



Deprecatory Ethnonyms: The Case of *Boanghin*

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Abstract. In this study, we aim to analyse the origin and semantics of one of the lexemes used by Romanians to refer to Hungarians: *boanghin(a)*, also used as *boanghen(a)*. Besides a meta-analysis of this ethnic slur (emergence, meaning, semantic shifts, and etymology), we also refer to literary works in which these terms have been used. The archaic *boanghin*, or *boanghen* seems to be a political construct which has the purpose of naming the enemy and personifying the evil. It is a typical case of verbal abuse, mockery, or insult which used to display a significant amount of collectively formed, pejorative connotation. Today it is old-fashioned, as it has been replaced by another slur, i.e. *bozgor*, which is going to be presented in a forthcoming study.

Keywords: *boanghin/boanghen*, ethnic slur, etymology, meaning, Romanian, Hungarian

Dysphemic ethnonyms and ethnic slurs

Ethnonyms are names used to refer to an ethnic group, tribe, or people.¹ Two types of ethnonyms are commonly distinguished: the external, which is used by others for the people (exonyms), and the internal, used by themselves (endonyms). Demononyms refer to a person or group of people living in or coming from a specific place.² They differ from ethnonyms by focusing on place rather than ethnicity³ (e.g. *Croat* = an ethnonym, and *Croatian* = a demonym).

Endonyms are also known as autonoms or autoethnonyms, and they denote *native* names used to refer to a geographical place, group of people, individual

1 “Ethnonym”. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnonym> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

2 <https://www.britannica.com/search?query=demonym> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

3 “Demonym”. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/demonym> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

person, language or dialect; they are self-identification lexemes used by an ethnic group as a self-designation.⁴ Exonyms are also known as xenonyms, and they are accepted, *non-native* names for geographical places, groups of people or languages, used only outside that particular place, group, or linguistic community.⁵ Glossonyms, glottonyms, or linguonyms designate language names. Exonyms are likely to suffer semantic changes, such as pejoration, due to the inimical representations ethnic groups create with regard to outgroup people or other nations. When pejoration takes place, the idea of *otherness* comes to the fore, and very often the language used by these *others* is perceived as “foreign-speaking”, “bad-speaking/-sounding”, or “nonsense-speaking”, as we will see in this article. Pejorative ethnic names, or ethnic labels are also called ethnic slurs, i.e. linguistic units (remarks or statements) “designed to defame, vilify, belittle, and insult members of a racial or ethnic group, usually by those who are not members of that racial or ethnic group” (Rodale 1986: 1125). These offensive ethnic names are instantiations of verbal abuse, insult, and exclusion meant to stigmatize others and to increase the gap between in-group and out-group people. This kind of linguistic offence endorsed with the help of pejorative, offensive exonyms is a symptom and a substantiation of hate speech, or “public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group”.⁶

Pejorative or dysphemic ethnonyms are also called ethnophaulisms, i.e. “words used as ethnic slurs to refer to outgroups in hate speech” (Mullen and Leader 2005).⁷ Allport (1954), on the other hand, talks about antilocutions⁸ as manifestations of hostile prejudicial behaviour in language. Mizetska and Zubov (2019) call pejorative ethnonyms ethnophobisms. In this article, we will mainly use pejorative or dysphemic ethnonyms or ethnic names and ethnic slurs, as these are clearly defined as lexemes meant “to derogate or dehumanize (...), to signal that their targets are unworthy of equal standing or full respect as persons, that they are inferior as persons” (Jeshion 2013: 232). Nevertheless, we do not wish to take sides for or against in the many current theories of slurs such as those presented by Neufeld (2019) or Hom and May (2013).

