borrowed word.

<sup>70</sup> The name indicates the round form of this mushroom.

<sup>71</sup> Literally, *mushroom*.

<sup>72</sup> Literally, *carbuncle mushroom*.

<sup>73</sup> Literally, *carbuncle mushroom*.

<sup>74</sup> The name refers to the ridged cap of the mushroom.

<sup>75</sup> The etymology of this name is disputed. Most likely is a word created in Romanian that refers to the small dimensions of this mushroom and at the way in which it is hidden among the forest leaves.

<sup>76</sup> The name refers to the ridged cap of the mushroom.

<sup>77</sup> Literally, *blueness*.

<sup>78</sup> The name refers to its resemblance to the fir.

<sup>79</sup> Literally, *moor grass*.

<sup>80</sup> Literally, *water wool*.

<sup>81</sup> Literally, *green wool*.

<sup>82</sup> Literally, *froggish itch*.

<sup>83</sup> Literally, *tar*.

<sup>84</sup> Literally, *earth's gall*.

<sup>85</sup> Literally, *flake*.

<sup>86</sup> Literally, *swallow's fan*.

<sup>87</sup> Literally, *pond moss*.

<sup>88</sup> Literally, *fountain moss*.

<sup>89</sup> Literally, *moor moss*.

<sup>90</sup> Literally, *mountain moss*.

<sup>91</sup> Literally, *curly moss*.

<sup>92</sup> Literally, *bitter curly moss*.

<sup>93</sup> Literally, *stone moss*.

<sup>94</sup> Literally, *cliff's moss*.

<sup>95</sup> Literally, *green wool*.

<sup>96</sup> Literally, *water's string*.

*Mnium ondullatum* and *Philonotis fontana*, the common name *burete roșu*<sup>97</sup> is used for the mushrooms *Boletus lupinus*, *Boletus satanas*, *Ganoderma lucidum*, *Hygrocybe coccinea*, *Lactarius volemus*, *Mycena strobilina*, *Russula lepida*, *Russula rubra* and *Russula vesca*.

Cultural specificity<sup>98</sup> is the core characteristic of the folk names given to lower plants. Scientific names, consensually adopted by the entire scientific community, have acquired the status of universal plant names, at least up to the time when this code will be forsaken in favor of another. Folk names are specific to a cultural region, meaning that they have preserved the culture of the linguistic community that created them „sunt reflectări lingvistice ale unor practici, credințe și comportamente umane specifice unei anumite culturi”<sup>99</sup> (Milică, I., 2010). Names based on metaphors, names containing references to pre-Christian or Christian layer, names revealing the different uses of lower plants or names that refer to endemic animals can be brought up as arguments of the cultural specificity of this particular nomenclature. The Christian layer is highlighted by terms that contain the name of the Divinity or the name of the Devil: *cimpoiul dracului*<sup>100</sup> (*Lasiosphaera gigantea*), *copilul dracului*<sup>101</sup> (*Phallus impudicus*), *drăcușor*<sup>102</sup> (*Anthurus archeri*), *hribul dracului*<sup>103</sup> (*Anthurus archeri*, *Boletus satanas*), *lingura Maicii Precista*<sup>104</sup>, *lingura milostivirii*<sup>105</sup>, *păhărelul Maicii*

*Domnului*<sup>106</sup> (*Cladonia pyxidata*), *pipa dracului*<sup>107</sup> (*Lycoperdon* sp.), *pita Domnului*<sup>108</sup> (*Lactarius volemus*), *pușca dracului*<sup>109</sup> (*Bovista nigrescens*, *Lasiosphaera gigantea*, *Mycenastrum corium*), *scuipatul dracului*<sup>110</sup> (*Russula emetica*) or the uses of fungi to certain Christian rituals: *iască de candelă* (*Phellinus ignarius*) and *burete de cană* (*Phellinus ignarius*)<sup>111</sup>. The pre-Christian layer is obvious through the folk names that refer to all sorts of pagan entities: *căciula piticilor*<sup>112</sup> (*Hygrocybe coccinea*), *hora Rusalilor*<sup>113</sup> (*Marasmius oreades*), *hora vrăjitoarelor*<sup>114</sup> (*Hebeloma crustiniforme*), *lingura Frumoaselor*, *lingura Milostivelor*, *lingura strigoacei*, *lingura zânei*, *lingura zânelor*, *lingura zâniei*, *lingurița zânei*, *lingurița zânelor*<sup>115</sup> (*Ganoderma lucidum*), *mana zânelor*<sup>116</sup> (unidentified mushroom), *mătura ielelor*<sup>117</sup> (disease caused by *Melampsorella cerasatii*), *mături de vrăjitoare*<sup>118</sup> (disease caused by *Melampsorella cerasatii*), *pironul zânelor*<sup>119</sup> (*Clitocybe clavipes*). Also, there are used words that, owing to their denotative sense, evoke objects specific to rural life or endemic fauna. A few names refer to appliances specific to the peasant household: *burduș*<sup>120</sup> (*Lasiosphaera gigantea*), *burhoi*<sup>121</sup> (*Lycoperdon perlatum*), *căciula șarpelui*<sup>122</sup> (*Coprinus comatus*, *Macrolepiota procera*), *ceșcuța babei*<sup>123</sup> (*Disciotis venosa*), *cimpoiul dracului*<sup>124</sup> (*Lasiosphaera gigantea*), *coș*<sup>125</sup> (*Taphrina pruni*), *cupițe*<sup>126</sup> (*Cyathus*

<sup>97</sup> Literally, *red mushroom*.

