

## EPONYMS IN LATIN MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY DERIVED FROM A TOPONYM<sup>1</sup>

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### **Abstract**

*The present research pays attention to those Latin medical terms which are derived from toponyms. The authors' main purpose is to make an attempt to compile a list of these terms and to devise a classification.*

**Keywords:** *Latin, medical eponym, toponym*

### **Rezumat**

*În articol, cercetăm termenii medicali latini, care derivă de la toponime. Scopul principal este de a-i repera, apoi de a-i clasifica după diferite criterii.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *limba latină, eponime medicale, toponim*

Eponyms take an important role in the terminological system of every language. In the sphere of medicine, they emerged for the first time in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Clinical eponyms came into view a little bit later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but their number is permanently increasing (Tosheva et al., 2000, p. 323).

In most of the cases, eponyms are connected with the name of a researcher who was the first person to describe a new disease, symptom, method, etc., from a scientific point of view. Nevertheless, there are some eponyms, though not as numerous as the previously mentioned ones, that are derived from the name of the place where a new disease appeared, the name of the first patient who became sick, or the name of a character from mythology, history, or world literature that was somehow linked with the symptoms of the illness or the patient's appearance and status.

The present research focuses on Latin eponyms derived from a toponym in the field of medicine and the knowledge domain connected with it. The

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list consisting of 61 examples excerpted does not claim to be full and complete because the authors' main purpose is to make an attempt at a classification of these eponyms. As a main source of excerption was used "Nova Terminologia Medica Polyglota et Eponymica ("New Medical and Eponymic Terminology in Seven Languages")" by Petya George Arnaudov.

In order to classify these eponyms, we have divided them into several major groups in accordance to the basic toponym for their coining, the thematic category for their sphere of usage, and the principles of their formation.

### Classification According to the Type of the Basic Toponym

1. Eponyms named after a geographical region (a peninsula, island, valley):
  - eponym from a toponym for a peninsula: *Balkan' nephropathia*, *nephropathia Balkani* (< the Balkan peninsula), *febris Crimea*, *febris* (< the Crimean Peninsula);
  - eponym from a toponym for an island: *Bornholm' morbus* (< Bornholm), *lesbianismus* (< Lesbos);
  - eponym from a toponym for a geographical region: *Bunyaviridae* (< Bunyamwere), *febris Kyasanur* (< Kyasanur), *febris volhynica* (< Volhynia/Volynia/Volyn);
  - eponym from a toponym for a valley: *febris Rift-Valley* (< Rift-Valley);
  - eponym from a toponym for a bay: *Minamata' morbus* (< Minamata Bay);
  - eponym from more than one toponym: *febris Crimea-Congo'* (< the Crimean Peninsula + Congo).
2. Eponyms named after an iokonym (a city, town, village) and an administrative region or a state:
  - eponym from a toponym for a state: *antigenum Australia*, *antigena Australia*, *Australia' antigenum* (< Australia), *Bulgaria' bacillus*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Bulgaria' cura*, *Bulgaria' methodus*, *cura bulgara*, *cura bulgarica* (< Bulgaria), *febris argentinica* (< Argentina), *febris bolivica* (< Bolivia), *febris Koreana* (< Korea), *febris Malta'* (< Malta), *mongolismus* (< Mongolia);
  - eponym from a toponym for a city, town or village: *arthritis Lyme'*, *Lyme' morbus* (< Old Lyme), *Coxsackie-vira* (< Coxsackie), *febris Haverhilli*, *Haverhill' febris* (< Haverhill), *febris Lassa*, *Lassa' febris* (< Lassa), *febris Omsk* (< Omsk), *Glasgow' (coma-) scala*, *scala Glasgow'* (< Glasgow), *kaolinum* (< Kao-Ling/Gao-Ling), *Marburg' febris haemorrhagica*, *febris haemorrhagica Marburgi*, *Marburg' virus* (< Marburg), *Medjugorje' maculopathia* (< Medjugorje), *Stockholm' syndromum* (< Stockholm), *trias Merseburgi* (< Merseburg);
  - eponym from a toponym for an administrative region: *chromosoma Philadelphia'* (< Philadelphia), *febris Queenslandi* (< Queensland).