4 <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/29893> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

5 <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/29893> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

6 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hate-speech> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

7 Ethnophaulisms (Roback 1944; from the Greek roots meaning ‘a national group’ and ‘to disparage’) are the words used as ethnic slurs to refer to outgroups in hate speech. These are distinct from ethnonyms (Levin and Potapov 1964; from the Greek roots meaning ‘a national group’ and ‘name’), which are the names an in-group gives itself to distinguish itself from outgroups. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2005-08614-012> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

8 From the Greek root meaning ‘against’ and the Latin root meaning ‘to speak’. In his 1954 book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport establishes a scale of prejudiced behaviour (called the Allport Scale). The stages of bias or prejudice in a society are antilocution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack, extermination.

Pașca (2019) classifies pejorative ethnonyms as the following types:⁹

- Dysphemic ethnic names that satirize physical aspects;
- Dysphemic ethnic names that criticize behavioural and psychic/moral aspects: ethnic names used for Hungarians: *gadină* ‘wild animal’, ‘beast’, *pohârlă* ‘stupid dog’, *pupăză* ‘talkative’;
- Dysphemic ethnic denominations based on religion: *calvin* ‘Calvinist’, *letină* ‘Latin’/‘Roman Catholic’ (but this might mean ‘non-orthodox’ as well, as Turkish people are also called *letin*; cf. Adam 2015);
- Dysphemic ethnic designations based on cultural and linguistic diversity (*ceangău* ‘sounding bad’, ‘stupid’, *boanghen* ‘Hungarian’, *șogor* ‘brother-in-law’);
- Dysphemic ethnic names based on regular ethnonyms (*ungur-bungur*);
- Dysphemic ethnic names based on trade names.

Among the most widespread dysphemic ethnic names used by Romanians to label or call Hungarians is *boanghin*, also known as *boanghen*. In this study, we aim to analyse the origin and semantics of: *boanghin(a)*/ *boanghen(a)*. Besides a meta-analysis of this ethnic slur (emergence, meaning, semantic shifts, and etymology), we also attempt to identify the literary works in which the term has been used.

***Boanghin, boanghen* in dictionaries, literary writings, and other genres in cultural reviews**

It is said that the first attestation of the word *boanghen* belongs to Ion Luca Caragiale, the famous Romanian playwright and prose writer (Pârvulescu 2000). *Boanghen* is used by Caragiale in a short prose published in the literary review *Moftul Român* [Romanian Fads], on 10 June 1901, entitled *Lună de miere* [Honeymoon]. It is the description of a journey the author takes from Brașov to Budapest, a journey during which he travels with a newlywed couple going on their honeymoon. The two young people take him for a *boanghen*, i.e. they believe that he is Hungarian and does not understand Romanian at all, therefore they keep gossiping about him and calling him names. The well-known *boanghen* is used quite often as a dysphemic exonym, usually in the vicinity of other pejorative qualifiers.¹⁰ Only when they finally arrive in Budapest does he reveal his true ethnic identity and status, with his accent-free and perfect Romanian. All along the way, he amuses himself at the expense of the two rather ignorant and obtuse-minded young people.

Our research has revealed further occurrences of *boanghen/boanghin* in the following texts and/or publications:

9 The examples of ethnic slurs selected and provided here are solely those used by Romanians to refer to Hungarians.

10 Such as: *Ptfiu! fir-ai al dracului de boanghen!* ‘Phew! Damn boanghen!’

Table 1. Occurrences of *boanghen/boanghin* in different publications and contexts