<sup>98</sup> These distinguishing characteristics are discussed by Ioan Milică, 2010, *Modele savante □ i modele naive în cadrul numelor de plante*, „Limba română”, no. 11–12, XX,

<http://limbaromana.md/index.php?go=articole&n=1077>, read on 27.11.2012. The article presents six features of the vernacular botanical names. The denominative specialization and the ambiguous denomination are the two features to be added to the ones mentioned above in order to complete the author's list. These two features have been removed from this paper because of the particularities of the Romanian common names given to lower plants.

<sup>99</sup> "are linguistic reflections of practices, beliefs and human behaviors specific to a certain culture".

<sup>100</sup> Literally, *Devil's bagpipe*.

<sup>101</sup> Literally, *Devil's child*.

<sup>102</sup> This name is a derivate of *drac* (*Devil*). It can be translated as *little Devil*.

<sup>103</sup> Literally, *Devil's cep*.

<sup>104</sup> This name is compounded. The first term is *lingură* (*spoon*) and the second one is the name of the Mother of God. It can be translated as *Mother of God's spoon*.

<sup>105</sup> Literally, *mercifulness's spoon*.

<sup>106</sup> This name is compounded. The first term is a derivate of *pahar* (*cup*) and the second is the name of the Mother of God. It can be translated as *Mother of God's little cup*.

<sup>107</sup> Literally, *Devil's pipe*.

<sup>108</sup> Literally, *God's bread*.

<sup>109</sup> Literally, *Devil's rifle*.

<sup>110</sup> Literally, *Devil's spit*.

<sup>111</sup> Both this names refer to the use of the matter obtain from this mushrooms as a snuff for the votive light.

<sup>112</sup> Literally, *dwarf's cap*.

<sup>113</sup> Literally, *fairies' round dance*.

<sup>114</sup> Literally, *witches' round dance*.

<sup>115</sup> Literally, *fairy's spoon* or *fairies' spoon*. Some of the folk names contain the word *linguri* □ *ă*, derivate from *lingură* (*spoon*).

<sup>116</sup> Literally, *fairies' blight*.

<sup>117</sup> Literally, *fairies' broom*.

<sup>118</sup> Literally, *witch broom*.

<sup>119</sup> Literally, *fairies' nail*.

<sup>120</sup> It is a form of *burduf* (*pouch*).

<sup>121</sup> It is a form of *burduf* (*pouch*).

<sup>122</sup> Literally, *snake's hat*.

<sup>123</sup> This name is compounded. The first term is a derivate of *ceașcă* (*cup*). The second one is *babă* (*old woman*). It can be translated as *old woman's little cup*.

<sup>124</sup> Literally, *Devil's bagpipe*.

<sup>125</sup> Literally, *basket*.

*striatus*, *Lactarius piperatus*, *Russula cyanoxantha*, *Russula rubra*, *Russula vesca*, *Russula virescens*, *cușmă*<sup>127</sup> (*Morchella esculenta*), *linguriță*<sup>128</sup> (*Ganoderma lucidum*), *măturici*<sup>129</sup> (*Clavulina cristata* var. *Corraloides*, *Ramaria botrytis*, *Ramaria flava*), *scufiță*<sup>130</sup> (*Encalypta* sp.) and a few refer to endemic domestic or wild animals: *lepra lupului*<sup>131</sup> (*Anthoceros punctatus*), *coada cucului*<sup>132</sup> (*Marchantia polymorpha*), *râia broaștei*<sup>133</sup> (*Cladophora* sp.), *barba caprei*<sup>134</sup> (*Clavulina cinerea*, *Clavulina cristata* var. *Coralloides*, *Ramaria crispula*, *Ramaria formosa*), *buretele viperei*<sup>135</sup> (*Amanita phalloides*), *cașul ciorii*<sup>136</sup> (*Lasiosphaera gigantea*, *Lycoperdon perlatum*), *creasta găinii*<sup>137</sup> (*Ramaria botrytis*, *Ramaria flava*), *limba ursului*<sup>138</sup> (*Clavariadelphus ligula*), *oiță* (*Russula* sp.), *piciorul căprioarei*<sup>139</sup> (*Amanita rubescens*, *Macrolepiota procera*).

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Romanian folk nomenclature of lower plants turns out to be an interesting field of study. This nomenclature, based on pre-scientific principles, represents a series of distinctions and classifications made in a section of the plant kingdom. The terms features and the way in which these plants are systematized into categories reveal four main characteristics of this folk nomenclature: the empirical dimension, the denominative variability, the denominative imprecision and cultural specificity. It is obvious that the Romanian folk nomenclature of lower plants is a sign of the culture, creativity and individuality of one linguistic community and also an indicator of the existence of a primitive science, which, in the confined space of each community, is just as precise and effective as the scientific one.

<sup>126</sup> It is a derivate of *cupă* (*cup*). It can be translated as *little cups*.

<sup>127</sup> Literally, *cap*.

<sup>128</sup> It is a derivate form of *lingură* (*spoon*).

<sup>129</sup> It is a derivate form of *mătură* (*broom*).

<sup>130</sup> It is a derivate form of *scufă* (*bonnet*).

<sup>131</sup> Literally, *wolf's leprosy*.

<sup>132</sup> Literally, *cuckoo's fan*.

<sup>133</sup> Literally, *frog's itch*.

<sup>134</sup> Literally, *goat's beard*.

<sup>135</sup> Literally, *viper's mushroom*.

<sup>136</sup> Literally, *crow's green cheese*.

<sup>137</sup> Literally, *fowl's comb*.

<sup>138</sup> Literally, *bear's tongue*.

<sup>139</sup> Literally, *doe's foot*.

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