3. Eponyms named after a hydronym (a sea, river, mineral springs and places belonging to them):
  - eponym from a toponym for mineral springs and places belonging to them: *aqua Seltersi*, *aqua-Seltzer*, *Selters' aqua* (< Selters), *balneum Nauheimi*, *Nauheim' balneum* (< Bad-Nauheim), *pulvis Seidlitz* (< Seidlitz, mineral springs in Bohemia);
  - eponym from a toponym for a river: *Ebola' febris haemorrhagica*, *febris Ebola'*, *Ebola' virus* (< Ebola);
  - eponym from a toponym for a sea: *febris mediterranea*, *febris mediterranea familiaris* (< The Mediterranean);
  - eponym from a toponym for a lagoon: *Haff' morbus* (Königsberg Haff/Frisches Haff);
4. Eponyms named after an urbanonym (buildings): *Brompton' mixtura*, *mixtura Bromptoni* (< Brompton Chest Hospital), *Chiba' acus* (< Chiba University), *Obuchovski' signum* (< Obuchovskaya boljnitsa).

### Thematic Classification

1. Eponyms for names of diseases, symptoms, or malformations: *Arthritis Lyme'*; *Balkan' nephropathia*, *nephropathia Balkani*; *Bornholm' morbus*; *Bunyaviridae*; *Coxsackie-vira*; *Ebola' febris haemorrhagica*, *febris Ebola'*; *Ebola' virus*; *febris argentinica*; *febris bolivica*; *febris Crimea*, *febris Crimea-Congo'*; *febris Haverhilli*, *Haverhill'febris*; *febris Koreana*; *febris Kyasanur*; *febris Lassa*, *Lassa' febris*; *febris Malta'*; *febris mediterranea*, *febris mediterranea familiaris*; *febris Omsk*; *febris Queenslandi*; *febris Rift-Valley*; *febris volhynica*; *Haff' morbus*; *Lyme' morbus*; *Marburg' febris haemorrhagica*, *febris haemorrhagica Marburgi*; *Marburg' virus*; *Medjugorje' maculopathia*; *Minamata' morbus*; *mongolismus*; *Obuchovski' signum*; *Stockholm' syndromum*; *trias Merseburgi*;
2. Eponyms for methods, sources, instruments and medicines for health recovery and prevention: *Aqua Seltersi*, *aqua-Seltzer*, *Selters' aqua*; *balneum Nauheimi*, *Nauheim' balneum*; *Brompton' mixtura*, *mixtura Bromptoni*; *Bulgaria' cura*, *Bulgaria' methodus*, *cura bulgara*, *cura bulgarica*; *Chiba' acus*; *kaolinum*; *pulvis Seidlitz*;
3. Others: *Antigenum Australia*, *antigena Australia*, *Australia' antigenum*; *Bulgaria' bacillus*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *chromosoma Philadelphia'*; *Glasgow' (coma-) scala*, *scala Glasgow'*; *lesbianismus*.

As it is obvious from the first two classifications presented above, the logical link between the eponyms included in the research and the toponym used for its derivation lies in the fact that the new disease was localized in that venue, its symptoms were observed there for the very first time, a new method or remedy was found in that place, or the area's natural features are favourable to health recovery.

### Classification According to the Principles of Formation

Monobasic terms: *Bunyaviridae*, *kaolinum*, *lesbianismus*, *mongolismus*;

Compound terms:

- Noun + noun / nouns: *Antigenum Australia, antigena Australia, Australia' antigenum; aqua Seltersi, aqua-Seltzer, Selters' aqua; arthritis Lyme'; Balkan' nephropathia, nephropathia Balkani; balneum Nauheimi, Nauheim' balneum; Bornholm' morbus, Brompton' mixtura, mixtura Bromptoni; Bulgaria' bacillus, Bulgaria' cura, Bulgaria' methodus; Chiba' acus; chromosoma Philadelphia'; Coxsackie-vira; febris Ebola', Ebola'; febris Kyasanur; febris Lassa, Lassa' febris; febris Malta'; febris Omsk; febris Queenslandi; febris Rift-Valley; Glasgow' (coma-) scala, scala Glasgow'; Haff' morbus; Lyme' morbus; Marburg' virus; Medjugorje' maculopathia; Minamata' morbus; Obuchovski' signum; pulvis Seidlitz; Stockholm' syndromum; trias Merseburgi;*
- Noun + adjective: *Cura bulgara, cura bulgarica; febris argentinica; febris bolivica; febris Koreana; febris mediterranea, febris mediterranea familiaris; febris vollhynica.*

The first group of the excerpted monobasic medical terms covers eponyms formed by a combination of a toponymic root and a Latin suffix for a noun (-a for a First declension, nominative singular form, -ae for a First declension, nominative plural form, -us for a Second declension masculine gender nominative singular form, -um for a Second declension neuter gender nominative singular form).

The most numerous are the examples which represent a combination between a common and a proper noun, i. e. a toponym. Very few are those of them where the traditional grammatical rules are followed, according to which the common noun should be used in its nominative form at initial position and the proper one should be used in a genitive form; for instance, *aqua Seltersi, balneum Nauheimi, mixtura Bromptoni, febris Queenslandi, pulvis Seidlitz, trias Merseburgi*. That leads to the existence of more than one variation of the same medical term (*balneum Nauheimi* and *Nauheim' balneum*).