Text/Publication	Context/Co-text	Pragmatic implications
Rebreanu, Liviu, <i>Frământări</i> [Torments], 1912, Librăria Națională Orăștie	<i>fire-ar al dracului de boanghină!</i> ‘...damn boanghina’	<i>Boanghin</i> is used in the context of cursing, swearing, with obvious negative implicatures.
<i>Furnica: revistă umoristică</i> , 1914, vol. XI, <i>Contrabanda de război prin Români</i> [War smuggling in Romania]	<i>Dă-te jos, boanghine</i> ‘Get off, boanghine’	The context reveals a clear physical but also psychological distancing.
<i>Furnica: revistă umoristică</i> , 1916, vol. XII, <i>Din aventurile unui rural</i> [The adventures of a rural man]	<i>vreun boanghen anarchist deghizat țăran</i> ‘some anarchist boanghen disguised as a peasant’	All the co-textual elements expose negative connotations (<i>anarchist</i> implicates violence, <i>disguised</i> implicates false, artificial, misrepresented, <i>peasant</i> implicates uneducated, low social status).
Liviu Rebreanu, <i>Calvarul</i> [The Ordeal], 1919, Bucharest, Alcalay	<i>Aici port groaza în spinare pentru că sunt boanghină, dincolo sunt huiduit pentru că-s român transilvănean.</i> ‘Here I feel terrified because I am a Boanghina, over there I am booed because I am a Transylvanian Romanian’	<i>Boanghina</i> is used in the sense of ‘Transylvanian’, which is perceived as a shortcoming, a moral defect.
D. D. Pătrășcanu, <i>Domnu Nae: scene din vremea ocupației</i> [Mr. Nae: scenes from the time of the occupation], 1921, Editura Librăriei H. Steinberg & Fiu Bucharest	<i>mi sberi în ureche, boanghină, paștele lui tată-to...</i> ‘you’re banging in my ear, you boanghina, bloody hell’	The entire communication is construed of curse words and swearing.

Text/Publication	Context/Co-text	Pragmatic implications
<i>Sburătorul</i> , Felix Aderca, <i>O noapte în avanposturi</i> [A Night in the Outposts], 14 February 1920	<i>Un boanghen cu un ochi de sticlă</i> ‘a boanghen with a glass eye’	<i>Boanghen</i> is a synonym for Hungarian, though there are clear textual clues to emphasize the idea of otherness, difference, as the glass eye of the Hungarian is a sign of the fact his eyes do not mirror his inner life, it is a false eye without the capacity of absorbing and reflecting the divine light and without life. The eye is the symbol of Christianity, therefore the man with a false eye, the <i>boanghin</i> , is a man with a false religion.
Locusteanu, A.–Pușcariu, Sextil, <i>Sub aripa morții: însemnari fugare din războiul de întregire</i> [Under the Wing of Death: Fugitive Notes from the War of Union], Institutul de Arte Grafice Ardealul Cluj, 1923	<i>bat cu ceasul boanghinii</i> <i>ăștia, mânca-i-ar să-i mănca holera!</i> ‘What the hell, I’ll beat the clock of these boanghins, dammit!’	The whole contexts is construed of curse words and swearing.
Liviu Rebreanu, <i>Aventuri vamale în Metropole: Berlin, Roma, Paris</i> [Customs Adventures in Berlin, Rome, Paris], Cartea Românească București 1926	<i>încăpățânat de boanghină</i> ‘damn stubborn boanghina’	<i>Stubborn</i> implicates mulish, obstinate, and difficult to handle.
Alex Lupeanu Melin, Biblioteca ASTRA, July 1927, <i>Minunatele întâmplări ale lui Niță Zdrenghia la București, în America și aiurea</i> [Niță Zdrenghia’s wonderful stories in Bucharest, America, and elsewhere], Sibiu: Editura Asociațiunii, Lupta cu taurii la București	<i>boanghine turbate</i> ‘rabid boanghin’	<i>Rabid</i> implicates extreme violence and fury.