There are even cases where the syntax of the phrase structure is changed (*Chiba' acus, scala Glasgow'*).

It is not the same with eponyms consisting of a noun and an adjective because their structure is almost *lege artis* – a common noun placed at the initial position in the phrase and an adjective, derived from a toponym, agreed with the noun in gender, case, and number form. The adjectives with only one exception (*febris Koreana*) are given with a small initial letter instead of a capital one as it should be since they are derived from a proper noun.

It is obvious that the different patterns of the specified term-formation have different degree of productiveness.

As it may be seen, the biggest part of the terms is presented by descriptive collocations. This type of nomination is dependent on the aspiration for the inner form of the term to be clear and obvious and to characterize the notion undoubtedly (Zidarova, 1998, p. 112).

Synonymy is another interesting fact about terms in general. There are pairs of synonyms just like *Bornholm' morbus* = *pleurodynia epidemica*, *Bulgaria' bacillus* = *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *febris Haverhilli*, *Haverhill'febris* = *erythema arthriticum epidemicum*, *erythema polymorphum acutum*, *morbus morsus Muris*, *kaolinum* = *bolus alba*, *lesbianismus* = *sapphismus*, *mongolismus* (old term) = *Down syndromum*, *chromosoma-21 trisomia*.

There can be synonymy between lexemes, between a lexeme and a phraseological unit, and between phraseological units (*idem*, p. 66).

It is worth noting that sometimes a monobasic term has compound terms as a synonym (*kaolinum* = *bolus alba*, *mongolismus* (old term) = *Down syndromum*, *chromosoma-21 trisomia*). Such types of synonyms are called absolute synonyms or lexical doublets and their meaning and stylistic usage is completely alike and could be observed only in scientific terminology (Rusinov & Georgiev, 1996, pp. 165-166).

On the one hand, synonymy of terms may become a problem in the act of communication, because it obstructs the possibility for a concrete and identical nomination in the field of science. However, on the other hand, it helps different variants to appear (Zidarova, 1998, p. 113), and these different forms may also express different opinions about one and the same phenomenon (*Теория и методика ономастических исследований / Teoriya i metodika onomasticheskikh issledovaniy*, 1986, p. 34).

Another thought-provoking research topic that is worth considering is related to the usage of those eponyms in some contemporary languages like Bulgarian and English, for example.

Unfortunately, the scarce number of Bulgarian and English equivalents of the researched eponyms is not sufficient for the realization of a detailed analysis. It may be explained in brief that the Bulgarian equivalents represent a literary translation of the Latin term (in most of the cases the proper noun is translated into Bulgarian as an adjective), while for the English part it is visible that the preferred form is the Latin term per se.

The researched eponyms were quite "popular" in the past but today they may be accepted as offending, their usage may affect economic interests, and even there are cases registered when they provoke "stigmatization and xenophobia". That made the World Health Organization to announce some changes - "disease names may not include "geographic location", "people's names", "species/class of animal or food", "cultural, population, industry or occupational references" or "terms that incite undue fear" (2, p. 43)".

More and more researchers advise eponyms usage to be avoided because the cases of misunderstanding and scientists start focusing mainly on their negative influence (Garanin & Garanina, 2019, p. 111).

And no matter that the usage of eponyms discussed are avoided in the official scientific sources they are still that popular in mass media (for

example, Wuhan/China/Chinese virus and Wuhan/China/Chinese coronavirus instead of COVID-19) (Felecan, 2021, p. 44).

As a conclusion, it can be explained why eponyms are still an interesting linguistic area for scientific investigation. The reason is hidden in their universal usage as terms which causes the appearance of more and more new units. That is why discussions about the principles of their formation and their classification are of great importance not only for language studies but also for representatives of other scientific fields of knowledge. They are still part of our communication, being it official or not, and though becoming an *avis rara* are as vivid as ever.

*Index of Eponyms, Part of Medical Terminology, Derived from a Toponym*

**Lat:** antigenum Australia, antigena Australia, Australia' antigenum (< Australia),

**BG:** австралийски антиген;

**Lat:** aqua Seltersi, aqua-Seltzer, Selters' aqua (< Selters, mineral springs in Prusia, Germany), **BG:** вода Зелтцер, аква-зелцер;

**Lat:** arthritis Lyme' (< Old Lyme, a town in Connecticut, USA), **BG:** лаймски артрит;

**Lat:** Balkan' nephropathia, nephropathia Balkani (< Balkan peninsula), **BG:** балканска нефропатия;

**Lat:** balneum Nauheimi, Nauheim' balneum (< Bad-Nauheim, town and balneological resort in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany), **BG:** наухаймска баня, наухаймско лечение;