Text/Publication	Context/Co-text	Pragmatic implications
<i>Războiul pentru întregirea neamului povestit de Victor Lazăr</i> [The War for the Reunification of the Nation narrated by Victor Lazăr], Editura Asociaţiunii Astra, 1928,	<i>Boanghine (Unguri)</i> 'Boanghins (Hungarians)'	<i>Boanghine</i> is accompanied by the explanatory lexeme Hungarian, reinforcing the perfect synonymy between the two lexemes and the fact that the users do not wish to make the difference between an ethnic name and an ethnic slur.
N. Aloman, <i>Spitalul</i> [The Hospital], <i>Revista Fundaţiilor Regale</i> , 1936, vol. 3, No 12	<i>O femeie înaltă, blajină, ducea un cărucior cu mâncare pentru bolnavi. Asta-i boanghina, îmi explică el arătându-mi femeia</i> 'A tall, pale woman was carrying a cart of food for the sick. That's the boanghina, he explained, pointing at the woman.'	the sole example in which <i>boanghina</i> carries neutral or perhaps slightly positive connotations in the sense that the referent is portrayed as a kind and gentle woman
Ilie Dăianu, <i>M-am pornit la şcoală</i> [I set off for school], <i>Satul şi şcoala</i> , no 9–12, 1938	<i>Boanghină de săsoaică</i> 'That Saxon boanghina'	<i>Boanghin</i> is synonymous with Saxon, but it is used as a qualifying adjective with strong negative connotations, in the vicinity of the distal deictic element <i>that</i> , signalling psychological distancing.
P. Petra Pop-Cucer. <i>Dumineca, Organul vicariatului episcopal greco-catolic din Maramureş</i> [Duminica, Organ of the Greek-Catholic Episcopal Vicarage of Maramureş], 9 August 1936:	<i>Nicicând să nu ne spălăm în public lingerie, mai curând să concurăm spre scopul nostru strălucit: o turmă şi un păstor iar vorbele de minoritari, străini, revizionişti ori boanghine să le cadram numai trecutului.</i> 'Let us never wash our lingerie in public but rather compete towards our brilliant goal: one flock and one shepherd, and let the words minority, foreign, revisionist, or boanghine be only of the past'	<i>Boanghin</i> is a synonym for 'minorities', 'foreigners', 'revisionists', implicating out-groupness and hostile opposition.

Text/Publication	Context/Co-text	Pragmatic implications
<i>Dumineca, Organul vicariatului episcopal greco-catolic din Maramureș</i> [Duminica, Organ of the Greek-Catholic Episcopal Vicariate of Maramureș], 9 July 1939	<i>Va trebui să ne desbrăcăm de omul cel vechiu și să'mbrăcăm haina dragostei de adevăr. Să nu fie dar nici grecotei nici popistași (nici boanghine, nici golani) când numele adevărat este români.</i> 'We will have to put off the old man and put on the garment of the love of truth. Let there be neither Greeks nor Papists (nor Boanghine nor thugs) when the true name is Romanians.'	The listing of adjectives referring to religious membership (Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic) together with <i>boanghin</i> and the qualifying adjective <i>thug</i> hints to the fact that <i>boanghin</i> is a lexeme which refers to Catholic religion, perceived as a morally condemnable status.
Petre Dumitriu, <i>Salata</i> [The Salad], in <i>Steaua</i> , February 1955	<i>Și canalie e ofițerul care se-nsoară cu boanghine, dușmani ai nației noastre. Ieșind, locotenentul Spahiu începu să înjure printre dinți: — ...paștele și dumnezeii mă-si de putoare ce crede ea, ciocolaica dracului? Și mai e și boanghină!</i> 'And scoundrel is the officer who sleeps with the boanghine, enemies of our nation. Leaving, Lieutenant Spahiu began to swear through his teeth: — ...Goddammit what does she think, the fucking whore? And she's also a boanghina!'	The co-text of <i>boanghina</i> makes it perfectly clear that the lexeme is used in the sense of 'enemy of our nation', 'someone who is not us', 'a member of the out-group nation'.

Boanghen, boanghin in early dictionaries

We have researched the occurrence and definition of *boanghen* in a significant number of early Romanian dictionaries: Bobb (1822), Barițiu (1869), Laurian-Massimu (1871). Lăzăriciu (1886), Barițiu (1870), Barițiu (1893), Alexics (1900), *Dicționarul Limbii Române / Dictionary of Romanian Language* (1913), Hodoș (1929), Șăineanu, (1929), Candrea (1931), Scriban (1939).

The first dictionary which lists an ethnonym referring to Hungarians as an entry is Barițiu's 1869 dictionary, which lists *Csángó* (textually "ceangau, magiaru moldoveniu seu barsanu" 'csango, Hungarian from Moldova or from Țara Bârsei'),

meaning ‘Hungarian’. The 1913 *Dictionary of Romanian Language* lists *boanghen* as a mock name given to Hungarians for the first time. The merit of this dictionary is that it offers information regarding the usages of the word (in the review *Convorbiri literare* 1911) and a possible old Slavic etymology *Vangrii vangher*.

In Hodoş’s 1929 dictionary and in Şăineanu’s 1929 dictionary, *boanghen* is also listed. Hodoş considers that *boanghen*, *boanghina* is a simple nickname for Hungarians, while Şăineanu discards the pejorative implications, focusing on the semantics of *boanghen* as a nickname for Hungarians, most probably linked to *boancă* ‘pine tree’.

In Candrea’s 1931 dictionary,¹¹ *boanghen* is a mock name given to Hungarians. *Boanghen* or its variants (*bonghin*, *banghin*) cannot be found in any of the other old dictionaries we have consulted.

***Boanghin/Boanghen* in modern dictionaries and studies: Definitions and etymologies**

In the *Dicţionarul explicativ al limbii române* [Explanatory Dictionary of Romanian Language] (hereinafter referred to as DEX), the meaning of *boanghin* is outlined as ‘Hungarian’ (with the specification ‘deprecatory’ or ‘ironic’), also known with the variants *hoanghină* (‘an insulting name given to a mean old woman’) and *şoangher* (derogatory name for ‘Hungarian’ and/or ‘Transylvanian’). This latter seems to be, according to DEX, an expressive creation, which seems to combine with *boanghen* and with *şogor* ‘brother-in-law’. The information provided by DEX for the variant *boanghin(a)* is based solely on Scriban (1939).

The variant *boanghen* is more detailed, as it refers to Şăineanu (1929), to Scriban (1939), but also to more recent dictionaries (MDA 2010, DEX 2007). Semantically, *boanghen* is defined as a “derogatory epithet given to the Hungarians” (MDA 2010), a “regional or dialectal and often deprecatory name for Hungarians” (DEX 2007). In Volceanov’s 2007 *Slang Dictionary*, the lexeme is registered as ‘person of Hungarian nationality’.

In this research, we have focused on identifying the earliest occurrences of the lexeme in literary and non-literary writings and its earliest attestations as dictionary entries. The purpose is to find the etymology, as the information provided by DEX is insufficient and based on folk etymology.

Lazăr Şăineanu, following on Dimitrie Cantemir, lists an ethnic slur in his 1891 study, where he states that Hungarians are called by Romanians *Şoacăţ*, i.e. ‘mouse’ (Şăineanu 1891: 379). The Hungarians from Moldova, as Şăineanu

11 An etymological pathway still to be followed in the future, taking into account that *boancă* meaning ‘pine tree’, ‘forest’ is semantically and formally very close to a similar lexeme in the Szekler dialect, *bongos*, *bongor*, *bungur* (meaning ‘shrubbery area’ or ‘forest’).

mentions, are called *ceangăi* (Hu. *csángó*), meaning in his view ‘bad-sounding’ (let us remember that an important feature of ethnic slurs is that of emphasizing the idea of otherness through calling the other’s language ‘bad-sounding language’, ‘bad-speaking’).

In an 1895 study, Ion-Aureliu Candrea quotes Lazăr Șăineanu’s *Semasiologia* [Semasiology] and lists *boanghen* as the only nickname given by Romanians from all historic regions to Hungarians, only that the form used at the end of the nineteenth century is that of *songher*, altered to *bongher*. He also states that in some parts of Moldova Hungarians are called *soacăț*, a slur used nevertheless more often, with reference to Germans and Saxons.

In 1909, Pascu Gorge published his doctoral thesis *Despre cimilituri. Studiu filologic și folkloric* [A Philological and Folkloric Study of Riddles]. In this study, Pascu (1909: 64) defines the ethnic slur *boanghin(a)* and attempts to establish its etymology. In his view, *boanghina* (meaning ‘foreign’), is applied especially to Hungarians, and comes from the words *monghină*, *mohoangă* (-că), *mogoandă* meaning ‘stupid’ or ‘foolish’. However, the etymon identified by Pascu and the phonetic and semantic shifts he mentions cannot fully explain the emergence of *boanghin* from *moagă* via *mogoandă* and *monghină*.