**Lat:** Bornholm' morbus (= pleurodynia epidemica) (< Bornholm, an island in the Baltic Sea, in the border between Denmark and Sweden);

**Lat:** Brompton' mixtura, mixtura Bromptoni (< Brompton Chest Hospital, London, England), **BG:** бромптънски коктейл;

**Lat:** Bulgaria' bacillus (= Lactobacillus bulgaricus) (< Bulgaria), **BG:** български лактобацил, **ENG:** Lactobacillus bulgaricus, Bulgarian bacillus, Massol's bacillus;

**Lat:** Bulgaria' cura, Bulgaria' methodus, cura bulgara, cura bulgarica, (< Bulgaria), **BG:** българско лечение, **ENG:** cura bulgara, cura bulgarica;

**Lat:** Bunyaviridae (< Bunyamwere, a region in Uganda), **BG:** Бунявириде;

**Lat:** Chiba' acus (< Chiba University, Japan), **BG:** чиба-игла;

**Lat:** chromosoma Philadelphia' (< Philadelphia, USA), **BG:** филаделфийска хромозома;

**Lat:** Coxsackie-vira (< Coxsackie, town in New York state, USA), **BG:** коксаки-вируси;

**Lat:** Ebola' febris haemorrhagica, febris Ebola' (< Ebola, a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo), **BG:** ебола хеморагична треска;

**Lat:** Ebola' virus (< Ebola, a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo), **BG:** Ебола-вирус;

**Lat:** febris argentinica (< Argentina) ;

**Lat:** febris bolivica (< Bolivia);

**Lat:** febris Crimea, febris Crimea-Congo' (< the Crimean Peninsula, lying between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov + Congo), **BG:** кримска треска;

**Lat:** febris Haverhilli, Haverhill'febris (= erythema arthriticum epidemicum, erythema polymorphum acutum, morbus morsus Muris) (< Haverhill, town and region in Massachusetts, USA), **BG:** хаверхилска треска;  
**Lat:** febris Koreana (< Korea);  
**Lat:** febris Kyasanur (< Kyasanur, a wood in Russia);  
**Lat:** febris Lassa, Lassa' febris (< Lassa, a town in Nigeria);  
**Lat:** febris Malta' (< Malta);  
**Lat:** febris mediterranea, febris mediterranea familiaris (< The Mediterranean), **BG:** Средиземноморска семейна треска (= семеен рецидивиращ полисерозит)  
**Lat:** febris Omsk (< Omsk, Russia);  
**Lat:** febris Queenslandi (< Queensland, state in Australia);  
**Lat:** febris Rift-Valley (< Rift-Valley, a valley in Kenya);  
**Lat:** febris volhynica (< Volhynia / Volynia / Volyn, region in Ukraine);  
**Lat:** Glasgow' (coma-) scala, scala Glasgow' (< Glasgow, Scotland), **BG:** Глазгоускала на комата;  
**Lat:** Haff' morbus (< Königsberg Haff / Frisches Haff, a lagoon connected with the Baltic Sea), **BG:** Хаф-болест;  
**Lat:** kaolinum (= bolus alba) (< Kao-Ling / Gao-Ling, a city in China);  
**Lat:** lesbianismus (= sapphismus) (< Lesbos, an island in Greece), **BG:** лесбийство;  
**Lat:** Lyme' morbus (< Old Lyme, a town in Connecticut, USA), **BG:** лаймска болест;  
**Lat:** Marburg' febris haemorrhagica, febris haemorrhagica Marburgi (< Marburg, a town in Germany), **BG:** марбургска хеморагична треска;  
**Lat:** Marburg' virus (< Marburg, a town in Germany), **BG:** марбургски вирус;  
**Lat:** Medjugorje' maculopathia (< Medjugorje, a village in Serbia), **BG:** меджугорска макулопатия;  
**Lat:** Minamata' morbus (< Minamata Bay, Kyushu Island, Japan), **BG:** болест на Минамата;  
**Lat:** mongolismus (old term) (= Down syndromum, chromosoma-21 trisomia) (< Mongolia);  
**Lat:** Obuchovski' signum (< Obuchovskaya boljnitsa, the oldest hospital in St. Petersburg, Russia), **BG:** обуховски признак;  
**Lat:** pulvis Seidlitzii (< Seidlitz, mineral springs in Bohemia), **BG:** зайдлицов прах;  
**Lat:** Stockholm' syndromum (< Stockholm, Sweden), **BG:** стокхолмски синдром;  
**Lat:** trias Merseburgi (< Merseburg, Germany), **BG:** мерзебургска триада.

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