In 1944, Iorgu Iordan mentions *boanghin* related to *șoanghina*, the formation of which is based on blending and contamination, which is also frequent in spoken language: *șoanghina* < *boanghină* + *șoacăț* (both pejorative names for a Hungarian). We would disagree with this argument by highlighting that the lexeme *șoacăț* is a slur for German, not for Hungarian.

Andrei Avram (2001) attempts to explain the etymology of *boanghen*, *boanghin* in his study *Noi contribuții etimologice* [New Etymological Contributions], where he states that *boanghina* is a derivative of *boangă*, closely related to *goangă* (meaning ‘ogre’), *boangă* being the feminine of *bongar*, which comes from Hun. *bogár* (En. ‘bug’). Ciorănescu (2002: 101) also lists *boanghen*, *-ina* as a deprecatory adjective applied to Hungarians but also to Transylvanian Romanians. Gabriela Violeta Adam (2015) defines *boanghen* as a synonym for ‘Hungarian’, whereas *boangher* is a synonym for ‘Saxon’.

Hence, we have spotted *boanghen*, *boanghin* under various forms in the first part of the twentieth century, followed by a gap of almost half a century, during which the lexeme seems to have vanished, to surface again in the 2000s. What could explain this sudden and total silencing of a word from texts, dictionaries, and most probably oral communication as well? The explanation is to be found in the scientific texts of lexicographers and linguists of the socialist regime such as Victor Chereșteșiu’s 1952 text *Să întocmim un dicționar științific al limbii române* [How to make a scientific dictionary of the Romanian language], in which he circumscribes the regime’s official position towards ethnonyms of nations belonging to the so-called *friendly socialist states*:

“The new management of the Institute proposes that such words as *boanghen*, *bungur*, *baragladina*, *jid*, etc., words spread with the aim of stirring up hatred between peoples, for diversionary purposes, be eliminated from the Dictionary” (Cheresteşiu 1952: 15).¹²

Boanghin: Bandini and the Catholic Hungarians of Codex Bandinus

Based on the fact that *boanghin* and all the other versions of the xenonym have been used in the context of otherness, Hungarianness with regard to religion and due to the fact that it has been spotted in many writings connected with Moldova, we have tried to find the connections of the term with the most significant Hungarian community from Moldova, the *Csángó* community, to see whether we can find some historical explanations of the emergence and spread of the term. The position of Romanian historiography on the issue of *Csángó* origins is not the topic of this study. However, we mention the fact that their research results between the two world wars are broadly in line with the results of Hungarian researchers, i.e. they do not question the fact that *Csángós* are a Hungarian Catholic community living in Moldova (Rosetti 1901, Năstase 1934, Iorga 1936). The Romanian position on the *Csángó* origin issue changes dramatically after 1945.

One of the most important features of *Csángó* self-naming strategies and auto-ethnonymic usages is that of defining themselves as ‘Hungarian’ and ‘Catholic’ to such an extent that ‘Hungarian’ and ‘Catholic’ became synonymous with each other a long time ago: it was enough to say one, and everyone understood the other (cf. Iancu 2021: 156). The synonymy of the two endonyms ‘Catholic’ and ‘*Csángó*’ is reinforced by Pávai (1999), Tánczos (2002), and Péntek (2005).

If we take a closer look at the history of this peripheral Hungarian community, we will see that the first written source of the word *Csángó* in Hungarian is the letter of parish priest Péter Zöld in 1772.¹³ The first census of this community was done in 1644 by the apostolic administrator Marco Bandini, who visited the Moldovan parishes during the reign of Vasile Lupu. He issues the so-called *Codex Bandinus* (with the original Latin title *Visitatio generalis omnium ecclesiarum catholicarum romani ritus in Provincia Moldaviae*), which is a report written in 1648 by Marco Bandini in Bacău, at that time the Roman Catholic episcopal residence, to be sent to Rome, to Pope Innocent X and to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Bandini records that

¹² English translation provided by the author of the present study.

¹³ Though the traces of the first Hungarian Catholics can be found as early as 1222, cf. <http://www.csangok.ro/vallas%20es%20kultura%20a%20moldvai%20magyaroknal.html> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

in the town of Huși Hungarian was sung during mass (Iancu 2021: 156), that in Iași there were 30 Hungarian families, in Bacău 40 Hungarian families, in Trotuș 30, in Galați 40, in Bârlad 30, in Huși 150 (Holban 1968: 437).

This *Codex Bandinus* is nothing else than a list of names and a detailed report of Hungarian-speaking Catholic community, the Csángó community from Moldova. The document has become one of the most important historical records regarding the Hungarian Catholics in Moldova, but also a minute analysis of life in medieval Moldova.

István Pávai (1999: 69–82) makes a complete inventory of ethnonyms, endonyms, and exonyms alike, with regard to the Csángó community. His research suggests that Csángós call themselves ‘Hungarian’ and ‘Catholic’ mainly, while the exonyms they are referred to by Romanians are ‘Csángó’, ‘Hungarian’, ‘bozgor’, and ‘band’in’. According to dialectologists, band’in or bangyin¹⁴ is a pejorative word borrowed from the Romanian *boanghin*, pronounced *band’in*, meaning ‘Transylvanian Hungarian’. They say it is not included in dictionaries, but it was a common word in the period between the two world wars. It was used with a stylistic nuance similar to that of *fricc* standing for ‘German’ or *iván* meaning ‘Russian’ (Márton, Péntek, and Vöő 1977: 56).

Therefore, it is quite clear that the connection between *band’in* or *bangyin* respectively *boanghin* in the sense of ‘Hungarian Catholic’ is indisputable. We believe that the ethnonyms ‘Csángó’ and ‘Hungarian’ are synonyms. What is more, the pejorative exonym we are analysing, *boanghin*, *bonghin*, *boanghen* (Romanian spelling and pronunciation), *band’in* or *bangyin* (Hungarian spelling and pronunciation) must be connected with the name of Marco Bandini, the author of the first list of Hungarian Catholics from Moldova. The lexeme *Bandini* has changed its status from a proper name into a common noun and/or an adjective. This is a case of appellativization, more precisely recategorization (cf. Anstatt 1997), as the proper name Bandini has shifted into the adjective *band’in*, meaning ‘belonging to the Bandini list’. Whether it is a simple appellativization (Bandini > belonging to Bandini’s list, i.e. Hungarian Catholic) or a recategorization of ‘Bandini’ accompanied with the contamination of a possible earlier version **bonghin* in the sense of ‘pine forest’, ‘pine tree’, ‘inhabitants of the pine forests’ ‘inhabitants of forest areas, i.e. ‘Transylvanian’ (see footnote 11 but also the forms *bongar*, *boanga* in DEX), is a matter of further research.

The phonetic changes which have occurred in the shift from BANDIN to B(O)ANGHIN/BANGYIN can be summarized as follows:

– The palatalization of *zs/z* or *d/dj* [ʃ] has always been specific to Csángó speech (Rubinyi 1902: 5) but also to Romanian spoken in regions inhabited by Hungarians

14 The word can be found under the forms *bangyina*, *bangyen* in Hungarian literary writings as well, such as in Ignác Rózsa’s *Keleti magyarok nyomában* [In the Footsteps of Eastern Hungarians].

as well (we would add), therefore this dental palatalization is obvious in our examples. The sounds *t*, *d*, and *n* palatalize under the influence of the Hungarian language, and in Transylvania there are pronunciations similar to the Hungarian sounds *ty*, *gy*, and *ny*: the variation *d/gy* shows in the Hungarian versions of *Boanghin/Bangyin*, as in *bade* → *bad^ee* (*Bagye*). Thus, *D* >> *GH* (Hungarian *gy*).

– Hungarian sound *A* turns into *OA* in many Romanian lexemes.¹⁵

Boanghin, as used by Romanians, or *bangyin*, as pronounced by Hungarians is a pejorative word borrowed from the Romanian ‘bandin’ (cf. Márton, Péntek and Vőő 1977: 56), meaning either ‘Catholic’ or, through semantic contamination, ‘Transylvanian’ or ‘Hungarian’. We add that the etymon for ‘bandin’ is the name of the apostolic administrator Marco Bandini.

Boanghin/boanghen is a type of ktetic, or possessive, meaning ‘belonging to Bandini’s list’, and it is an ethnic slur, an exonym but also a glottonym, or language name, as the lexemes *bozgor*, *bangyin*, *madárnyelv*, *lónyelv* ‘bozgor, bangyin, language of birds, language of horses’ are all pejorative glottonyms used by Romanians to refer to the Hungarian language (Iancu 2021: 162).

Another argument for the etymology of *boanghin*, *boanghen* from the eponym Bandini is the presence of the verb *a se bonghini*¹⁶ in Romanian, meaning ‘bending’, ‘bowing’, or ‘kneeling down’, which is an obvious hint to the body posture during worship and praying and to the religious background of the word.

Another, equally important pathway to be followed is the hint we find in Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu’s unfinished work *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae*, issued in 1893 in Bucharest at Socecu Publishing House, according to which in the nineteenth-century Romanian language there was a lexeme *bânde* (with no clear etymology given) which was a synonym for *ungur* ‘Hungarian’ (further derivations of this lexeme are toponyms such as Bândeşti and family names such as Bândoiu, Bândescu, etc.). As Haşdeu left his work unfinished, the forthcoming volume in which this piece of information could have been clarified was never written and/or published.

Conclusions

The ethnic slurs *boanghin*, *boanghen* (RO) or *bangyen*, *bangyina* (HU) are lexical creations that semantically represent dysphemic ethnic denominations which clearly foster discrimination and prejudicial thinking. Prejudices and negative stereotypes are not necessarily in line with reality, which is why their usage must be avoided. However, discrimination through language has left its imprint on the

15 A Romanian–Hungarian glossary from the beginning of the 20th century proves the pronunciation of the Hungarian *a* sound as the Romanian *oa* (Lexicon militar româno-ungar 191?).

16 A se încovoia – <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/bonghini/definitii> (Last accessed: 1 June 2023).

lexicon, which contains many offensive units that have preserved and developed over time. Although these slurs may gradually fade away (as has happened in the case of *boanghin*, *boanghen*), they can be replaced with others (as *boanghin* was replaced with *bozgor*, which is the topic of a forthcoming study).

Exclusion and discrimination are usually based on the acceptance of linguistic stereotypes and prejudices though very often the true meaning of the words people use to offend others has blurred. The meaning and origin of *boanghen*, *boanghin* are still uncertain and obscure though the lexeme sometimes emerges in written/spoken discourses and codes, i.e. on forums and social media platforms (though it has been abandoned in newspaper articles and other forms of classic written communication). That is why we have attempted to clarify the abstruse aspects of these linguistic units which still nurture xenophobic attitudes. We have reached the conclusion that despite all the (rather insufficient and intricate) information, scattered in scientific volumes and dictionaries, *boanghin/boanghen* are offensive ethnonyms based on community religion, which originate in the name of Bandini, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Bosnian origin, who organized the first census of the Hungarian Catholics and/or Csángós from Moldova in and around the Diocese of Bacău, the author of the so-called *Codex Bandinus*.

Boanghen/boanghin (with intermediary form *banghin*) are corrupted forms of 'bandin' (pronounced as band'in by the members of the Csángó community), both meaning 'Hungarian Catholic' or 'belonging to Bandini('s list)'. Nevertheless, further research is needed to spot the presence of the word in the above forms and meaning in old Romanian documents.

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